

State of Louisiana

MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JIMMY D. LONG SR. LOUISIANA SCHOOL FOR MATH, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

March 22, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts met on Monday March 22, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. in the Jimmy D. Long Board Room, LSMSA, in Natchitoches, LA. Mrs. Gahagan called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Ms. Anne Dejoie-Lucas recorded the minutes. Mrs. Gahagan welcomed members and guests to the meeting, including new Board members Preston Castille, who replaced Tony Davis as the BESE representative; and Sen. Katrina Jackson, who sits at the Pleasure of the Senate Committee on Education.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan (Chair)
Rep. Beryl Amedee (via Zoom)
Dr. Jason C. Anderson
Ms. Leanne M Broussard (via Zoom)
Mr. Preston Castille (via Zoom. Arrived 1:35pm)
Mr. Jared Dunahoe (via Zoom)
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (via Zoom)
Mr. Kirby Hopkins (via Zoom. Arrived 1:30pm)
Sen. Katrina Jackson (via Zoom. Arrived 1:40pm)
Ms. Chanda Johnson (via Zoom)
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson (via Zoom)
Ms. Denise Karamales (via Zoom)
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr. (via Zoom)
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister (via Zoom. Arrived 1:25PM)
Ms. Meredith McGovern (via Zoom)
Representative Charles Owens (via Zoom)
Ms. Martha T. Smiley (via Zoom)
Dr. Larry Tremblay (via Zoom)
Dr. Arthur S. Williams (via Zoom)
Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent:

Mr. Joseph E. "Jed" Cain
Sen. Beth Mizell
Mr. Richard Strong

Guests Present:

Attorney Ken Sills, LSMSA Counsel (via Zoom)
Mr. John Allen, LSMSA Chief of Staff

Dr. Kristy Pope-Key, LSMSA Director of Academic Services
Ms. Emily Shumate, LSMSA Director of Enrollment and Student Services
Ms. Ali Landry, LSMSA Foundation Executive Director (via Zoom)
Ms. Angela Couvillion, LSMSA Registrar

A Quorum of Board members being present, the meeting proceeded with business.

AGENDA ITEM 1: APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 7, 2020, BOARD MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the December 7, 2020, Board minutes and requested any additions or corrections.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Art Williams, seconded by Ms. Suzy Johnson, and unanimously passed, the Minutes of the December 7, 2020, meeting stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 2: CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Gahagan reported that she had no requests for comment.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Vice Chair Tony Davis resigned his position and moved out of state. As secretary of the Board, Dr. Steve Horton conducted nominations and election for a new Vice Chair per Article A, Part 3, Sections a & c of the Bylaws.

Dr. Horton asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Art Williams, seconded by Dr. Larry Tremblay, Dr. Vickie Gentry was nominated for the position.

There being no further nominations, Dr. Horton called for a motion to close nominations.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Larry Tremblay, seconded by Ms. Chanda Johnson, and unanimously passed, nominations for the position of Vice Chair were closed.

There being no additional nominees, Dr. Horton announced that Dr. Vickie Gentry is elected as Vice Chair by acclamation.

AGENDA ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF PROPOSED 2021-2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The executive team has set the calendar to align with pre-pandemic years, with a couple of notable changes. New Student Orientation will take place in August this year to allow for the pandemic to slow and the vaccine to be available to students. Student move-in this year is anticipated to occur over several days to accommodate social distancing; NSO will be staggered with move-in for those reasons.

Dr. Art Williams asked if Special Projects will still take place in January, to which Dr. Key replied yes.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Vickie Gentry, seconded by Dr. Jason Anderson, and unanimously passed, the Proposed 2021-2022 School Calendar was approved.

AGENDA ITEM 5: APPROVAL OF SCHOOL ATTORNEY CONTRACT FOR 2021-2022

Dr. Horton directed Board members to review Agenda Item 5, Exhibit 1 and explained that there are no significant changes to the contract other than the inclusion of attorney Jonathan Blake to the legal team and a proposed increase in services in the amount of \$5,000 to reflect the difference in last year's projected versus actual amount incurred for services.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Larry Tremblay, seconded by Mr. Jared Dunahoe, and unanimously passed, the 2021-2022 School Attorney Contract was approved.

AGENDA ITEM 6: APPROVAL OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE 2021-2022 STUDENT HANDBOOK

Dr. Kristi Key indicated the first action point addresses the students' use of preferred names and legal name changes on academic documents. The proposed changes affirm what can and cannot be used based on guidance from counsel and best practices of our sister schools.

Ms. Emily Shumate explained that the remainder of the changes make adjustments related to the new residence hall as well as use of the new REACH boarding system for sign-in/sign-out purposes. They also address service animals based on policy previously drafted by counsel but never approved and adopted by the School.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Jason Anderson, seconded by Ms. Suzy Johnson, and unanimously passed, the proposed changes to the 2021-2022 Student Handbook were approved.

