Centerville, Louisiana

February 9, 2023

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in regular session on Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, Louisiana, with the following members answering to roll call:

**Present:** Mr. Joseph C. Foulcard Jr., Ms. Tammie L. Moore, Mrs. Lindsey T. Anslem, Ms. Debra R. Jones, Ms. Marilyn P. LaSalle, Mr. Chad M. Paradee, Mrs. Alaina L. Black, Mr. Andrew V. Mancuso, Mrs. Rhonda R. Dennis.

**Absent:** Mrs. Ginger S. Griffin, Mr. Murphy J. Pontiff Jr.

# Invocation

Ms. Estay gave the Invocation.

# Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

President Black led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

# Introduction of Students and Employees of the Month

## Franklin Senior High School:

Principal Natasha Jackson introduced 12th grader Layla Gray as “Student of the Month” at Franklin Senior High School. She was accompanied by her parents, brother, and grandparents. Layla is an honor student with a 3.8 grade point average. She is a Del Leader and a counselor for Focusing on Student Success Organization. Layla has been a member of the basketball and volleyball team for 4 years, and a cheerleader for 3 years. She is a Delta Debutante and Del Leader of the year. Layla is in the Gifted/Talented program, Beta member, National Honor Society member and Student Council member. She also helps in the office with morning announcements and printing temporary IDs for students. Principal Jackson proudly announced Layla as “Student of the Month” and “Student of the Year” at Franklin Senior High School.

Principal Natasha Jackson introduced librarian Allyson Billodeau as “Employee of the Month” at Franklin Senior High School. She was accompanied by her husband. Mrs. Billodeau received a bachelor’s degree in elementary education and a master’s degree in educational supervision, both from University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her teaching career began in 1993 with 4th graders at G. W. Hamilton Elementary School. In 1995-2002 she transitioned to be a librarian at Lagrange Elementary School. In 2002 she became the librarian at Franklin High where she has worked for the past 21 years. Mrs. Billodeau is our SBLC Facilitator, Yearbook Coordinator, Technology Lead Teacher and Title I Liaison. Principal Jackson proudly announced Mrs. Billodeau as “Teacher of the Month” and “Teacher of the Year” at Franklin Senior High School.

# Julia B. Maitland Elementary School:

Principal Tonya Hills introduced 5th grader Sohanni Munoz as “Student of the Month” at Julia B. Maitland Elementary School. She was accompanied by her mother. Sohanni is noble, humble, always willing to help others, and has a good heart. She is an honor roll student, has good attendance, and she is a leader among her peers. She loves reading, drawing, and playing soccer. Sohanni is an active member of Jr. BETA where she served as president. Teachers at Maitland say that Sohanni is a problem solver and eager to participate in any activity that is presented with a positive attitude. She has great behavior and is respectful, kind, and she is a role model for others around her. She plans to attend college for engineering.

Principal Tonya Hills introduced 1st grade teacher Tori Chasson as “Employee of the Month” at Julia B. Maitland Elementary School. She was accompanied by her mother and two of her children. She has taught for 23 years. Before coming to J. B. Maitland Elementary, she taught at Shannon Elementary School. She earned her bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Nicholls in 1999. In her free time, Mrs. Chasson likes to spend time with her family and friends. She loves seeing her students grow. For years, she thought her passion was upper elementary but was moved multiple times to discover her love for first grade. Her colleagues know that she has touched so many lives in her time as a teacher. Her positivity shines, and it is evident that she cares deeply for her students. Some words to describe her are: reliable, inspiring, fair, prepared, calm, organized, hardworking, engaging, and faithful to her career. She is always willing to lend a hand and teaches from her heart. She tells the most interesting stories and is one of the best partners a teacher could ask for. Teaching seems so effortless when you walk in her classroom. She truly is one of the best. Mrs. Chasson is such an inspiration for students, faculty, and staff at Julia B. Maitland.

# W. P. Foster Elementary School:

Principal Angela Stewart introduced 5th grader Carli Stansbury as “Student of the Month” at W. P. Foster Elementary School. Carli was accompanied her mother, two aunts, and grandmother. She is an active member of the student body at Foster Elementary. She is also the Student of the Year, cheer captain for our school’s cheerleading squad, and the president of the Beta Club. In addition to school activities, she is productive in the community.  She plays basketball for St. Mary Parish local community recreational center, and she praise dances and sings at her church. Carli is motivated by the desire that she has for learning and succeeding as she strives to become a successful individual. She wants to go to college to become a doctor to help and care for others. Principal Stewart proudly congratulated Carli Stansbury as “Student of the Month” W. P. Foster Elementary School.

