Centerville, Louisiana

October 13, 2022

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in regular session on Thursday, October 13, 2022, at 5:00 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:** Ms. Debra R. Jones, Mrs. Ginger S. Griffin, Mr. Michael E. Taylor, Mr. Roland H. Verret, Mr. Kenneth E. Alfred, and Ms. Marilyn P. LaSalle (arrived at 5:11 p.m.)

**Absent:** Mr. Joseph C. Foulcard Jr., Ms. Tammie L. Moore, Mr. Wayne J. Deslatte, Mr. Dwight D. Barbier, and Mrs. Alaina L. Black.

A quorum was not reached at 5:00 p.m. The Board will address non-voting agenda items until a quorum is reached.

# 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:

**Berwick Junior High School**

Principal Ryan Taylor introduced 8th grader, Kamry Landry as student of the month at Berwick Junior High School. She was accompanied this evening by her parents. Kamry is actively involved in the Beta Club and Insight. She is a hard worker, kind, and always willing to help others. Kamry is a role model for her peers and a perfect example of someone who strives to do the right thing with the right attitude. Principal Taylor proudly presented Kamry as student of the month at Berwick Junior High School.

Principal Ryan Taylor introduced Librarian, Laura Rentrop as employee of the month at Berwick Junior High School. She was accompanied this evening by two of her daughters. Ms. Rentrop earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Nicholls State University in 1987. She spent 10 years at Berwick Elementary teaching 5th grade. The next nine years, she spent raising her three daughters. In 2007, she returned teaching English at Berwick Junior High for another 12 years. Ms. Rentrop was named “Teacher of the Year” in 2015-2016 at Berwick Junior High School and at the district level. In 2019, she earned her librarian certification from Northwestern State University and became librarian. Ms. Rentrop has dedicated 25 years to educating children of Berwick. She has been the Beta sponsor for the last 14, and she is on her fourth year as the Site Technology Leader. She is a pleasure to work with and is always willing to lend a helping hand, watching over students, covering classes, etc. She continuously offers support to whomever is in need. Ms. Rentrop is truly a blessing to Berwick Junior High School.

**Morgan City Junior High School**

Principal Crystal Daigle introduced 8th grader, Carmen Johnson as student of the month at Morgan City Junior High School. She was accompanied this evening by her father, her mother, and her three sisters. Carmen has willingly volunteered for afterschool events without anyone asking her to. She is respectful to everyone and gives 100 percent with everything that she does.

Principal Crystal Daigle introduced 6th grade teacher, Jacqueline Nguyen as employee of the month at Morgan City High School. She was not able to attend the meeting tonight. Ms. Nguyen is an asset to the Morgan City Junior High School faculty where she is head of the Social Studies department. She goes out of her way to help everyone, but especially with making sure new teachers are supported.

A quorum was reached at 5:11 p.m., as Ms. Marilyn P. LaSalle entered the meeting. Regular session will begin with approval of amended agenda.

# Approval of Amended Agenda.

There was no amended agenda to approve.

# Approval of Official School Board Minutes.

Mr. Taylor offered the motion and Ms. LaSalle offered the second to approve the official school board minutes for the regular meeting held on September 8, 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:

# New Business

## Personnel:

**Item 1.** \*Approve updated job descriptions for:

A. Computer Technician I

B. Computer Technician II

C. Computer Technician III

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

# Appearances:

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Ms. Jennifer Collins-Lanceslin, with Community of Friends, Inc. invited the Board to a National Disability Employment Awareness event to support individuals with disabilities. This event is free to the public with lunch provided, and will be held at the Baldwin Community Center on Friday, October 14, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There will be several guest speakers participating in this event from surrounding organizations.

# Business Affairs:

## Item 2 A-D. Consider proposed January 1, 2023 renewals for the following employee benefit plans and take appropriate action.

Mr. James Perez of DJW Insurance Agency, Inc. reported with the exception of mandated benefit changes and RX formulary adjustments, the Commercial and Medicare Advantage Plan (MAP) benefits remained unchanged for the 2023 plan year. Item 2 A and 2 B will be discussed together given the following options, which include funding and/or premium changes:

## 2 A. The Commercial Group Health Plan is a fully insured plan through Blue Cross Blue Cross Blue Shield, Louisiana, no change in benefits.