AGENDA ITEM 7: APPROVAL OF PROPOSED NEW COURSES

The proposed new courses are a combination of classes that have either been offered in the last calendar year or will be offered, with Board approval, in the next calendar year and reflect the ongoing evolution of faculty interests and training. Courses applicable for TOPS or offered strictly as electives will be indicated as such and shared with the LDOE and BESE upon approval by the Board.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Jason Anderson, seconded by Dr. Art Williams, and unanimously passed, the proposed new courses were approved.

AGENDA ITEM 8: RETROACTIVE APPROVAL OF STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES FOR FY21

Student activity fees were waived in Fall 2020 and prorated in Spring 2021 due to the online and cohort formats. Traditionally the Board is not required to ratify these fees; but based on recommendation from the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, these fees will now be presented annually for approval by the Board.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Chanda Johnson, seconded by Dr. Vickie Gentry, and unanimously passed, the Board retroactively approved the Student Activity Fees for FY21.

AGENDA ITEM 9: APPROVAL OF STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES FOR FY22

Student Activity Fees will revert to their full amounts for FY22, as it is the School's expectation to return to normal operations in the fall. Senior fees will include graduation fees. There is no commingling of funds. SAFs are collected via PayPal and deposited to the School accounts at the Bank of Montgomery. They are not collected through the state system and do not pass through the treasury department; they are maintained locally and do not get mixed with other state-generated funds.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Kimberly McAlister, seconded by Dr. Jason Anderson, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the Student Activity Fees for FY22.

AGENDA ITEM 10: UPDATE ON LSMSA FY22 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

LSMSA's budget is independent of the Department of Education. It's a line item in the Governor's budget, and the School reports directly to the Commissioner of Administration. Budget requests go to the DOA, and no other authorities are involved in the School's budget request. LSMSA is under Schedule 19-B - Special Schools and Commissions – and is financed by direct appropriation. The only area where the School requested an increase last November is the state general fund, resulting in a total request for FY22 of \$10.7 million. The proposed budget from the Commissioner's Office in late February showed only a slight cut and indicated a \$344,000 increase over current year. The budget also reflects a 4% increase to Civil Service. Risk Management increased by \$71,000 as a result of the opening of the new residence hall. These should go back down the following year when Caddo and Prudhomme are taken offline.

Ms. Suzy Johnson asked how the CARES Act impacted the budget.

LSMSA did not qualify for direct CARES Act funding because it's not a Title I School. It did, however, receive \$31,000 directly from the DOE for the purchase of computers, software and hot spots for virtual instruction. Any additional funding that gets approved this fiscal year will also be used for IT purchases and will not impact the budget for FY22.

AGENDA ITEM 11: APPROVAL OF THE OCCUPANCY POLICY FOR THE LIVING/LEARNING COMMONS

The Living/Learning Commons (LLC) is the new building which will operate in Fall and Spring through May, and for summer programming in the month of June. Summer school is virtual this year, and it's unclear if it will remain in virtual format or revert to in-person next year. Summer programming consists of Excel and Summer@ programs – those two programs will occupy the building in June. The month of July will be strictly for maintenance and repair, with the goal being to remain proactive in the maintenance of the building. Only LSMSA academic and outreach programs shall occupy the building. Other outside academic and extracurricular activities that require residential occupancy will not be permitted. The maximum number of students is 360, maximum number of residential life staff full time or part time is 11, and maximum number of academic or residential interns is 2 (but may need to increase to 4). There is a guest room for individuals that may be applying to work at the school, specifically faculty members from out of state, to alleviate the cost of hotel rooms; it may also be used for guest lecturers or other guests as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director. Current employees of the school are not permitted to occupy the guest room and/or occupy spaces designated for students, residential life staff or interns.

Ms. Kimberly McAlister asked if the Board wished to address changing the number of interns from 2 to 4 at this time.

At the request of Chair, Mr. Allen, clarified that the language should be amended to read "The maximum number of academic interns allowed to occupy the building at one is time is up to four (2 rooms)."

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Art Williams, seconded by Mr. Jared Dunahoe, and unanimously passed, the Board approved an amendment to the Occupancy Policy to state "The maximum number of academic interns allowed to occupy the building at one is time is up to four (2 rooms)".

Mrs. Gahagan then called for a motion to approve the newly amended Occupancy Policy for the Living/Learning Commons.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Larry Tremblay, seconded by Dr. Vickie Gentry, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the newly amended Occupancy Policy for the Living/Learning Commons.

