

State of Louisiana

MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

December 5, 2022

The Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts met on Monday December 5, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. in the Jimmy D. Long Board Room, LSMSA, in Natchitoches, LA. Mrs. Sharon Gahagan welcomed members and guests and invited Diamond Smith and Andre Williams, LSMSA students from the School's Athletic Council, to speak with members about the Radio M.A.S.H. Toy Drive. Mrs. Gahagan called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Mrs. Anne Dejoie-Lucas recorded the minutes. Roll was called, and quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan (Chair)
Representative Beryl Amedee
Dr. Jason C. Anderson
Ms. Leanne Broussard
Mr. Jared Dunahoe
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (Vice Chair)
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr.
William "Bill" Luster, MD
Ms. Tana Luther
Ms. Meredith McGovern
Representative Charles Owens
Ms. Regina Pierce
Dr. Arthur S. Williams
Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent

Mr. Joseph E. "Jed" Cain
Mr. Preston Castille
Ms. Lisa DeJean
Mr. Kirby Hopkins
Senator Katrina Jackson
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson
Mr. Patrick Jenkins
Ms. Denise Karamales
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister

Senator Beth Mizell
Dr. Larry Tremblay

Guests Present

Attorney Ken Sills
Mr. John Allen, LSMSA Chief of Staff
Dr. Kristy Pope-Key, LSMSA Director of Academic Affairs
Ms. Emily Shumate, LSMSA Director of Enrollment Management & Institutional Research
Ms. Angela Couvillion, Registrar and Chief Articulation Officer
Ms. Ro Slutsky
Ms. Christie Price, Dean of Students
Ms. Randi Washington, Director of the Living Community
Ms. Rebekah Maricelli, LSMSA External Affairs
Ms. Juliana Sheffied, LSMSA Foundation
LSMSA Students Diamond Smith / Andre Williams

AGENDA ITEM 1: APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2022, BOARD MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the September 12, 2022, minutes and requested any additions or corrections.

Upon motion duly made by Rep. Amedee, seconded by Dr. Gentry, and unanimously passed, the minutes of the September 12, 2022, 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: APPROVAL OF 2023-2024 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The proposed calendar for the 2023-2024 school year indicates start and stop dates, breaks, significant grading periods, and special events like matriculation and commencement.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Anderson, seconded by Rep. Amedee, and unanimously passed, the 2023-2024 School Calendar was approved.

AGENDA ITEM 4: RATIFICATION OF FOUNDATION FACULTY/STAFF REIMBURSEMENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER 2022 BOARD MEETING

Seven (7) employees received reimbursement from the Foundation for matters primarily related to enrollment recruitment. Other expenses were for art supplies, art gallery showings, and capital campaign expenses.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dunahoe, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the Board ratified the Foundation's faculty/staff reimbursements paid since the September 2022 Board meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 5: REPORT ON LLC STUDENT ROOM DAMAGE COSTS

Dr. Allen will present for a vote in March. Upon approval, LSMSA will begin charging fees for damage to students' room and common areas. He plans to meet with the facilities management staff to outline a list of very specific charges, and that list will be shared with families/students so they are aware as they enter their tenure at LSMSA.

AGENDA ITEM 6: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

We participated in the Christmas Festival Weekend after a two-year absence. The School was well represented, and appreciation goes to Dr. Luster for driving the float. The following day, student athletes enjoyed an afternoon at Coach Dale's home. Currently, we're in the midst of concerts, Christmas performances and more before leaving for break.

Traditions like science fair, community meetings, and more are slowly returning to their annual schedule; and the School is making a return to its policies and procedures. Dean Price has done an excellent job of strictly focusing on student conduction and experiences and navigated LSMSA through its first student appeal in over 10 years.

Dr. Horton traveled with the Foundation to various states/cities to help promote the silent phase of the capital campaign before going public to raise the other half of the funds.

Attorney Sills met with Dean Price in September in Baton Rouge to discuss updating the bullying statute(s), which will also hold staff members accountable who fail to act properly under the new state statutes. Narcan nasal spray, to be administered immediately in the case of drug overdose, will be made available as a preventative measure to schools for use by students, faculty and staff, and visitors to campus, if needed.

This past semester, two counselors were out on family medical leave for about six weeks. The School worked closely with the attorneys office to make sure student needs were met properly by licensed counselors and in accordance with privacy protocols. Dr. Horton publicly thanked Catherine Fauchaux, a local licensed social work, who stepped in to assist on a contract basis. LSMSA is advertising for a third counselor position and hopes to also keep Ms. Fauchaux on a professional contract through the spring semester.

Rebekah Maricelli's office monitors the Schools various social media accounts, working to keep posts uplifting and honest and navigating through any negative or false publicity that erupts. Along with the administrative team, it's been a positive way to handle social media which is now so prevalent.

AGENDA ITEM #7: REPORT FROM THE FACULTY

Faculty have been busy with professional development, continuing education, publishing, and overall return to normalcy with events like science fairs, math competitions, athletics, and more. The full report is included as Agenda Item 7, Exhibit 1. According to Dr. Anderson, the Faculty is seeing more “need” from the students post-Covid and more 504 accommodations, but faculty members are working hard to adapt and change to the classroom dynamics.

