Centerville, Louisiana

December 8, 2022

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in regular session on Thursday, December 8, 2022, at 5:00 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville,

**Present:** Mr. Joseph C. Foulcard Jr., Ms. Tammie L. Moore, Ms. Debra R. Jones, Mrs. Ginger S. Griffin, Ms. Marilyn P. LaSalle, Mr. Dwight D. Barbier, Mrs. Alaina L. Black, Mr. Roland H. Verret, Mr. Kenneth E. Alfred.

**Absent:** Mr. Wayne J. Deslatte, Mr. Michael E. Taylor.

**Invocation**

Ms. Estay gave the Invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Introduction of Students and Employees of the Month:**

**J. S. Aucoin Elementary School:**

Principal Shantell Toups introduced 5th grade student Maireny Padilla, as student of the month as J. S. Aucoin Elementary School. She is truly a model student who excels not only academically, but also exhibits great character. She has been at J. S. Aucoin Elementary since Pre-K and entered the EL program as a kindergartener. In two short years, she scored proficient on the ELPT test and has maintained the Principal’s List and Honor Roll throughout her elementary career. Maireny was one of the “Student of the Year” candidates. She is a leader in the classroom and takes initiative to assist her Spanish-speaking classmates who need support in English. She plays the clarinet in band and participates in the school’s Garden Club. Outside of school, Maireny  likes to play board games at home with her family. Her favorite subject is math and when she grows up, she wants to be a math teacher. Principal Toups proudly announced Maireny Padilla as student of the month at J. S. Aucoin Elementary School.

Principal Shantell Toups introduced EL paraprofessional Teresa Quintanilla, as employee of the month at J. S. Aucoin Elementary School. Ms. Quintanilla has been employed at Aucoin Elementary for 21 years as an EL paraprofessional. She has taken on many roles and responsibilities due to the large Spanish-speaking school population.  She has continually strived to improve her knowledge and talents by attending professional development provided by the parish and through translator-interpreter training at the state level. She steps into any position or task she is asked to fulfill without question. She supports the entire community by being available to parents and students during the school day and after-school events and activities. Ms. Quintanilla is heavily relied on as the primary communicator with J. S. Aucoin families. She has even translated many documents for the district. She works closely with J. S. Aucoin families and builds relationships with faculty, students, and parents. Ms. Quintanilla will be retiring at the end of this school year which makes this presentation bittersweet. She will be missed tremendously next year. Principal Toups proudly presented Ms. Teresa Quintanilla as employee of the month at J. S. Aucoin Elementary School.

**LaGrange Elementary School:**

Principal Heidi Mouton introduced 5th grade student Yasser Abdulla, as student of the month at Lagrange Elementary School. He was also selected as the 5th grade student of the year. Yasser Abdulla is one of a kind! He is intelligent and has been able to maintain a 3.8 GPA. He is such a wonderful role model for all of Lagrange Elementary students. Principal Mouton said, “If there is ever a time I need someone to represent the right way of doing things, I look to Yasser.” He is honest, kind, and a friend to everyone. No matter what challenges come his way, Yasser is able to focus on what he knows is right. Principal Mouton stated she will certainly miss seeing Yasser’s smile in the hallways at Lagrange when he heads over to the junior high next school year, but she is excited to see what great things he will accomplish. Principal Mouton proudly congratulated Yasser as Lagrange Elementary’s Student of the Month.

Principal Heidi Mouton introduced Mrs. Margaret Shivers, as employee of the month at Lagrange Elementary School. Mrs. Shivers was also selected as Lagrange Elementary’s Teacher of the Year for this school year. She is accompanied this evening by her husband. Mrs. Shivers has served as an educator for 31 years. Nineteen of these years were at Hernandez Elementary School in Franklin, and the past seven years have been at Lagrange Elementary. She teaches first grade math and is completely devoted to the school and students. Mrs. Shivers is one of those people who truly wants to help. She has a genuine concern for people and enjoys crocheting things for others during her time away from work. The best thing about Mrs. Shivers is that in her classroom, she takes her students’ learning personal. When they fail, she feels like she has failed. When they succeed, she celebrates and shares her excitement. Whether it takes long evenings or even weekends at school to get the job done, that’s what she will do. Principal Mouton thanked Mrs. Shivers for being there with her when she first stepped foot into Lagrange as curriculum facilitator. Now as an administrator, she is so thankful to have Mrs. Shivers on her team. Principal Mouton proudly congratulated Mrs. Shivers on her huge accomplishment!