AGENDA ITEM 12: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Horton asked the Chair to consider an Executive Session at the end of his report, following his updates on completion of the Living/Learning Commons, senior cohort activities, and graduation. Plans will be made for surplusing the property/inventory contained in Caddo and Prudhomme, with the intent of returning those residence halls to Northwestern University by mid-August. Students will continue to reside in Caddo this summer for the Summer@ program, Stemrichment, and Excel.

LSMSA plans for a traditional Senior Recognition Ceremony and Commencement in Prather Coliseum under Phase 3 guidelines. Students have been diligently following the guidelines this Spring, and online instruction has worked well as students are receiving a very robust educational experience.

The School worked with The Foundation to secure funds for the engagement of a public relations firm to assist with an enrollment management plan. SI Innovation will assist with social media platforms, webpage, and other advertising to draw awareness and enrollment to the School. Additionally, two Foundation donors came forward with a special interest to assist in this endeavor to promote the outreach program.

Senior Recognition is May 14 and Commencement is May 15. As of now, they are scheduled to be held in Prather Coliseum. If Louisiana returns to Phase 2, they will take place in Turpin Stadium. We are working with NSU and will follow their guidelines; and they are following the Department of Health guidelines.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Jared Dunahoe that the Board go into Executive Session pursuant to L.R.S. 42:17(A)(2) to discuss the following matters: To discuss investigative proceedings regarding Ethics Code Issues; seconded by Ms. Suzy Johnson; Ms. Lucas commenced the required Roll Call Vote (requires 2/3 of the board members present in person or via zoom to authorize the Executive Session):

Rep. Beryl Amedee	yes	
Dr. Jason C. Anderson	yes	
Ms. Leanne Broussard	yes	
Mr. Preston Castille	yes	
Mr. Jared Dunahoe	yes	
Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan		yes
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry	yes	
Mr. Kirby Hopkins	yes	
Sen. Katrina Jackson	yes	
Ms. Chanda Johnson	no answer	
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson	yes	
Ms. Denise Karamales	yes	
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr.	yes	
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister	yes	
Ms. Meredith McGovern	yes	
Rep. Charles Owen	yes	
Ms. Martha Smiley	no answer	
Dr. Larry Tremblay	yes	
Dr. Art Williams		yes

Having received 2/3 votes as required, the Chair was given permission to proceed. *(Let the minutes reflect that two attending Board members did not vote either because they were out of the room when vote was taken or because they refrained from answering when prompted. Four members who joined the meeting late were in attendance to cast their votes for Executive Session.)*

The Board entered into Executive Session at 2:22 p.m. At the request of the Chair, Attorney Ken Sills remained in Executive Session. Zoom guests were placed into a ZOOM waiting room, and physical guests in attendance were asked to leave the boardroom.

At the completion of business addressed during Executive Session, the Regular Session resumed at 3:10 p.m. Roll call was taken to establish quorum to reconvene.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan (Chair)
Rep. Beryl Amedee (via Zoom)
Dr. Jason C. Anderson
Ms. Leanne M Broussard (via Zoom)
Mr. Preston Castille (via Zoom)
Mr. Jared Dunahoe (via Zoom)
Mr. Kirby Hopkins (via Zoom)
Sen. Katrina Jackson (via Zoom)
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson (via Zoom)
Ms. Denise Karamales (via Zoom)
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr. (via Zoom)
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister (via Zoom)
Ms. Meredith McGovern (via Zoom)
Ms. Martha T. Smiley (via Zoom)

Dr. Larry Tremblay (via Zoom)
Dr. Arthur S. Williams (via Zoom)
Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent:

Mr. Joseph E. "Jed" Cain
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry – did not return after Executive Session
Ms. Chanda Johnson – did not return after Executive Session
Sen. Beth Mizell
Representative Charles Owens – did not return after Executive Session
Mr. Richard Strong

Guests Present:

Attorney Ken Sills, LSMSA Counsel (via Zoom)
Mr. John Allen, LSMSA Chief of Staff
Dr. Kristy Pope-Key, LSMSA Director of Academic Services
Ms. Emily Shumate, LSMSA Director of Enrollment and Student Services
Ms. Ali Landry, LSMSA Foundation Executive Director (via Zoom)
Ms. Angela Couvillion, LSMSA Registrar

A Quorum of Board members being present, the meeting proceeded with business, with Mrs. Gahagan, presiding.

AGENDA ITEM 13: REPORT FROM THE FACULTY

Dr. Jason Anderson reviewed the accomplishments submitted by faculty since the December 2020 Board meeting and thanked the faculty, his colleagues, who continue to adjust, adapt and continue to deliver the best education possible to the students. He also thanked the administration and the Board for providing steady leadership throughout the year.