## 2 B. The Medicare Advantage Plan (EGWP) is an employer group waiver plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana, no change in premiums.

**Option 1** – all premiums remain unchanged for 2023 and no additional employer costs.

**Option 2 –** Medicare Advantage Plan (MAP) premiums remain unchanged for the 2023 renewal. The Commercial Plan moves to a self-funded arrangement with a specific stop- loss deductible of $200,000, aggregate stop-loss with a 25 percent corridor, and a 12/15 contract basis. The recommended increase in commercial plan employer contributions is 5.5 percent fully absorbed by the Board and a pre-funding of the 25 percent aggregate corridor, which amounts to $3 million to be transferred from the general fund to claims reserve.

Mr. Taylor inquired about the 5.5 percent increase for the Commercial Group Health Plan.

Mr. Perez replied to ensure a sufficient reserve for the first year. However, it is not mandatory, and the Board could choose to not include the 5.5 percent increase and not include the pre-funding of the aggregate corridor. He stated he is being cautious considering the claims activities over the last three years.

Ms. LaSalle asked Mr. Perez if he was proposing that the Board switch to a self-funded plan at this time.

Mr. Perez replied that he is giving the Board an option to remain fully-insured with no change in premium and no additional cost to the Board or choose the self-funded plan with additional cost to the Board.

Ms. Jones asked Mr. Perez to explain the cost of the stop-loss insurance.

Mr. Perez responded that self-funding could be fully self-funded, which means you incur full risk, regardless of the claims trend, and with no reinsurance protection. However, he did not recommend that. Therefore, Option 2 is more of a partially self-funded program that would carry stop loss protection for a specific plan.

Ms. Jones asked Mr. Perez if he was recommending Option 2 to the Board.

Mr. Perez replied that he deems self-funding as a better option for the long term. However, it is a financial decision that only the Board can choose. If the Board decides to move to self-funded, they will have to be in a financial position to incur additional expenses and willing to take some risk especially for the first year.

Mr. Alfred stated since a decision has to be made now, it is best to continue with option 1, where the Commercial Plan and Medicare Advantage Plan (MAP) would remain the same at no extra cost from the Board or employees.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion and Mr. Verret made a second to approve option 1, all premiums remain unchanged for 2023 and $0 additional employer costs.

After more discussion, the Board voted on the motion and the motion carried.

## 2 C. Voluntary Group Dental Plan

Mr. Perez presented three proposals received for the renewal of the voluntary group dental insurance, which is totally funded by employee payroll deductions. Option 1 was offered through the current dental plan with Ameritas, which included a 15 percent rate increase for this year’s renewal. Option 2 was offered through Delta Dental with similar benefits as the current plan with Ameritas, and a 2-year rate guarantee of less than one percent of the increase proposed by Ameritas. Option 3 was also offered through Delta Dental with a 3-year rate guarantee under a three percent rate increase. Mr. Perez recommended that the Board consider Option 3 with Delta Dental, for a rate increase of $1.07 for employee only and a $2.83 rate increase for employee + 1 or more.

Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the Voluntary Group Dental Plan with Delta Dental (Option 3) with the 3-year rate guarantee. Ms. Jones made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

## 2 D. Voluntary Group Vision Plan

Mr. Perez reported that the Voluntary Group Vision Plan has been with Blue Cross through Davis Vision for the last eight years. He did review other bids but did not find a competitive bid that included Walmart vision, which is used by the majority of school board employees with the vision plan. He recommended the Board to renew with the current plan through Davis Vision for a slight increase of 72 cents for employee, and $1.85 increase for employee, spouse, children, or family.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion to approve the renewal for the Voluntary Group Vision Plan with Davis Vision, as recommended by Mr. Perez. Ms. Jones made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

## Item 3. Receive update on air conditioning at Franklin High School

Ms. Jones asked for an update on the air conditioning system at Franklin High School.

Mr. Wiese provided the Board with a chilled water plant diagram, which explained the basics of how the cooling system works in the schools. Mr. Wiese indicated that the City of Franklin repaired several water lines near Franklin High School over several weekends that caused water supply issues, which is required to operate the air conditioning system. The chillers were manually reset on Monday morning, which takes a long time for the building to cool off.

