# Centerville, Louisiana

July 8, 2021

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in regular session on Thursday, July 8, 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:** Ms. Sylvia K. Lockett, 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, and Mr. Kenneth E. Alfred.

**Absent:** Mr. Joseph C. Foulcard Jr., and Mr. Wayne J. Deslatte.

## Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Bergeron gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

## Approval of Amended Agenda.

There were no amended agenda items to approve.

## Approval of Official School Board Minutes.

Ms. LaSalle offered the motion and Mr. Barbier offered the second to approve the official school board minutes from the regular meeting held on June 10, 2021, as presented. 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. Superintendent Bagwell read aloud the items on the consent agenda as follows:

## New Business

## Personnel:

### **Item 1.** \*Renewal of Performance Contracts for Administrators 2021-2023.

### **Item 3.** \*Approval of revisions to the St. Mary Parish School Board Comprehensive Salary and Job Classification 2021-2022 (Goldbook)

### **Item 4**. \*Approve Memorandum of Understanding for the Foster Grandparent Program.

### **Item 5.** \*Approve the 2021-2022 Pupil Progression Plan.

### **Item 7.** \*Approve updated job descriptions for:

A. \*K-2 Literacy Paraprofessional

B. \*Paraprofessional

C. \*Special Education Paraprofessional

### **Item 8**. \*Authorize RFP or negotiation process for casualty insurance for the year

### commencing October 1, 2021.

### **Item 9**. \*Approve banking resolutions authorizing signatories at various schools

as a result of recent appointments.

### **Item 12.** \*Declare Bus #60 as surplus and sell to the highest bidder.

Mr. Taylor requested to pull agenda items 10, 11, 13, and 17 from the consent agenda for further discussion.

Mr. Verret requested to pull agenda item 14 from the consent agenda for further discussion.

Mr. Taylor made a motion and Mrs. Rack offered a second to approve the items on the Consent Agenda as presented by Dr. Bagwell, with the exclusion of agenda items 10, 11, 13, 14, and 17 which moved to Business Affairs for further discussion. All in favor and the motion carried.

## Appearances:

Recognition of 2020 and 2021 Top Word-Millionaires in St. Mary Parish:

Ms. Sarah Broussard recognized Stanley Aucoin, 5th grader at Berwick Elementary School as the Secondary Top Word-Millionaires in St. Mary Parish for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

Stanley read 6,471,212 words as a fourth grader in 2019-2020, and 6,681,449 words as a fifth grader in 2020-2021. He was also honored as the “Top Word-Millionaire” in the third grade. President Alfred presented Stanley with two certificates and two gift cards for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 “Top Word-Millionaire.”

## New Business

**Personnel:**

### **Item 2.** Approve St. Mary Parish Schools Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

Dr. Bagwell stated that in collaboration with staff, a strategic plan has been developed to formally outline the district’s priorities and some action steps that align to those priorities. The plan is designed to not only to direct district activities, but also the deployment of resources, giving the federal stimulus funding the district has received. The priority set forth includes: effective, innovative, engaging, purposeful, and high-quality teaching and learning environment, opportunities for student success, student safety, health, and wellbeing, community engagement and partnerships, and efficient and equitable use of resources. Overall, the development of the strategic plan also serves to annually measure the school's system progress in these areas, which we recognize as most critical in the growth of the district as a whole. Dr. Bagwell requested that the Board approve the St. Mary Parish School Strategic Plan for a school system prioritization of resources.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion to approve St. Mary Parish Schools Strategic Plan 2021-2024. Ms. LaSalle made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

## Business Affairs:

### **Item 6.** Consider approving extension of the mask recommendation for the 2021-2022

school year.

Dr. Bagwell reported that the Louisiana Department of Education released the school system operational guidance for 2021-2022 school year. The guidance asked to update the protocols for safely operating schools to enter the new school year. At a special meeting on May 27, 2021, the board approved a revision to the mandate that made it a recommendation, particularly for those who are unvaccinated, with the exception of school buses that would continue as a mandate due to the President’s Executive Order 13998 released in June. The order specifically requires that on public transportation, masks continue to be worn. Dr. Bagwell asked the Board to consider approving the extension of the mask recommendation through the 2021-2022 school year with any updates to occur as conditions warrant. This would be a recommendation of mask wearing in schools, with the mandate only on the school bus.