AGENDA ITEM 14: REPORT FROM THE I.D.E.A. COUNCIL

Dr. Anderson gave an update on the Council's work since the December 2020 Board meeting, including the activation of various sub-committees. The Council as a whole met twice since December to solidify its primary goals for the 2020-2021 academic year. The Council activated 3 sub-committees to complete these goals: Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ+, and Policy Review. The Anti-Black Racism sub-committee has met numerous times and deemed to implement a Dialogue on Race Louisiana program as a priority. LGBTQ+ sub-committee met and is evaluating certain policies that exist at the school. Their goal is to present policy changes that reflect the School's values and are consistent with federal law. The Policy sub-committee met and agreed that they need to update the current Mission Statement of the School to reflect the current diverse and multicultural background of Louisiana. The sub-committee also plans to evaluate policies within the Faculty and Staff Handbook.

A climate study task force has been formed to gather pertinent information from outside firms to build a climate survey that best fits our community. Additionally, this is the first year LSMSA has looked at a more targeted recruitment approach. Hopefully through these actions, the Council can deepen the impact not only on students but also all members of the LSMSA community.

AGENDA ITEM 15: ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF REPORTS

Mrs. Gahagan asked the Board members to consult their handouts/exhibits for administrative staff reports and to address any questions they might have to Mr. Allen, Dr. Key, Ms. Shumate and Ms. Landry.

AGENDA ITEM 16: APPROVAL FOR ONE-TIME SUPPLEMENTAL PAY FOR FULL-TIME FACULTY/STAFF PERSONNEL RELATED TO RETAINMENT OF FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 STUDENT RETENTION GOALS

An annual retention goal is set each year, usually around 95%, and unused MFP funds allow for a one-time supplemental check to full-time faculty and staff if that goal is met. The goal set at the beginning of this academic year was 90%, recognizing the challenges faced by Covid, online instruction, and other factors. Dr. Horton indicated that as of right now, LSMSA is still maintaining its 95% retention mark, and he commended the faculty and staff for their efforts. As such, he asked the Board to approve a one-time stipend up to \$250 for each full-time faculty and staff member, based on remaining MFP funds.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Jared Dunahoe, seconded by Dr. Art Williams, and unanimously passed, the Board approved a one-time supplemental pay for full-time faculty/staff personnel related to retainment of fiscal year 2020-2021 student retention goals.

AGENDA ITEM 17: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TIMELINE FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The School is suspending the evaluation process for the faculty this year, as any evaluations that would be conducted would be invalid due to the numerous fluctuations in processes this year. Mrs. Gahagan requested that the same process for the Executive Director's evaluation be made and that Dr. Horton receive a "satisfactory" rating and forgo a formal evaluation this year. She called on the School's Director of Academic Services and its Chief of Staff to offer support for this decision before calling for a vote.

Dr. Kristi Key explained the justification and reasoning that the department chairs gave to suspend the formal evaluation process of faculty. Following input from department chairs, Dr. Key will write a letter to put on file for every full-time faculty member, addressing any concerns and noting any conversations that need to take place in regards to performance, promotions, etc.

She further expressed that Dr. Horton has been right out front with the faculty in its "survive and thrive" mode, saying, "I believe the faculty and staff would be in support of that process for him as well."

Mr. John Allen echoed those sentiments saying, "We've all done our best whether virtual or on campus to keep things moving. As issues have arisen throughout the year, we've addressed it with the individuals and are happy to support not having the usual official evaluation."

Mrs. Gahagan concluded by stating that having a full-blown evaluation of the Executive Director is not applicable here, and The Chair respectfully requests the same process used for faculty evaluations be used for the Executive Director's evaluation this year.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Jason Anderson, seconded by Dr. Art Williams, and unanimously passed, the Board approved waiving the establishment of a timeline for

evaluation of the Executive Director and will instead defer to The Chair to provide a letter of “satisfactory” rating to the faculty, staff and Board of Directors.

AGENDA ITEM 18: DATE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

The date for the next Board meeting is Monday, June 14, 2021. Face-to-face and Zoom format will be used, and possibly a tour of the Living/Learning Commons can be scheduled for those in attendance. The meeting will remain at 1:00 p.m.

The last meeting for the year is June 2021. Before then, the dates will be set by Mrs. Gahagan and Dr. Horton for the September, December March and June 2022 meetings, taking into consideration BESE and DOE meetings to avoid conflicts.

AGENDA ITEM 19: OTHER BUSINESS

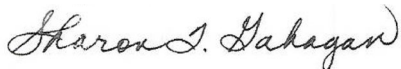
Mrs. Gahagan again expressed her gratitude to Mr. Preston Castille and Senator Katrina Jackson for joining the Board and gave each a chance to address the Board before adjourning.

No Action Required

There being no further business,

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Suzy Johnson, seconded by Mr. Jared Dunahoe, and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Sharon T. Gahagan, EdS.
Chair



Steven G. Horton, PhD.
Secretary