Centerville, Louisiana

October 28, 2021

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in special session on Thursday, October 28, 2021, 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:** Mr. Joseph C. Foulcard Jr., Mrs. Pearl B. Rack, Mrs. Ginger S. Griffin, Ms. Marilyn P. LaSalle, Mr. Michael E. Taylor, Mr. Dwight D. Barbier, Mrs. Alaina L. Black, Mr. Roland H. Verret, Mr. Kenneth E. Alfred.

**Absent:** Ms. Sylvia K. Lockett (Deceased), Mr. Wayne J. Deslatte.

# Pledge of Allegiance

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

# Approval of Amended Agenda

Mr. Taylor made a motion and Mrs. Griffin made a second to approve the amended agenda, as presented. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Business Affairs:**

**Item 1.** Approve Declaration of Vacancy in Position of School Board Member, District II, St. Mary Parish School Board and Proclamation calling Special Election to fill such vacancy.

Mr. Alfred read aloud the proclamation as follows:

DECLARATION OF VACANCY IN POSITION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, DISTRICT 2, ST. MARY PARISH SCHOOL BOARD AND PROCLAMATION CALLING SPECIAL ELECTION TO FILL SUCH VACANCY

**WHEREAS,** due to the passing of Sylvia Lockett on October 8, 2021, a vacancy now exists in the office of School Board Member, District 2, St. Mary Parish School Board; and

**WHEREAS,** Louisiana Revised Statute 18:602 requires that the St. Mary Parish School Board formally declare the vacancy in its membership and appoint an individual to fill the vacancy until a special election can be conducted in accordance with the requirements of law.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, **BE IT DULY RESOLVED** that the St. Mary Parish School Board does hereby order and direct as follows:

**SECTION 1:** The School Board hereby declares that, due to the passing of Sylvia Lockett, the office of School Board Member, District 2, St. Mary Parish School Board, is vacant.

**SECTION 2:** A special election shall be held for the purpose of electing a qualified individual to fill the vacancy in the office of School Board Member, District 2, St. Mary Parish School Board.

**SECTION 3:** Any qualified person desiring to become a candidate for the office shall file a notice of candidacy, accompanied by a qualifying fee or a nominating petition, as required or authorized by law, with the appropriate election official in the manner and form and under the procedures and conditions set forth in the Louisiana Election Code during the period commencing Wednesday, January 26, 2022 and ending at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 28, 2022.

**SECTION 4:** The special election shall be held and conducted under the applicable provisions of the Louisiana Election Code.

**SECTION 5:** The primary election shall be held Saturday, March 26, 2022, and the general election, if necessary, shall be held Saturday, April 30, 2022, at the times and places and in the manner prescribed by law.

**SECTION 6:** The Secretary of State, Commissioner of Elections, Parish Board of Election Supervisors, Clerk of Court, Registrar of Voters, and all other persons charged with any power, function, right, duty or responsibility in conducting elections in the jurisdiction of the vacant position described herein are hereby authorized, requested, directed and empowered to exercise every lawful function and to do every act necessary to conduct the special election, to cause the returns to be made, to canvass and promulgate the results, and to perform all related and incidental functions.

**SECTION 7:** Superintendent Teresa T. Bagwell (or her designee) will take all action necessary to immediately publish this proclamation in the School Board’s official journal.

**SECTION 8:** Superintendent Teresa T. Bagwell (or her designee) will send a copy of this proclamation to the Clerk of Court for the 16th Judicial District and to the Secretary of State by registered or certified mail no later than twenty-four (24) hours after this proclamation is issued.

**RESOLVED** by the St. Mary Parish School Board at its special board meeting on the 28th day of October, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Teresa T. Bagwell Kenneth E. Alfred

Board Secretary Board President

Mr. Taylor made a motion and Mr. Foulcard made a second to approve the Declaration of Vacancy in Position of School Board Member, District II, St. Mary Parish School Board and Proclamtion calling Special Election to fill such vacancy. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 2.** Appoint a representative to temporarily fill the seat of District II, School Board Member until the Special Election.

Mrs. Rack moved to appoint Ms. Tammie L. Moore, who resides at 1157 Big Four Corners Road, Jeanerette, Louisiana 70544, as representative to temporarily fill the seat of District II, School Board Member until the Special Election. Mr. Foulcard made a second to the motion. All in favor and the motion carried.

President Alfred stated that Ms. Tammie L. Moore will be sworn in at the November 11, 2021 regular board meeting.

