Centerville, Louisiana

October 15, 2020

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in regular session on Thursday, October 15, 2020, 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 attendance not voting), Mr. Kenneth E. Alfred, Mrs. Ginger S. Griffin, Ms. Marilyn P. LaSalle, Mr. Wayne J. Deslatte, Mrs. Pearl B. Rack, Mr. Dwight Barbier, Mrs. Alaina Black, Mr. Roland H. Verret, Mr. Michael E. Taylor.

Mrs. Bergeron gave the Invocation and 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:**

Assistant Principal Ryan Taylor introduced 7th grader Makenzie Linn as “Student of the Month” at Berwick Junior High School. She was accompanied by her parents and brother.

Mackenzie is an exceptionally bright student who is always willing to go above and beyond to help her teachers and fellow peers. Berwick Junior High School is grateful for her positive spirit and good vibes as a model student for all of her peers.

Assistant Principal Ryan Taylor introduced 7th grade English Language Arts Teacher Leah Nicar as “Employee of the Month” at Berwick Junior High School. She was accompanied by her mother, aunt, and sister. Ms. Nicar is a certified teacher who has been employed for 22 years by the St. Mary Parish School Board. She has served the last 14 years of her career at Berwick Junior High School, where she relentlessly allocated her time and energy to her students and school. Her craftiness and organizational skills are appreciated by her peers at Berwick Junior High School.

**Foster Elementary School:**

Principal Dawn Chaisson introduced Curriculum Facilitator Lenette Hebert as “Employee of the Month” at Foster Elementary School. She is accompanied by her father and daughter. This is Ms. Hebert’s 33rd year in education. She taught kindergarten and first grade at Centerville High School for a total of 26 years, she devoted the last 6 ½ years as a curriculum facilitator at Foster Elementary School. Her peers stated that she is an amazing coworker, very humble, compassionate, pleasant, and she genuinely cares about the well-being of every student and coworker at Foster Elementary School.

Principal Dawn Chaisson introduced 5th grader Navaeh Bouton as “Student of the Month” at Foster Elementary School. She was accompanied by her mother. Nevaeh enjoys art, playing games, dancing, and she also likes to read. She loves animals and hopes to one day become a veterinarian.

**Maitland Elementary School:**

Principal Tonia Verrette introduced 5th grader Laurynn Jones as “Student of the Month” at Maitland Elementary School. Laurynn is compassionate, kind, intelligent, responsible, and has always been on the honor roll and or principals list. Laurynn is really good at creating art, acting, singing, and dancing. She also qualified for talented theater, which she anticipates on receiving one of her Broadway debuts at some point in her life.

Principal Tonia Verrette introduced 5th grade teacher Melinda Thomas as “Employee of the Month” at Maitland Elementary School. Ms. Thomas has a passion for reading, she is a problem solver, immaculate at paperwork, and very reflective and thoughtful when it comes to her work. Ms. Thomas enjoys teaching because she loves kids. Principal Verrette indicated that Ms. Thomas has really made a difference with the students at Maitland Elementary School.

# Approval of Amended Agenda

No amended agenda.

# Approval of Official School Board Minutes

Mrs. Rack offered the motion, Mr. Barbier offered the second and the motion carried to approve the official school board minutes from the regular meeting held on September 10, 2020.

# Approval of Consent Agenda

President Taylor 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:

## **Item 1 A-J\*: Approval of policies from Forethought Consulting**:

A. \*Teleconference/Remote Participation in School Board Meetings (BCAD)

B. \*Employment of Superintendent (CED)

C. \*Purchasing (DJE)

D. \*Bids and Quotations (DJED)

E. \*Business Continuity and Technology Disaster Recovery (EFD)

F. \*Employment of Retired Personnel (GBDA)

G. \*Sports Injury Management and Concussions (IDFAB)

H. \*Attendance Reports for Students Drivers (JBH)

I. \*Student Health Services (JGC)

J. \*Child Abuse (JGCE)

## Item 2: \*Consider for adoption grievance procedures drafted in accordance with Policy

**JAAA-Title IX Sexual Harassment (Approved-August 13, 2020).**

## Item 7: \*Approve banking resolutions authorizing signatories at various schools as a result of recent appointments.

Mr. Alfred requested that Item 1-K\* under New Business, Personnel be removed from the consent agenda for further discussion.