**Approval of Amended Agenda.**

Mrs. Black made a motion and Mr. Barbier made a second to approve the amended agenda as presented. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Approval of Official School Board Minutes.**

Ms. LaSalle offered the motion and Ms. Jones offered the second to approve the official school board minutes for the regular meeting held on November 10, 2022. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Approval of Consent Agenda.**

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

**Item 1.** \*Approve banking resolutions authorizing signatories at various schools as a result of recent appointments.

**Item 3.** \*Authorize RFP or negotiation process for property insurance for the year commencing April 1, 2023.

**Item 4.** \* Authorize RFP or negotiation process for workers compensation insurance for the year commencing May 1, 2023.

Mr. Barbier offered a motion and Mrs. Griffin offered a second to approve remaining items on the Consent Agenda, as presented by Dr. Bagwell. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Appearances:**

Recognition of St. Mary Parish School Board Christmas Card artwork winners.

Superintendent Bagwell recognized honorable mention artwork winners; Jaiden Partain, 12th grader of Morgan City High School, Isabella Benedietto, 5th grader of Berwick Elementary School, and Jessa Aucoin, 3rd grader of Centerville High School. Each honorable mention winner received a certificate and a framed copy of their design.

Courtney Trosclair, 11th grader of West St. Mary High School was recognized as the winner of St. Mary Parish School Board Christmas Card contest. Ms. Trosclair received a $75 cash award, a certificate, and a framed copy of her design. Additionally, the card served as this year’s official Christmas card for St. Mary Parish Schools.

**Business Affairs:**

**Item 2.** Approve acceptance of audit report for year ended June 30, 2022, as presented by Mr. Chris Miller, CPA with Darnall, Sikes, Gardes & Frederick.

As a result of the audit for financial statements, there was an unmodified clean opinion and the highest opinion that can be given by an independent auditor.

In regard to the performance of the audit procedures, there were no audit adjustments proposed to the financial statements. Information received from the St. Mary Parish School Board accounting staff was accurate and unchanged.

Overall, the fiscal year 2022 was a successful year from the financial standpoint. There were improved sales tax collections, stable revenues from federal sources, Ad valorem taxes, and MFP funding were all stable as compared to the previous year. Expenditures were very comparable to the prior year, it stayed within the originally adopted budget and there were no budget violations noted.

Internal controls testing for compliance with state laws had one minor finding in regard to the bid law. It was noted that the St. Mary Parish School Board did not receive an affidavit prior to the bid/award process. Therefore, the School Board was not in compliance with the Louisiana Public Bid Law. Although it was not done during the bidding process as required by the Louisiana Public Bid Law, management of the St. Mary Parish School Board did obtain the required signed affidavit during the course of the audit for fiscal year ended June 30, 2021.

The report for internal controls and compliance regarding two large federal programs, were reviewed and tested in great detail for specific requirements. There were no findings on internal controls and compliance with the federal programs. It was an unmodified clean opinion issued for the year.

It was noted that there were some differences this year in the data reporting to the Louisiana Department of Education. Mr. Perry will research those items, and if required the information submitted to the Department of Education will be amended.

After a two-year COVID pause, the Legislative Auditors have resumed a requirement that local governments are now again subjected to additional compliance testing in approximately 15 operational areas. The testing is very extensive and is used to help identify any operational deficiencies that might exit from a financial and general oversight perspective. In regard to the statewide agreed upon procedures, there were no items noted that were worthy of comments and no reportable findings in that area.

In summary, the results of the audit in many testing procedures were very positive.

Mr. Verret made a motion and Mrs. Black made a second to approve the audit report for year ended June 30, 2022, as presented by Mr. Chris Miller. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 5.** Receive update on District II and District III roofing projects (ESSER Funds).