**Item 3**. Discuss and take appropriate action regarding “opt out” mask provision for K-12 schools.

**Public Comments Regarding “opt out” mask**:

Ms. Lindsey Anslem, a concerned parent, spoke in opposition of the mask mandate and to make masks optional. She stated that her child has a speech impediment, and he learns by watching the teachers speak. Since masks has been put into place, he can no longer watch the teachers mouth because of the mask. Ms. Anslem indicated that her child has more anxiety and more stuttering from wearing a mask, which is also affecting others in this situation. She mentioned since the beginning of COVID, St. Mary Parish has reported 8,835 positive COVID cases and 221 deaths. Ms. Anslem indicated by wearing masks children are harmed socially, emotionally, and productively, and she strongly urged the Board to please consider opting out of the mask mandate for students.

Ms. LaSalle commented that she fully supports Ms. Anslem for stating her opinion. However, she considered it not to be an opinion, but mostly statistical data that is contradicted by what Governor Edwards stated.

Ms. Brook Falgout, a concerned parent of seven children and three grandchildren. Ms. Falgout stated her daughter struggles every day as a teacher in St. Mary Parish with students wearing masks, and that it takes away from a teacher's ability to teach. Ms. Falgout also has a child with asthma, who has visited the emergency room several times within the last two-years, due to wearing masks. She asked the Board to please “opt out” of the masks mandate, and to make masks optional for St. Mary Parish Schools.

Mr. David Hanagriff, President of St. Mary Parish Government, spouse of a St. Mary Parish teacher and a concerned parent, spoke in support of opting out of the masks as mandated by Governor Edwards. Mr. Hanagriff stated as the parish president, when Governor Edwards issued the first mask mandate, he followed suit and issued the same mask mandate for St. Mary Parish. However, he did not find it necessary to issue or follow suit of the second mask mandate. He indicated that he is a true believer in personal choice and personal responsibility, being responsible for yourself and your family. Mr. Hanagriff said he has nothing against any individual that wants to wear a mask, but he chooses not to unless it is required. He asked the Board to consider the opt out option and to follow suit with the surrounding parishes.

Mr. Jesse Simoneaux, a concerned parent of four children, shared his thoughts about wearing masks at school. Mr. Simoneaux stated that he has three children that attend school in Berwick. He indicated when it comes to his children’s health, he should have the freedom to make decisions whether or not he wants his children to wear a mask.

Dr. Bagwell reported on Tuesday, Governor Edwards provided the state's mandatory face covering requirements, stating that an LEA local educational agency could affirmatively opt out of the continuation of the mandate, only if the LEA also adopts an isolation and quarantine policy consistent with the Louisiana Department of Health protocols. Dr. Bagwell also noted that mandate of face coverings will continue on school buses until such time as the federal government lifts its requirement for public transportation. St. Mary Parish   
Schools has consistently utilized a protocol for responding to COVID that strictly aligns to the Office of Public Health regarding contact tracing, and managing students and staff in quarantine or isolation. Therefore, the opt out provision would not present any undue burden on the contact tracing and our response process. Accordingly, she asked that the Board approve a motion to opt out of the face covering mandate for St. Mary Parish Schools and agree to continue to employ State Health guidelines in responding to COVID-19.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion and Mr. Barbier made a second to opt out masks provision for K-12 schools, and follow the state guidelines for quarantine as required.

Mrs. Black stated that she works in a school district that has opted out of the masks mandate. She said it was nice going into some of schools and seeing a lot of smiles.

With no further discussion, the motion carried with Mrs. Rack voting nay.

# Item 4. Student Expulsion Appeal.

# President Alfred stated the Board will enter executive session to discuss the disciplinary criteria of a student expulsion appeal.

# Enter Closed Session:

            With a motion from Mr. Taylor and a second from Mr. Barbier, the Board went into closed session to discuss the student expulsion appeal. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Return to Regular Session:**

             Mrs. Rack moved that the Board return to regular session.  Ms. LaSalle gave a second and the meeting resumed. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Statement Issued:**

President Alfred reported that the Board has concluded their deliberations in Executive Session regarding the student disciplinary appeal.

Mr. Barbier made a motion that the decision of Child Welfare Supervisor, Kenneth Holmes be affirmed, in regard to the disciplinary appeal of a Morgan City High School student. Mrs. Griffin made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

# Any other Business as Allowed by Act 131

None

# Adjournment

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