## Public comment:

Ms. Lindsey Anslem, a concerned parent, shared information on new studies from Gainesville, Florida, where a group of parents submitted six face masks to a lab for analysis. The results showed that five of the masks were contaminated with bacteria, parasites, and fungi, including three with dangerous pathogenic and pneumonia-causing bacteria. Although the test is capable of detecting viruses, there were no COVID-19 viruses detected on the masks. The analysis detected several alarmingly dangerous pathogens on the masks including: streptococcus pneumonia, tuberculosis, meningitis, Escherichia coli, and borrelia burgdorferi. Half of the masks were contaminated with one or more strains of pneumonia-causing bacteria. One-third were contaminated with one or more strains of meningitis-causing bacteria, and one-third were contaminated with dangerous, antibiotic-resistant bacterial pathogens. Another study performed by the American Medical Association conducted by an experimental assessment of the amount of exposure to carbon dioxide, without and with a mask. Carbon dioxide exposure in ambient air without a mask is 0.074 percent by volume, and 2.65 percent of carbon dioxide with a mask. These figures show that the value of a child with the lowest carbon dioxide rates were three to five percent times greater with children with masks. Ms. Anslem thanked the Board and suggested that they look at new studies going forward as more information is released on COVID.

Mrs. Rack thanked Ms. Anslem and also inquired about the age group for the masks tested.

Ms. Anslem responded that the masks tested were for children six to ten years old.

Ms. LaSalle stated that she appreciates the information and input from concerns parents. However, most of the decisions are made from the CDC guidelines and the state, which usually tells the Board what to do. Ms. LaSalle thanked Ms. Anslem for being a concerned parent and for the recommendation she provided to the Board.

Ms. LaSalle asked Dr. Bagwell since the St. Mary Parish School Board did not mandate wearing masks, is it okay if a parent allows their child to wear a mask.

Dr. Bagwell responded that is correct. If we continue the recommendation status that we instituted for the Summer Adventure Program. It would be a recommendation only and anyone who chose to wear a mask can continue to do that.

Ms. LaSalle said, “just because we are not mandating it, does not mean that if you are not comfortable that your child cannot wear a mask because they have to wear one on the bus anyway.” No one will make the child take the mask off if they are wearing it in the classroom.

Dr. Bagwell responded that is correct.

President Alfred said Dr. Bagwell to repeat her recommendation.

Dr. Bagwell replied that, she recommends that St. Mary Schools continue the mask as a recommendation, particularly for unvaccinated individuals in the schools, with the exception of bus transportation whereas masks would be required as necessitated by the President’s Executive Order 13998.

Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the extension of a mask recommendation for the 2021-2022 school year allowing parents the ability to let their child wear a mask where they think it is appropriate. Masks would still be required for bus transportation as necessitated by the President’s Executive Order 13998. Mrs. Black made a second.

Further discussion followed where Mr. Barbier inquired if the mask recommendation also applied for teachers.

Dr. Bagwell responded that it applies to all individuals operating within the schools. Recommended for all unvaccinated individuals but not mandated.

Ms. Lockett inquired if the St. Mary Parish School Board will require unvaccinated individuals to show proof of vaccination.

Dr. Bagwell replied that it is not allowed under the HIPAA Law (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 laws.)

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

### **Item 10.** Approve life insurance for the period commencing October 1, 2021.

Mr. Perry explained that the current life insurance policy expires on September 30, 2021. He indicated that the board packet included a list with over 20 companies that were contacted when the RFP process was conducted, with most declining to quote. Proposals were submitted from Voya, the current carrier, and five other carriers. Mr. Perry recommended that the Board accept the lowest bid from Unum with a three-year rate guarantee, switching from Voya to Unum with the same current coverage and a slight annually rate increase of $3,249, which will be divided by the employer and the retiree. Due to the immaterial premium increase involved, Mr. Perry additionally recommended that the Board absorb the entire rate increase thus allowing all employee/retiree premiums to remain the same for the next three years.

Mr. Taylor made a motion and Mrs. Rack made a second to approve switching the life insurance from Voya to Unum for the period commencing October 1, 2021. All in favor and the motion carried.

### **Item 11.** Approve student accident insurance for year commencing August 1, 2021.

Mr. Perry reported that a renewal was received from Bollinger for Student Accident Insurance, which is a supplemental policy for extra-curricular activities. The policy includes two enhancements under in-patient and out-patient coverage for x-rays, MRI, and radiology, with a rate going from $150 to $200. Mr. Perry recommended that the Board accept the renewal from Bollinger with the reduced rate of $46,367, including the two enhancements.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion and Mr. Barbier offered a second to approve the student accident insurance from Bollinger at the rate of $46,367, including enhancements for year commencing August 1, 2021. All in favor and the motion carried.