Mr. Deslatte made a motion to approve the remaining items on the Consent Agenda as presented by Dr. Bagwell, with the exception of Item 1-K\* under New Business, Personnel, which was removed by Mr. Alfred. Mrs. Griffin made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

# Appearances

## Candidate for 16th Judicial District Attorney:

Mr. Bo Duhe appeared before the Board to announce his candidacy for re-election as the 16th Judicial District Attorney, which includes St. Martin, Iberia, and St. Mary parishes. Mr. Duhe was born and raised in Iberia Parish. He graduated from the University of Louisiana – Lafayette in 1984 with a General Business degree. In 1984-1989 he worked as a banker at a bank in Lafayette. He then enrolled at Tulane University graduating with a law degree. After graduation, he worked as a law clerk for eleven months for Judge Buddy Fleming, and in 1993 he began working for the 16th Judicial District Attorney’s Office. His primary duties involved prosecution of major felony crimes. Mr. Duhe humbly asked for everyone’s support in the November 3rd election.

## Candidate for the upcoming election for the 16th JDC Judge position (Division F):

Mr. Anthony Saleme introduced himself as a candidate for District Judge of the 16th Judicial District Court (Division F) in the upcoming election on November 3, 2020. Mr. Saleme is a resident of Morgan City, Louisiana who has practiced law for 26 years. In his last 23 years as an assistant district attorney with the 16th Judicial District Attorney’s Office working in the St. Martin Parish and St. Mary Parish offices, he had the opportunity to try over 40 jury trials, over 200 bench trials including felonies and misdemeanors, and thousands of motion hearings. Since 2013, he has served as the supervisor of the District Attorney’s Office in St. Mary Parish. In conclusion, Mr. Saleme asked that everyone educate themselves on all three candidates, review their experience and background and vote for the most qualified candidate, which he believes is him.

## Candidate for the upcoming election for the 16th JDC Judge position (Division H):

Mr. Roger Hamilton, Jr. candidate for the Sixteenth Judicial Judge position (Division H) was not able to attend the meeting due to a conflict of another meeting.

# Superintendent Personnel Matters:

Superintendent Bagwell provided a list of personnel changes for the past month in the Board’s packet to review at their leisure.

# New Business

**Personnel:**

## Item 1-K. \*(RECOMMENDED FOR DELETION) Policy Governing Prohibition of Discrimination Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (GAAAA).

Mr. Alfred inquired about replacement documentation to support Item 1-K “Policy Governing Prohibition of Discrimination Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (GAAAA).

In response to Mr. Alfred’s inquiry, Mrs. Bergeron stated that the policy was redundant and replaced with a new policy “Title IX Sexual Harassment (JAAA),” which was approved by the board at the August 13th regular board meeting. Mrs. Bergeron also indicated that Melissa Losch, lawyer with Hammond and Sills researched the policies, and recommended that the Board vote to remove the policy from the policy manual as it is unnecessary because St. Mary’s EEO and student non-discrimination policies suffice.

Mr. Alfred made a motion for the recommendation of deleting “Policy Governing Prohibition of Discrimination Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972” (GAAAA). Mrs. Griffin made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

# Business Affairs:

## Item 3: Discussion and/or action concerning employment of General Counsel

Mrs. Griffin indicated that the Board has benefited from the legal representation provided by the 16th Judicial District Attorney’s Office. However, the needs of the Board and other district departments has certainly become more complex. Mrs. Griffin stated the cost involved is necessary for the Board and also for the district’s employees. She asked that the Board consider retaining the law firm of Hammond and Sills as the Board’s general counsel, who is specialized in educational law and also served as the St. Mary Parish School Board’s general counsel in 2012.

Mrs. Griffin made a motion, Mr. Alfred made a second to retain the law firm of Hammond and Sills as the general counsel for the St. Mary Parish School Board, effective immediately.

Discussion followed where Mrs. Rack questioned the cost involved for Hammond and Sills services, as opposed to using the 16th Judicial District Attorney’s services.

Dr. Bagwell stated that the 16th Judicial District Attorney’s Office is an overarching counseling, which provides legal representation to the School Board and other local governments. Whereas Hammond and Sills provides more educational law counseling.

Mr. Perry stated that he anticipates the cost to be an estimate of $1,000 monthly or in the range of $12,000 to $15,000 annually.

Ms. LaSalle inquired if the District Attorney’s Office charged for their services provided. Dr. Bagwell replied that the District Attorney’s Office was obligated in providing legal services to the School Board pro bono.

Mr. Deslatte questioned if payments occur every time the St. Mary Parish School Board requests legal counseling from Hammond and Sills. Mr. Perry responded that the estimated $1,000 per month would pertain to attending regular school board meetings, which is separate from requested legal counseling.