Ms. Jones questioned if the air conditioning problem was resolved at the Franklin High, since the City of Franklin fixed the water issues.

Mr. Wiese replied “Yes,” everything has been corrected and the air conditioning system is working appropriately.

Ms. LaSalle inquired if the City of Franklin communicates with the school board to inform when to water will be out of service.

Dr. Sanders replied that she spoke to Mayor Foulcard with the City of Franklin, and she has been added to the call list to receive notifications for upcoming incidents.

## Item 4. Discuss and take necessary action on bids received for the West St. Mary Chiller replacement (ESSER Funds)

Mr. Wiese indicated that bids were scheduled to open today at 2:00 p.m. However, due to bid clarifications the bid date has been postponed until November 3, 2022. No action is required from the Board at this time.

## Item 5. Approve new mileage rate for bus owner/operator as a result of Act 661 (SB 57)

Mr. Louis, Supervisor of Student Services, stated that Act 661 of the Louisiana legislature has increased the bus owner/operator mileage rates from $1.64 to $1.75. The new law changed the compensation rate to consider the capacity of passengers instead of length. Currently, the school system has 10 owner/operator buses out of 62 bus drivers. Mr. Louis asked the Board to approve the increase of the new mileage bus rate, as according to Act 661.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion to approve new mileage rate from $1.64 to $1.75 for bus owner/operators as a result of Act 661 (SB 57), as presented by Mr. Louis. Ms. Jones made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

## Item 6. Consider and take appropriate action regarding funding air conditioning and 6 camera systems on all future agreements for leased buses.

Mr. Louis, Supervisor of Student Services, asked that the Board consider including air conditioning and 6 camera systems to all leased buses upon renewal of the lease agreement. The current leased cost without air conditioning is $21,800.00 per bus. Currently, the school system has 52 leased buses. By adding air conditioning and 6 camera systems, the new cost would be increased by $1,000.00 for air conditioning and $1,000.00 for camera systems for an annual total of $23,800.00 per bus. Mr. Louis stated if Ross Bus & Equipment Sales gets the agreement, they will be responsible for the maintenance, repairs, and equipment.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion and Ms. Jones made a second to approve funding air conditioning and 6 camera systems on all leased buses upon renewal of lease agreement. All in favor and the motion carried.

## Item 7. Consider approving school bus owner/operators bus insurance allotment from $5,000 to $6,000 per year.

Mr. Louis, Supervisor of Student Services, asked that the Board consider approving the increase of owner/operator bus insurance allotments from $5,000.00 to $6,000.00 per year. This increase was included in the recently adopted budget. Currently, there are 10 owner/operator buses on routes.

Mr. Perry mentioned when he presented the bus insurance allotments at the Budget Workshop, he made a mistake by saying the bus insurance allotments increased from $4,000.00 to $5,000.00. However, it was budgeted correctly from $5,000.00 to $6,000.00.

­Mrs. Griffin made a motion to approve school bus owner/operators bus insurance allotment from $5,000 to $6,000 per year. Mr. Taylor made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

## Item 8. Proclamation(s):

**A.** School Bus Safety Week (October 17-21, 2022)

Mr. Louis asked that the Board approve the proclamation as follows:

**Proclamation**

**WHEREAS**,  National School Bus Safety Week is an annual event held during the 4th week of October to promote school bus safety; and

**WHEREAS**,  every school day in St. Mary Parish, 62 school bus drivers and other transportation staff safely transport students to and from

school; and

**WHEREAS,**  the Transportation Services, of St. Mary Parish, on behalf of its members, school board, and with the assistance of its school bus operators, daily transport more than 5,500 students;

**WHEREAS**,  Bus Safety Week is a time to recognize the importance of our parish school bus drivers and appreciate the invaluable contributions they make to education and student safety;

**NOW Therefore**, the St. Mary Parish School Board does hereby proclaim October 17-21, 2022, as **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK** in St. Mary Parish and urge all citizens to support the efforts of bus drivers in reducing preventable injuries to our children.

**CERTIFICATE**

I, the undersigned President and Secretary of St. Mary Parish School Board, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true copy of a proclamation adopted at its regular Board Meeting on October 13, 2022, at which time a quorum was present and that same is in full force and effect.