Architect, Carl Blum reported that roofing projects were divided into four different phases. Phase I of District II schools include Berwick High, Patterson High, and Berwick Junior High. Phase I of District III schools include Morgan City High, Morgan City Junior High and J.S. Aucoin Elementary. Phase II of District II schools include Berwick Elementary, Bayou Vista Elementary, Hattie Watts Elementary and the St. Mary Alternative Program. Phase II of District III include Wyandotte Elementary, J. B. Maitland Elementary, and M. E. Norman Elementary. In moving forward with the final plans, Phrase I is almost completed, and Phase II is about 20 percent completed.

No action required from the Board.

**Item 6.** Approve change order for District I and District II Front Door Security Project (ESSER Funds).

Mr. Carl Blum asked the Board to approve the change order for District I and District II Front Door Security Project for a cost of $17,580.05.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion and Ms. LaSalle made a second to approve change order for District I and District II Front Door Security Project funding with ESSER Funds for a cost of $17,580.05. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 7.** Receive update on Morgan City High School Stadium Renovations Project.

The Maintenance District III Committee met a few months ago to discuss a plan that Mr. Carl Blum prepared for the Morgan City High School Stadium project. Mr. Blum’s original plan at that time estimated at $2 million. Mr. Blum presented a new proposal of $1.2 million that would align with the Board’s budget. The base bid would include the stadium seating area with ramps and railings, stadium understructure, fencing, remove existing latex track surface and replace with latest urethane technology, less the lighting for an estimate of $678,000 for construction cost and $729,000 total project cost including the architectural fees. The remaining four poles for stadium and track lighting would be priced per unit on an alternate budget. Mr. Blum stated that the project is scheduled to be completed by August 2023. However, the Maintenance District III Committee would have to meet and approve the finalized plans of the project.

**Item 8.** Discussion and/or action concerning Board participation in the class action lawsuit against manufacturer of vaping devices.

Board Attorney, Bob Hammonds stated that a law firm in California reached out to his office seeking school board clients to participate in the class action lawsuit against vaping. The lawsuit would have no cost to the school board but could benefit from receiving monetary damages that could be used to provide educational service to the students. However, if the school board prevails in the lawsuit, a 25 percent contingency fee will be required to pay the California law firm. Attorney Hammonds indicated that the deadline to join is approaching soon and he recommend that the Board participate in this lawsuit against vaping.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion and Ms. Jones made a second to approve participation in the class action lawsuit against manufacturer of vaping devices. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 9.** Discuss and take appropriate action regarding audit results relative to technology and maintenance funding.

Mr. Perry reported that technology has no source of funding at the current time, and recommended that the Board designate $2 million for technology funding.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion to designate $2 million for technology funding, as presented by Mr. Perry. Ms. Moore made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

Mr. Perry recommended that the Board transfer $500,000 from the general fund to Maintenance District I, II and III capital projects.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion to transfer $500,000 to Maintenance District I, II, and III capital projects, as presented by Mr. Perry. Mr. Barbier made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

**Reports**

**Committee:**

Maintenance District II Committee Meeting-December 8, 2022, at 4:30 p.m.

Mrs. Griffin stated that the Maintenance District II Committee met prior to the board meeting at 4:30 p. m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, Louisiana, to discuss items as follows:

**Item 1.** Consider funding the relocation of the Patterson High School softball scoreboard for an estimated cost of $14,000.

The Maintenance District II Committee voted to approve funding as described in Item 1, which is now being recommended for the full Board’s approval.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion to approve funding the relocation of the Patterson High School softball scoreboard for an estimated cost of $14,000 funded for special projects. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 2.** Consider funding Patterson High School football field improvements and take appropriate action.

The Maintenance District II Committee voted to approve funding Patterson High School football field improvements for an estimated cost of $150,000 for capital projects, which is now being recommended for the full Board’s approval.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion and to approve Patterson High School football field improvements for an estimated cost of $150,000 for capital projects. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 3**. Consider designation of funds to purchase property for Berwick High School softball field.

Mrs. Griffin stated that Item 3 was not discussed since it was a request made by Mr. Taylor, who was unable to attend the Maintenance District II Committee Meeting.

**Chief Financial Officer’s Report**

**Sales Tax Update:**

Mr. Perry reported that the sales tax collections for five months into the fiscal year estimated at 7 percent favorable.