### **Item 13.** Permission to spend COC HVAC funds for the purchase and installation of a 300 KW generator.

Mr. Wiese reported that in November and December 2020 conversations with the Board were discussed to set aside funds of $700,000 for the HVAC replacement at the Central Office Complex. In May 2021, when discussing special projects an additional $100,000 were included in the $700,000 totaling $800,000. Mr. Wiese indicated that a substantial amount of money was saved by performing all of the HVAC work in-house. He also stated that in conversation with the Board, the leftover funds from the $800,000 was intended to purchase a generator for the Central Office Complex. Mr. Wiese is asking the Board for some of the funds set aside to purchase a 300 KW generator totaling $215,000, with no extra cost of the Board.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion to accept Mr. Wiese’s recommendation to spend the Central Office Complex HVAC funds for the purchase and installation of a 300 KW generator totaling $215,000. Ms. Lockett made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

### **Item 14.** Permission to bid playground equipment for Wyandotte Elementary utilizing funds from land sale.

Mr. Verret stated that he asked to pull item 14 from the consent agenda for clarification on the total cost of the playground equipment at Wyandotte Elementary.

Mr. Wiese reported that the Wyandotte Elementary property was sold in July 2020 for $112,000. The projected amount of the playground equipment was estimated at $82,000, which would leave a remainder of about $29,000. Mr. Wiese indicated that this is only a proposal, and he is asking for permission to bid the playground equipment, as requested by the principal.

Mr. Verret stated he is not against bidding the playground equipment, he is just not sure about doing it all at one time.

Ms. LaSalle inquired if the playground equipment was discussed at the District III Maintenance Committee meeting.

Mr. Wiese responded that the playground equipment was discussed but not the cost. The principal was not sure of what equipment was needed to purchase at the time of the maintenance committee meeting.

Ms. LaSalle asked if the playground equipment can be discussed again at a District III Maintenance Committee Meeting and allow committee members to approve the amount of funds they want to spend on the playground equipment.

Mrs. Rack agreed with Ms. LaSalle to discuss the playground equipment for Wyandotte Elementary again in the Maintenance District III Committee Meeting.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion and Mrs. Rack offered a second to not grant permission to bid playground equipment for Wyandotte Elementary utilizing funds from land sale, instead return item back to the Maintenance District III Committee for further discussion. All in favor and the motion carried.

### **Item 15.** Receive Group Health Insurance Premium to Claims Summary Report on Commercial Plan.

Insurance consultant James Perez provided the Board with the Group Health Insurance Commercial Plan premiums to claims summary. He indicated that United Health Care is behind a few months with the reports. In analyzing the details of the claims report through the end of March, several large claims have already been received. When calculating the renewal, anything in excess of the stop loss of $200,000 does not count against the School Board. However, the renewal has to be released by September 1st, which will probably be based on data through the end of May and a 12 month claims history. Mr. Perez said, “I don’t think at this point it is going to be a pretty renewal.” He stated when presenting the renewals from United Health Care in early September, he will also provide competitive proposals from Blue Cross for the Board to consider.

Ms. LaSalle asked why school system’s insurance premiums depend on the amount of expenditures, whereas other institution’s insurance premiums remain the same.

Mr. Perez responded that every large group above 500 members is pretty much fully credible, and school systems premiums are based on their claims. Whereas, many large companies in the private sector are self-funded, and the employer typically pays an average of 75 percent of the premium.

Mrs. Griffin questioned if insurance companies took COVID into consideration.

Mr. Perez responded that insurance companies gave much consideration last year, the School Board received some sizable premium rebates from United Health Care in 2020. In reviewing the 2020 claims experience for a period of time, claims were suppressed. At the end of 2020 going into 2021 more people are visiting their doctors. Mr. Perez stated it appears that one of the large claims were associated to a respiratory disorder, due to an employee being hospitalized from COVID. He said, “it won’t be pretty, but he will have some alternatives for the Board to consider.”

I**tem 16.** Receive update on Medicare Advantage Plan renewal and take appropriate action.

Mr. Perez reported that the renewal for the retirees Medicare Advantage Plan with part A and B does not anticipate an increase in premiums. United Health Care will include benefit enhancements in the renewal plan to cover post discharged transportation to and from medically related appointments and pharmacies for up to 30 days following an inpatient or skilled nursing facility discharge at no additional cost. The plan will also include in-home personal care benefits administered through care links for post discharge patients, member access to discounted home delivered meals, and in-home personal care services. Mr. Perez stated that he is not requesting any action on the Medicare Advantage Plan at this time.

### **Item 17.** Morgan City High School HVAC Project change order #1: Replace the ceiling tile, grid, and lighting in the cafeteria dining room area in an amount not to exceed $65,000.

Mr. Wiese reported that the change order for the Morgan City High School HVAC Project was actually lower than the estimated cost. He asked that the Board accept the change order for amount of $51,662.00.

