Centerville, Louisiana

May 27, 2021

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in special session on Tuesday, May 27, 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., Ms. Sylvia K. Lockett (virtual not voting), Mrs. Pearl B. Rack, Mrs. Ginger S. Griffin, Mr. Wayne J. Deslatte, 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:** None

In honor of Memorial Day, President Alfred led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

# New Business

Superintendent Bagwell requested to expand the agenda to discuss mask mandate in schools during summer programs.

President Alfred stated that a unanimous vote was needed to expand the agenda for discussion on mask mandate.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion and Mr. Deslatte made a second to expand the agenda, as requested by Superintendent Bagwell. With there being no descending votes, the motion carried.

# Mask mandate

Dr. Bagwell reported that Governor John Bel Edwards released the mask mandate for K-12 education on Wednesday, May 26, 2021. The mandate stays in effect for the remainder of this semester. The local school board can determine whether or not mask should be worn on school campus for summer programs. However, the mask mandate stays intact for public transportation. Dr. Bagwell stated that all elementary principals were in favor of relieving mask mandate at schools for the Summer Adventure Camp but will remain on school buses, which is still part of the Governor’s mandates. Dr. Bagwell asked that the Board approve revising the mask mandates to continue on school buses and eliminated from school campuses to a recommendation and not a mandate.

Mrs. Black made a motion and Mr. Deslatte made a second to make the mask mandate a recommendation for the summer programs but remain on school buses as mandated by Governor John Bel Edwards.

Discussion followed where Mrs. Rack indicated that she opposed the mask mandate due to a close call she had with COVID-19 but thankfully she tested negative for the virus after a colleague at work was diagnosed. She said, “Some people like to think COVID is over, but COVID is not over and that is why I oppose.”

After no further discussion, the motion passed with eight Board members voting in favor: Mr. Foulcard, Mrs. Griffin, Mr. Deslatte, Mr. Taylor, Mrs. Black, Mr. Barbier, Mr. Verret, and Mr. Alfred. Two Board members voting nay: Mrs. Rack, and Ms. LaSalle (arrived at the meeting at the closing of discussion on mask mandate and voted nay.) Ms. Lockett in virtual attendance not voting.

# Approve job descriptions:

A. Redesign K-5 Literacy Coach (NEW)

B. Redesign 6-8 Literacy Coach (NEW)

Mrs. Bergeron reported that School Redesign funds were approved for CIR/UIR schools in St. Mary Parish, which presented an opportunity to hire a Redesign K-5 Literacy Coach and a Redesign 6-8 Literacy Coach. Each coach will service three schools. The Redesign K-5 Literacy Coach will service Lagrange Elementary School, Maitland Elementary School, and Raintree Elementary School. The Redesign 6-8 Literacy Coach will service Patterson Junior High School, B. E. Boudreaux Middle School and Morgan City Junior High School. Mrs. Bergeron asked for Board approval of the new Redesign K-5 and 6-8 Literacy Coach positions.

President Alfred asked if the new job descriptions were temporary positions. Mrs. Bergeron responded that the positions would last as long as the grant funding is available.

Mrs. Rack made a motion and Mr. Deslatte made a second to approve job descriptions for Redesign K-5 Literacy Coach (NEW) and Redesign 6-8 Literacy Coach (NEW). All in favor and the motion carried.

# Approve a one-time employee stipend for additional duties performed in preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID-19 during the school system’s reopening to an in-person educational environment.

Dr. Bagwell stated as part of the federal stimulus for ESSER II, one of the allowable expenditures is for a district to compensate using a one-time stipend for employees who completed additional duties that were related to COVID. She indicated that a $2,000 stipend was put in the ESSER II budget, which would be paid to every employee who worked on site or campus to support in person learning and completed additional duties after fully reopening all facilities on September 28, 2020. The stipend and benefits will come directly from the ESSER II budget and would be of no cost to the general fund. Dr. Bagwell asked the Board to approve a one-time employee stipend of $2,000 for all employees who completed additional duties that were related to preventing, preparing for, or responding to COVID from October 1, 2020, through June 4, 2021.

Mrs. Rack inquired if the $2,000 one-time stipend included bus drivers that worked from October 1, 2020. Dr. Bagwell responded that every employee including bus drivers, cafeteria technicians, office personnel, and long-term subs (excluding day-to-day subs) that were employed on site from October 1, 2020, through June 4, 2021, would receive the same amount of $2,000 for the one-time stipend.

Ms. LaSalle questioned if the employee salary scales be affected by the one-time stipend. Dr. Bagwell replied that it is a one-time single payment stipend of $2,000 for the duration of October 1, 2020, through June 4, 2021. Dr. Bagwell said, “she is hoping for payments to be issued on June 4, 2021, if approved by the Board.”

Mr. Deslatte commended Dr. Bagwell and staff for taking the initiative to secure a one-time stipend.

Mrs. Rack expressed her appreciation and also indicated that she tried getting a one-time stipend for all employees at the last meeting.

Mrs. Rack made a motion and Mr. Barbier made a second to approve a one-time employee stipend for additional duties performed in preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID-19 during the school system’s reopening to an in-person educational environment.

During further discussion, Mr. Taylor thanked teachers, and everyone involved that had to go face-to-face with students every day with so much unknown with the COVID-19 pandemic. He also thanked the Board members who voted with him for students to return on school campus in a classroom environment in September 2020.

Mrs. Rack stated that she did not vote for students to return on school campus in September 2020. She said, “You never know what could happen, so I stand strong on having voting no.” Mrs. Rack also thanked all of the Board members, whether they voted for or against returning on school campus, for just being present and thank God that nothing happened.

With no further discussion, all in favor and the motion carried.

# Other Comments:

Ms. LaSalle apologized to the Board for attending the meeting late. She indicated that she was not aware of the expanded agenda item on mask mandate and was not present at the beginning of the discussion. She asked the Board to revisit the item to reassess the discussion for clarifications. Ms. LaSalle inquired about the percentage of employees being vaccinated in St. Mary Parish School System and also expressed her concerns about employees being unmasked when returning on school campus full-time. Dr. Bagwell replied that the survey taken about a month ago reported an estimate of 30 percent of the school district’s employees that were vaccinated. She also explained that the mask mandate is only for the summer program and does not include all employees. Further discussion on returning on school campus full-time will be discussed in the future.

Ms. LaSalle thanked the Board for clarifying that the mask mandate only pertained to the summer program.

# Any other Business as Allowed by Act 131

## None

# Adjournment

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