**Financial Statements (Major Funds Only)**

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

**Other Significant Items:**

Fiscal Risk Assessment was rated excellent at 30 percent for revenues in the General Fund.

Dr. Bagwell first acknowledged outgoing board members who are serving in their final meeting for St. Mary Parish Schools. Members presented with a certificate of appreciation are as follows:

Mr. Dwight D. Barbier served on the Board for the last 4 years.

Mr. Kenneth E. Alfred served 8 years on the Board and also served as the current president.

Mr. Roland H. Verret served 20 years on the Board representing District 11.

Members not present: Mr. Wayne J. Deslatte served 34 and Mr. Michael E. Taylor served 32 years on the Board.

Dr. Bagwell thanked each of them for their leadership service and for always putting St. Mary’s teachers, staff, and students first.

**Farewell Remarks:**

Mr. Barbier thanked the Board and constituents of District 10 for their support to allow him to serve as board member.

Mr. Verret stated he was very appreciative to serve on the Board for 20 years, and he thanked everyone for their support.

Mr. Alfred thanked teachers and principals for their dedication to St. Mary’s students over the years. He thanked the Board for allowing him to serve as the Board’s president, and a special thanks to Mrs. Griffin and Attorney Bob Hammonds for their support. Lastly, he praised Dr. Bagwell for her accomplishments as Superintendent, and presented her with a gift of appreciation from the current Board.

**Superintendent’s Report:**

Dr. Bagwell reported on November 16th, the Louisiana Department of Education released performance score data for schools and districts. According to their release, St. Mary’s overall district performance score declined slightly from 82.3 to 80.2 ranking the school system as 26 in the state. The report also showed that St. Mary continued to outperform the state's performance score, which was 77.1, as well as surrounding districts including Iberia, Assumption, and St. Martin parishes. Several parishes nearby were significantly impacted by Hurricane Ida and therefore did not report district performance scores in 2022. St. Mary had 12 schools that received the designation for honor roll status for attaining a letter grade A or B. Those schools receiving a letter grade A included Berwick High School, Morgan City High School, Patterson High School and Franklin High School. Honor roll schools with the letter B included Aucoin Elementary, Berwick Elementary, Bayou Vista Elementary, Hattie Watts Elementary, Centerville High, West St. Mary High, Wyandotte Elementary, and Berwick Junior High. Eight schools were named as Top Gains schools for student progress index at a grade level of A, and included Aucoin Elementary, Bayou Vista Elementary, Berwick Elementary, Foster Elementary, Franklin Junior High, Hattie Watts Elementary, M. E. Norman Elementary, and Wyandotte Elementary. Additionally, schools with Opportunity Honoree status for outperforming 90 percent of all schools across various student groups, and receiving no intervention labels included Aucoin Elementary, Franklin High School, Morgan City High School and Patterson High School. Lastly, Patterson Junior High School was one of 41 schools in the state to be recognized as a Louisiana Comeback Campus for making significant gains in ELA and math throughout the pandemic. On December 19th Patterson Junior High School will be visited by state leaders and officially honored for their work in accelerating learning through some of the most difficult times in public education. Early dismissal for the Christmas holidays will be on Wednesday, December 21st, with middle schools and high schools dismissing at 12:30 p.m. and elementary schools at 1:00 p.m. Parents are reminded that students will return on Friday, January 6, 2023, while teachers and staff return from the holidays for professional workshops on Thursday, January 5th. In closing, Dr. Bagwell wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

**Set time and date of Maintenance District III Committee Meeting**

The Maintenance District III Committee scheduled a meeting for Monday, December 19, 2022 at 1:30 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, to approve revised proposals and discuss bid process for the Morgan City High School Stadium Renovations Project.

**Any other Business as Allowed by Act 131**

None

**Closing**

**Resolutions of Respect**

Ms. Estay read the Resolutions of Respect for the late Charles Arnie (retired junior high school principal), Rickey Buck (retired elementary school teacher), and Kathrine Neau (retired school librarian), Edward Payton, Jr. (retired school board member and superintendent), and Mary Wells (retired school secretary).

**Adjournment**

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