Principal Angela Stewart introduced Kindergarten teacher Greta Lowe as “Employee of the Month” at W. P. Foster Elementary School. She was accompanied by two of her daughters and one of her colleagues. Mrs. Lowe teaches math, social studies, and science to Kindergarten students. She has been teaching for seven years. Before teaching kindergarten, Mrs. Lowe taught ELA and science in fourth and fifth grades for the first three years of her teaching career. Before becoming a teacher, Mrs. Lowe proudly served as a paraprofessional for 18 years. It is a joy to have her on Foster Elementary’s team. Principal Stewart proudly congratulated Mrs. Lowe as “Employee of the Month” as W. P. Foster Elementary School.

# Approval of Amended Agenda.

No amended agenda.

# Approval of Official School Board Minutes.

Ms. Moore offered the motion and Ms. Jones offered the second to approve the official school board minutes from the regular school board meeting held on January 12, 2023, as presented. All in favor and the motion carried.

# Approval of Consent Agenda.

President Black stated that Board Members can remove any of the items on the consent agenda for further discussion in the regular proceedings. Dr. Sanders read aloud the items on the consent agenda as follows:

## Business Affairs:

## Item 4. \*Permission to declare buses, technology van, and maintenance truck as surplus to sale of highest bidder.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion and Ms. Moore made a second to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented by Dr. Sanders. All in favor and the motion carried.

# Appearances:

## St. Mary Parish District Students of the Year:

Ms. Rose Hale introduced the elementary and high school “Students of the Year” for St. Mary Parish Schools as follows.

* **Elementary:** Autumn Bach, 5th grade student, Wyandotte Elementary School
* **High School:** Sarai Richardson, 12th grade student, Morgan City High School

Ms. Hale indicated that the junior high school “Student of the Year” was currently at a Beta Club Convention and will be presented at the March meeting.

**Recogition of 2023-2024 St. Mary Parish Teachers of the Year:**

Ms. Estay recogized the 2023-2024 St. Mary Parish “Teachers of the Year” as follows:

* **Elementary:** Greta Lowe, W. P. Foster Elementary School
* **Junior High:** Jacqueline Nguyen, Morgan City Junior High School
* **High School:** Chasity Toups, Patterson High School

## Recognition of 2023-2024 St. Mary Parish Principal of the Year:

Ms. Estay recognized Ms. Natasha Jackson as “Principal of the Year” at Franklin Senior High School.

## Item 1. Receive Group Health Insurance Premium to Claims Summary Report.

Mr. Perez provided a summary update from January 2022- through December 2022 for the 2022 Commercial Group Health Plan, which ensured active employees and non-Medicare retirees. It was a very good year especially when compared to the premium to claims summary for 2020 and 2021. At the end of December 2022, there was an expense adjusted loss ratio of 88.2 percent loss ratio at $11.4 million in premiums paid in and a total of $9.2 million of claims paid. If the school system was self-funded, and having payment of administration specific and aggregate stop loss, medical claims and prescription drug claims, the school board would have ended up with over a million dollars of reserves. In prior years of 2020 and 2021, those loss ratios far exceeded 100 percent. Therefore, in those years, the school board would have actually attained a deficit.

The summary report also included a self-funded plan hypothetically based on actual premiums and claims. Last year, Mr. Perez recommended a self-funded plan for the St. Mary Parish School Board given the size and certain changes made over the course of the last four years which would have established a good point for the school board to transition from fully insured to self-funded. He would like a schedule workshop for the Board in the near future prior to a regular school board meeting to provide a historical overview and more in-depth explanation of the self-funded plan.

The Medicare Advantage Plan that covers retirees and some active employees who are Medicare eligible with both parts A and B of Medicare is insured separately under an employer group waiver plan through Blue Cross. This plan started with United Health Care in 2019 and has now been with Blue Cross Blue Shield for the last two years. Mr. Perez stated that he does not receive regular data on the Medicare Advantage Plan, but it never had a rate increase. In fact, the plan has seen rate decreases which has benefited the St. Mary Parish School Board for adopting the Group Medicare Advantage Plan.