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Kenneth E. Alfred Teresa T. Bagwell, Ed. D.

President Superintendent

Mr. Taylor made a motion and Ms. Jones made a second to approve the School Bus Safety Proclamation for the week of October 17-21, 2022. All in favor and the motion carried.

## B. Veterans Day (November 11, 2022)

On behalf of Ms. Monceaux in her absence, Ms. Mitchell read aloud the Proclamation as follows:

**Proclamation of Veterans Day**

**WHEREAS**, November 11th serves as an official day of recognition, honoring the service and sacrifice of the men and women of our nation’s armed services; and

**WHEREAS**, our nation’s military has demonstrated unceasing courage and honor in securing the freedoms guaranteed to all Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard continue to stand ready to serve when called to duty; and

**WHEREAS**, the nation respectfully pays tribute to soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in remembrance of their bravery and selfless acts of service; an

**WHEREAS**, residents of St. Mary Parish have honorably served in the armed forces and remain actively deployed in defense of our nation; and

**WHEREAS**, it is especially significant for educators to demonstrate and instill respect and reverence for the men and woman who have dedicated their lives to the defense of freedom,

**NOW LET IT THEREFORE BE RESOLVED** that the St. Mary Parish School Board recognizes the contributions of our nation’s military and devoted service to citizens of the United States. The board applauds parish schools who commemorate Veterans Day through ceremonies, classroom activities and moments of silence honoring the heroes who have selflessly committed their lives to military service to ensure the safety and security of the United States of America.

Signed this 13th day of October, 2022.

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Kenneth E. Alfred, President Dr. Teresa T. Bagwell, Superintendent

Mr. Verret made a motion and Ms. LaSalle made a second to approve the Veterans Day Proclamation on November 11, 2022. All in favor and the motion carried.

## C. World Blindness Awareness Month (White Cane Day)

Ms. Jennifer Collins-Lancelin read aloud the Proclamation as follows:

**White Cane Awareness Day Proclamation**

**WHEREAS,** the white cane, which every blind citizen of St. Mary Parish has the right to carry, demonstrates and symbolizes the ability to achieve a full and independent life and the capacity to work productively in competitive employment; and

**WHEREAS**, the white cane, by allowing every blind person to move freely and safely from place to place, makes it possible for the blind to fully participate in and contribute to our society and to live the lives they want; and

**WHEREAS**, every citizen should be aware that the law requires that motorists and cyclists exercise appropriate caution when approaching a blind person carrying a white cane; and

**WHEREAS,** St. Mary Parish law also calls upon employers, both public and private, to be aware of and utilize the employment skills of our blind citizens by recognizing their worth as individuals and their productive capacities; and

**WHEREAS,** celebrating White Cane Awareness Day allows us to appreciate the accomplishments of our students with vision impairments, their parents, teachers, and staff in St. Mary Parish Schools;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, **BE IT RESOLVED** that the St. Mary Parish School Board, does hereby proclaim October 15, 2022, as

**WHITE CANE AWARENESS DAY**

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Kenneth E. Alfred Teresa T. Bagwell, Ed. D.

President Superintendent

October 13, 2022

DATE

Ms. Jones made a motion and Mr. Taylor made a second to approve the World Blindness Awareness Month (White Cane Day) Proclamation, as presented by Ms. Jennifer Collins-Lanceslin. All in favor and the motion carried.

## Item 9. Memorandum of Understanding between the St. Mary Parish School Board and the St. Mary/Vermilion CAA Head Start Program with provisions of Public Law 102 – 119 (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Public Law 97 – 35 (Federal Head Start Act)

On behalf of Ms. Almetra Franklin in her absence, Mr. David Teno, Fatherhood Director with St. Mary CAA Head Start, asked the Board for approval on the Memorandum of Understanding between the St. Mary Parish School Board and the St. Mary/Vermilion CAA Head Start Program.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the St. Mary Parish School Board and the St. Mary/Vermilion CAA Head Start Program with provisions of Public Law 102 – 119 (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Public Law 97 – 35 (Federal Head Start Act). Ms. Jones made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

## Item 10. Memorandum of Understanding between the St. Mary/Vermillion CAA Head Start Program and the St. Mary Parish School Board.