Mrs. Black made a motion and Mr. Barbier offered a second to approve the Morgan City High School HVAC Project change order #1. Replace the ceiling tile, grid, and lighting in the cafeteria dining room area in an amount of $51,662.00. All in favor and the motion carried.

### Item 18. **LITIGATION:**

Discussion of pending litigation in the matter of Coulon v. St. Mary Parish School Board, et al., Civil Action 6:21-cv-00019 (W.D. La) – Hammonds, Sills, Adkins, Guice, Perkins and Noah

\*An Executive Session may be held upon an affirmative vote, taken at an open meeting

of two-thirds of Board members present, pursuant to La. R.S 42:16 which reads, in pertinent part:

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

more of the following reasons:

(2) Strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining,

prospective litigation after formal written demand, **or litigation when an**

**open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation**

**position of the public body.**

Dr. Bagwell asked that the Board enter into executive session to receive updates on the above litigation.

## Board Enters Closed Session:

With a motion from Ms. LaSalle and a second from Mr. Taylor, the Board went into closed session to address the litigation as listed above.

## Board Returns to Regular Session:

Ms. LaSalle moved that the Board return to regular session. Mrs. Rack gave a second and the meeting resumed.

## Statement:

Ms. LaSalle made a motion to expand the agenda and accept the recommendation from the legal counsel. Mrs. Rack made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

## Reports

### **Committee:**

The Board scheduled a District III Maintenance Committee meeting on Thursday, August 12th at 4:30 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, Louisiana, to revisit agenda item 14 as listed.

### **Staff:**

Mr. Wiese provided the Board with an update on the maintenance department. At the June 8th meeting, Mr. Wiese stated that the maintenance department was struggling to find custodial and maintenance staff. Since then, there have been several applicants interested in custodial positions but no interest in maintenance workers.

Mr. Wiese indicated that over a half a million dollars were spent this summer in renovating and repairing old air conditioning units across the parish. The Morgan City High School HVAC District III Special Project is on track and should be ready for the start of school. Bleachers at Franklin High School have been repaired and completed. The painting and fencing projects are still slow, due to the availability of purchasing supplies. Gym floors have been varnished and completed, several cement projects have been completed, roofing surveys in process, and phone systems across the parish are being upgraded at several schools.

A silent bid for surplus equipment housed at the old J. A. Hernandez building in Franklin, will be held on August 2nd through August 5th.

Dr. Bagwell announced that a meeting has been scheduled on Wednesday, July 14th with the mayor of Morgan City to discuss the HVAC concerns at Shannon Elementary School.

## Chief Financial Officer’s Report

## Sales Tax Update:

Mr. Perry reported that the sales tax collections finished for the fiscal year at $1.4 million collected verses $1.2 million budgeted.

## Financial Statements (Major Funds Only)

Mr. Perry stated that the financial statements were not available, due to working in two different accounting packages. Hopefully, this coming month he will start putting the general fund financial statements back in the board packets.

## Other Significant Items:

Mr. Perry provided information from a survey on the building and contents coverage renewals, which was shared among Chief Financial Officers within other school districts. St. Mary Parish School Board was actually one of the lowest renewals at 7 percent, whereas other districts had renewal increases averaging between 12 percent to 367 percent.

## Superintendent’s Report:

Dr. Bagwell reported that the arrival of school supplies and uniforms at area businesses this weekend signals the nearness of yet another school year. With only a few weeks of summer remaining school administrators will be participating in a two-day training on July 19th and 20th, comprised of updates on newly adopted legislative acts, curriculum changes, and leadership strategies for initiating a successful school year. On July 27th, new teachers will arrive for their first orientation, quickly followed by various workshops to fully prepare them for the first day of school. The Annual School Board Member Leadership Institute will be held on July 22nd from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room. Board members can expect to learn about recently adopted legislation, expansion of literacy initiatives and budgetary considerations among other topics. Schools will officially open for students on August 6th with orientation set at various schools prior to that day. Parents and guardians are encouraged to check the school's website for details regarding various activities and informational items in preparation for the first day of school.

## Comments from the Board:

President Alfred asked Dr. Bagwell if there were any changes or information from the Louisiana High School Athletic Association on attendance at athletic events.

Dr. Bagwell responded not at this time, but she does anticipate some changes to be issued in mid-July.

President Alfred announced that a quarterly report (April 1-June 30, 2021) was provided in the Board packet from the St. Mary Parish Excel Group, for Board Members to review at their leisure.

## Any other Business as Allowed by Act 131

None

## Closing

##### Resolutions of Respect

None

## Adjournment:

With there being no further business to address, Mrs. Black made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Barbier made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.