## Item 2. Request to re-schedule March Regular Board Meeting.

Dr. Sanders asked the Board to consider re-scheduling the regular school board meeting on March 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., which is currently set on the same day and time as the Morgan City Rotary Club’s 28th Annual New Generation Forum. The Forum gives student teams from each St. Mary Parish high school the opportunity to design a community improvement project and propose this idea to community stakeholders. Re-scheduling the meeting would remove the conflict between the school board and the Rotary Club and would allow school system leaders and board members the opportunity to attend both events.

Mr. Foulcard made a motion and Mrs. Dennis made a second to re-schedule the regular school board meeting for Thursday, March 16th back to the second Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, Louisiana. All in favor and the motion carried.

## Item 3. Proclamations:

## A. National School Breakfast Week (March 6-10, 2023)

Ms. Chaisson read aloud the proclamation as follows:

NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK

OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, the School Breakfast Program has served our nation admirably since it was permanently established in 1975; and

**WHEREAS,** the School Breakfast Program is dedicated to the health and well-being of our nation’s children.

**WHEREAS,** the School Breakfast Program joins and has been joined through the years by many other excellent child nutrition programs; and

**WHEREAS,** there is evidence of continued need for nutrition education and awareness of the value of school nutrition programs.

**NOW, LET IT THEREFORE BE RESOLVED** that the St. Mary Parish School Board does hereby proclaim the week of *March 6-10, 2023*, as NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK and encourage all residents to become aware and attentive to their children’s and their own nutritional habits, in the hope of achieving a more healthful citizenry for today

and the future.

Signed this 9th day of February 2023.

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Alaina L. Black, Board President Rachel Sanders, Interim Superintendent

Ms. LaSalle made a motion to approve the National School Breakfast Week Proclamation for the week of March 6-10, 2023. Mr. Foulcard made a second, all in favor the motion carried.

## Item 5. Receive update on the STAR Academy Program at Franklin Jr. High School.

In the summer of 2022, principal Ina received a phone call from the State Representative Vincent St. Blanc indicating that he had a potentially awesome opportunity for Franklin Junior High School. After visiting with Representative St. Blanc and Mayor Eugene Foulcard of Franklin, he was informed that Governor John Bel Edwards was awarded $6 or $7 million for Star Academies.

The Star Academy essentially is a project-based learning environment where students work in conjunction with one another to do hands-on activities to cover the state standards for that grade level. It was an opportunity for kids to have a nontraditional way of learning through hands-on based education. Last year, Franklin Junior High School was awarded a million dollars, which covers the program for three years at $0 of cost to the district.

Teachers of the STAR Academy at Franklin Junior High School enlightened the Board on how they felt about the program. It is an awesome program that is progressing in a positive direction. Students are very engaged, eager to learn, and loves the hands-on experience.

Principal Ina commended his “STAR Academy Crew” for everything they have done with the program; he commended Board Member Joseph Foulcard for his assistance and visits to the school; and he also commended the Board for allowing the opportunity to have the academy at Franklin Junior High School.

After discussions from the Board, Principal Ina stated that the program started in November 2022. He is looking forward to a positive impact on standardized testing. He spoke to representative St. Blanc about scheduling a date to have a formal introduction, which will be opened to the public.

## Item 6. Discussion and any action on honors/AP classes in junior high schools.

Mr. Mancuso presented information to the Board regarding honor classes for junior high schools. He is hoping the instructional staff will review its scheduling exclusion and make efforts to reinstate in the schools where enrollment numbers would allow it. In his opinion, honor classes should offer math, English language arts, science, and social studies for sixth, seventh and eighth grade levels. He is not seeking action from the Board at this time. However, he would like for junior high administrators and instructional support staff to consider the topic and explore the benefits and drawbacks of offering honor sections of the briefly mentioned grades in class subjects. Then report back to the board at a future meeting if honors classes can be a standard practice in all of our junior high schools.

## Item 7. Receive update on status of School Climate Survey.

Mr. Mancuso presented information to the Board regarding School Climate Survey. He indicated that surveys can be used to produce school and district level scores on various indicators of school climate from the perspectives of students, teachers, non-instructional school staff, principals, parents and guardians. Title I schools are required to develop an academic improvement plan. In the process of developing an academic improvement plan for schools in St. Mary Parish, the school staff surveys parents of children enrolled in the school. Mr. Mancuso stated it is his understanding that school climate surveys were at one time administered in every St. Mary Parish school to every teacher and every parent with a child in the system. He deems this can be an important tool to allow teachers and parents an opportunity to offer feedback on the status of their respective schools. Mr. Mancuso requested that St. Mary district again consider district wide school climate surveys. He is not seeking action from the Board at this time. However, he would like to revisit this topic at a future meeting. After some discussion with district staff, investigate the details, and work through the challenges with implementing these types of surveys.