On behalf of Ms. Almetra Franklin in her absence, Mr. David Teno, Fatherhood Director with St. Mary CAA Head Start, asked the Board for approval on the Memorandum of Understanding between the St. Mary/Vermillion CAA Head Start Program and the St. Mary Parish School Board.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the St. Mary/Vermillion CAA Head Start Program and the St. Mary Parish School Board. Ms. LaSalle made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

## Item 11. Approve funding for completion of phone system upgrades at all St. Mary Parish Schools.

Mr. Wiese reported that new VOIP (voice over internet protocol) phone systems were funded at the 2022-2023 Special Project Budget Workshops, which included Centerville School, Franklin High School, Morgan City High School, Wyandotte Elementary School, Berwick Elementary School, Raintree Elementary, and Hattie Wattie Elementary School. A quote and list of schools remaining for upgrades have been provided as follows:

**District II Schools**

* Berwick Junior High $10,738.31
* Berwick High $11,658.04
* Patterson High $11,658.04

Total Estimate $34,054.39

**District III**

* Aucoin Elementary $10,158.49
* Morgan City Junior High $10,738.31
* Norman Elementary $10,158.49

Total Estimate $31,055.29

Mrs. Griffin made a motion to approve funding for completion of phone system upgrades for schools in District II, as presented by Mr. Wiese. Ms. LaSalle made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

Mr. Verret made a motion to approve funding for completion of phone system upgrades for schools in District III, as presented by Mr. Wiese. Mr. Taylor made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

President Alfred noted that phone system upgrades for District I schools have been completed.

## Item 12. Student Expulsion Appeal

A. A public body may hold an executive session pursuant to R.S. 42:16 for one or more

of the following reason:

(7) Discussions between a city or parish school board and individual students or the parents or tutors of such students, or both, who are within the jurisdiction of the respective school system, regarding problems of such students or their parents or tutors; provided however that any such parent, tutor, or student may require that such discussions be held in an open meeting.

Agenda item: Discuss and take any needed action regarding the above noted executive session.

President Alfred stated that a request for Item 12 has been withdrawn and there will be no discussion or action taken at this time.

# Reports

## Staff:

Mr. Wiese reported that the generator installation at the Central Office Complex has been completed. A new chiller was installed at Franklin Junior High and Berwick Elementary School using ESSER Funds. However, trying to spend ESSER Funds for Roofing Projects has been very slow, due to receiving material.

## Chief Financial Officer’s Report

## Sales Tax Update:

Mr. Perry reported that sales tax collections dropped for the month of September but still had an estimated favorable variance of $800,000 year-to-date, with a $189,000 unfavorable variance for the month.

President Alfred asked Mr. Perry if he could prepare a report for the November 10th board meeting on providing all employees with a one-time stipend.

Mr. Perry responded that he would be glad to provide the report. He indicated that the newly passed .45 percent sales tax has some excess funds, which was dedicated for employees’ salaries and benefits.

## Financial Statements (Major Funds Only)

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

## Other Significant Items:

None

# Superintendent’s Report:

Dr. Bagwell reported on October 1st of each school year, school systems report student enrollment numbers in grades K through 12, that are used to determine funding allotments according to the State's Minimum Foundation Program. St. Mary reported a total of 7,448 students in grades K through 12. This official enrollment counted approximately 200 students fewer than reported at this time last year. A second student count will be submitted on February 1st, which will also be factored into the overall MSP budget for St. Mary. The Annual College and Career Fair will be held at Morgan City High School on Tuesday, October 18th. The event is designed to provide high school students with the opportunity to visit with area companies, colleges, and military service organizations, to learn about various options available to them after graduation. Graduation rates for the Class of 2021 were just received. The data included the percentage of students completing high school within four years and while St. Mary's rates had a small decline along with the state, St. Mary continued to outpace the state average by 10.6 percent with an overall graduation rate of 94 percent.

President Alfred commended all students, teachers, and administrators, for having an overall graduation rate of 94 percent.

# Any other Business as Allowed by Act 131

None

# Closing

## Resolutions of Respect

Ms. Estay read the Resolutions of Respect for the late Constance Guy Butler (elementary school teacher).

## Adjournment

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