AGENDA ITEM #8: DIVISION REPORTS

- a. CofS – Operations (Dr. Allen): Comptroller Mariah Metoyer accepted another job in Arkansas. Her last day was October 3. Dr. Allen has is serving as interim comptroller and will submit the budget request for next year. There currently is an open search to fill the position – someone with governmental accounting experience. Dr. Allen also indicated that he is working on a reorganization plan for the business office.

All student labs have been replaced with new computers, and additional AV tech equipment in the classrooms will be replaced, about \$400k. By the end of the fiscal year, all of the IT structure will be completely replaced. Bids also are out for the CPT chiller, which is about 13 years old. It will be replaced with a model that integrates with the HSB chiller. Two (2) new vehicles will be added to the existing fleet due to two current vans that have about 200k miles on each of them.

- b. Academic Affairs (Dr. Key): Current retention rate is about 95%, with an anticipating of 5-12 students withdrawing by end of semester for academic reasons or self-selection by family. Support services around campus continues to function well and offers a holistic option for families and students.

Dr. Key extended respect and appreciation to the School’s DOE partners and K-12 partners, and also thanked the Foundation and IT staff for its efforts in obtaining evaluation software to be used for course evaluation as well as evaluation of faculty and the Executive Director.

- c. Enrollment Management and Institutional Research (E. Shumate): Enrollment numbers are currently a little bit above where they were at this point last year, but not up enough to slow down enrollment and retention efforts. LSMSA is mailing info to 320 potential students who scored a 25 or higher on the ACT to encourage them to apply. Additional mailouts of nearly 3000 pieces went to students whose scores might be close but slightly below 25, or to middle school students, to start garnering interest. Events like the middle school math competition, Summer@, and more are also great tools for reaching families. LSMSA is also looking into working with the Girl Scouts and other community partners. Sister schools like ISMA in Illinois are considering opening its enrollment to out-of-state students for a nominal fee; the Maine school has been taking students from out of state and internationally at an added charge to combat the drop in enrollment following Covid. LSMSA saw good turnout at its regional meetings and hopes to see numbers rise in the spring. The School is trying to increase brand awareness and may even consider billboard advertising, which it’s never done before.

Dr. Williams indicated that perhaps LSMSA try to reach potential students through organizations like FFF and 4-H since the high schools don't always want LSMSA to "steal away" their best students.

Mrs. Shumate agreed that is a good idea, and explained the new efforts being made to organize "make and take" activities and events for middle schoolers at parish libraries, STEM programs, etc.

- d. Student Support Services (R. Slutsky): Coriana Cesar is moving to Chicago but has agreed to help faculty and students navigate the transition until a replacement is hired. For midterms, 15.4% of students had a failing grade, which left 84.6% with all passing grades. LSMSA is still feeling remnants of the pandemic, but the students are doing well. The School is in the process of hiring a third personal counselor. Three (3) students were required to withdraw due to wellness issue, and three (3) were required to get mental health evaluations before returning to campus. Mrs. Katie Summerell in the College Counseling Center won the Guidance Counselor of the Year at NSU. Mrs. Slutsky also publicly acknowledged and thanked her assistant, Jackie Jacoby saying, "When you have somebody in your back pocket that shows up, it allows you to breathe. That's Ms. Jackie Jacoby for me!"
- e. Dean of Students (C. Price): Since students returned in August, there have been 225 infractions noted; 16 major infractions, 209 minor. Two of the major infractions resulted in mandatory withdrawal from the school because they involved illegal activities. LSMSA currently has 27 students (almost 10%) who have a 504 plan. The goal with seniors who have those plans is to give them tools that may help that at the higher education level once they leave LSMSA.
- f. Living Community (R. Washington): One-on-one meetings are being held with residential life staff members to assess changes and student needs and to implement a plan of action. The plan is to re-assess staff and student needs on an annual basis. Weekly meetings with senior administration and the Behavioral Intervention Team also prove helpful in making sure students' needs are met. Several faculty, staff and students participate each week in LSUHS's Covid-19 screening. Inter-Club Council (ICC) comprised of all the club presidents will resume meetings in January to discuss fundraiser ideas and campus events. Parents were polled concerning the use of Wi-Fi being accessible 24/7; over 160 parents responded yes. The School will conduct a trial basis and then re-evaluate and re-poll parents again next semester to see if response is still the same.
- g. Foundation (A. Landry): Ms. Juliana Sheffield spoke on behalf of the Foundation in Mrs. Landry's absence and gave an update on the capital campaign and the School's support of the building of the Innovation Center. A full report of Foundation updates is included in the Agenda exhibits.

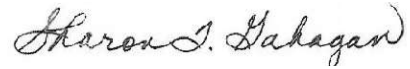
AGENDA ITEM #9: OTHER BUSINESS

The next Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 13, 2023; followed by the June 12 meeting.

There being no further business;

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Dr. Anderson, and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Sharon T. Gahagan, Ed.S.
Chair



Steven G. Horton, PhD.
Secretary