# Committee:

Schedule time and date for School Uniform Committee Meeting.

Ms. LaSalle requested to schedule a School Uniform Committee Meeting to discuss backpack options as regards to safety. The committee agreed to meet on Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, LA 70522.

# Staff Report:

# Chief Financial Officer’s Report:

## Sale Tax Update

Mr. Perry indicated that he did not receive the sales tax collections report this month. Therefore, he had nothing to report.

## Financial Statements (Major Funds Only):

The Board was provided financial statements for major funds only to review at their leisure.

## Other Significant Items:

Insurance renewals for building and contents coverage, boiler and machinery coverage, and workers compensation will be presented at the March meeting.

## Maintenance Committee Report:

Mr. Wiese reported that letters will be sent to principals regarding special projects for the next school year. Maintenance District Committee meetings to review special projects are normally held at the end of April or the beginning of May before the May regular school board meeting.

## Superintendent’s Report:

Dr. Sanders reported that Ms. Estay in the Human Resource Department will travel to several universities from February through April, to meet and greet new graduates in the College of Education to encourage them to consider a career in St. Mary. Human Resources will offer another substitute teacher class on February 15th.

Safety and incident prevention are top priorities. Therefore, the district has implemented additional safety measures for athletic events. Each of the steps that schools will take to protect students and the general public at sporting events, were listed in a press release and sent home through J text.Student Services Supervisor, Mr. Ronnie Louis and At-Risk Interventionist, Ms. Fallon Michell delivered one additional new handheld metal detector to each school last week to help this move to ramp up school safety. Bus Safety expectationswill be revisited and practiced with students throughout the spring semester.

The district's new School Resource Officers completed their training on Friday, February 3rd and hit the ground running in St. Mary Schools on Monday, February 6th. Thus far only positive feedback has been received from school administrators.

Middle and high school counselors have begun meeting with students to start the scheduling process for the 2023-24 school year. Counselors have attended several conferences such as the ACT Summit and the Jumpstart convention to ensure that all students are receiving the most current information when deciding on coursework for the upcoming school year, especially pertaining to Career and Technical Education and university dual enrollment. Schools are making plans to host parent nights for middle and high school students and their families to discuss scheduling as well.

Ms. Vaccarella and the technology department have completed the switch and access point upgrades in all schools. This upgrade increases available network bandwidth, network performance, and better the overall functionality of devices within St. Mary Schools.

The special education department is making sure that all students with special needs have the testing and classroom accommodations in place and part of daily practice in preparation for upcoming state testing. Ms. McClarity invited everyone to the Special Olympics track meet which will be held on March 31st at Franklin High School stadium beginning at 10 a.m.

In closing, Dr. Sanders stated that today marks the halfway point for the third nine weeks, which means progress reports went home with students today. Early release allowed teachers to participate in conferences with parents of any student in danger of failing any course. All parents with any concerns about their child’s progress report are encouraged to contact teachers or administrators.

## Board Attorney Bob Hammonds

Attorney Hammonds indicated that the opening of applications for the Superintendent position is scheduled for Tuesday, April 4, 2023. All applications will be reviewed for completeness and qualifications of the applicants, and then forwarded to all the board members to carefully review. The next step in the process would be for the Board to determine how many applicants to interview and when to schedule interviews.

Discussion followed where the Board discussed changing the deadline date for submission of superintendent applications.

Mrs. Dennis made a motion to add to the agenda the item of changing the date for submission of Superintendent applications. Ms. Jones made a second, all in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Paradee made a motion to change the deadline for submission of Superintendent applications Friday, March 17, 2023, post marked on or before that date. Mr. Mancuso made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

A Special board meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 27, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room, at the Central Office Complex, in Centerville, Louisiana, to discuss procedures of the Superintendent selection process.

Attorney Hammonds reported that he has finished the article in the desegregation case, which should be uploaded to the St. Mary Parish School Board website by Monday, February 13th.

# Any other Business as Allowed by Act 131

None

# Closing

## Resolutions of Respect

Ms. Estay read the Resolutions of Respect for the late Alicia Robicheaux (retired school cafeteria manager), Shirley Thibodaux (retired school bus driver).

## Adjournment:

With there being no further business to address, Ms. Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Anslem made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.