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

## Item 4: To consider and take action with respect to announcing that the Parish School

**Board of the Parish of St. Mary, State of Louisiana, plans to consider adopting**

**a resolution ordering and calling an election to be held in the Parish of St. Mary,**

**State of Louisiana to authorize the levy of a .45 percent sales and use tax at its meeting**

on Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. at the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex, 474 Hwy. 317, Centerville, Louisiana.

President Taylor read aloud the sales tax announcement as described in Item 4, which is a repeat of the sales tax proposal pulled earlier this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If theBoard chooses to move forward, further discussion and appropriate action will take place at the November regular school board meeting.

## Item 5: Proclamations

## A. School Bus Safety Week (October 19-23, 2020)

Mr. Mike Ortiz asked the Board to proclaim October 19-23, 2020 as “School Bus Safety Week” in St. Mary Parish and urge all citizens to support the effects of bus drivers in reducing preventable injuries to our children.

Mr. Verret offered the motion and Mrs. Rack offered the second to proclaim “School Bus Safety Week” in St. Mary Parish for October 19-23, 2020 as presented by Mr. Ortiz. All in favor and the motion carried.

#### 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 student to and from school and

WHEREAS, The Transportation Services of St. Mary Parish on behalf of its member school board and with the assistance of its school bus operators, daily transport more than 5500 students

WHEREAS, Bus Safety Week is a time to recognize the importance of our parish school bus driver

and appreciate the invaluable contributions they make to education and student safety

NOW THEREFORE, The St. Mary Parish School Board does hereby proclaim October 19 – 23, 2020, 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 8, 2020, at which time a quorum was present and that same is in full force and effect.

**B. Veterans Day (November 11, 2020)**

Mrs. Niki Fryou announced the Proclamation of Veterans Day held November 11th on behalf of Mrs. Amber Monceaux in her absence. Mrs. Fryou asked the Board to approve a day or recognition for St. Mary Parish Schools to recognize the contributions of our nation’s military and applaud parish schools to commemorate Veterans Day through classroom activities and moments of silence honoring these heroes.

Mr. Alfred offered a motion and Ms. LaSalle offered a second to proclaim “Veterans Day” for November 11, 2020 as presented by Mrs. Niki Fryou.

Mr. Alfred inquired if board members would be allowed to attend assemblies that may be held and to provide the Board a schedule when available.

Mrs. Fryou replied that schools will be provided options. Microsoft Teams is also an option, which would allow a guest to log-in virtually. A schedule of assemblies will be provided after plans are finalized.

Ms. LaSalle indicated that her daughter is deployed in the military, and she is also a JAG who will be in charge of the law administration for the Afghanistan Military Operations.

Mrs. Rack stated that her husband was wounded twice in Vietnam as a veteran of the United States Marine Corps.

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

##### 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; and

**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 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 8th day of October, 2020

## Item 6: Approve funds for the Sixteenth Judicial District Office of the District Attorney and Family Service Division Family in Needs of Service (FINS) Program for providing

**services to at risk students during the 2020-2021 school year.**

Mr. Stadalis stated in August he received an email from Mr. Gannon Watts, the Administrative Director with the Sixteenth Judicial Family Court Division. Mr. Watts requested funding from the St. Mary Parish School Board to operate the Families in Need of Services Program (FINS Program), due to the funding cuts, which was funded by the Louisiana Supreme Court. After further discussion, Mr. Watts resumed with an email stating that $15,000 would provide services to a maximum of 40 students and $25,000 would provide services for 70 students in the Families in Need of Services Program (FINS). Mr. Stadalis stated that 108 cases were served, and 3,228 contacts made last year in St. Mary Parish Schools. He asked that the Board consider approving the requested funds for the Families in Need of Services Programs (FINS Program).

Ms. LaSalle made a motion to approve $15,000 for the Sixteenth Judicial District Office Attorney and Family Service Division in Needs of Service (FINS) Program to help provide services to at risk students during the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Rack made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

# Staff Reports

## Chief Financial Officer’s Report:

## Sales Tax Update

Mr. Perry reported that the sales tax collections for September 2020 was $84,000 unfavorable and year to date $81,000 favorable.

## Financial Statements (Major Funds Only)

# Other Significant Items:

None

# Superintendent’s Report:

Dr. Bagwell indicated that school systems annually report student counts for the purpose of establishing funding through the state’s Minimum Foundation Program. St. Mary reported a total of 7,679 students in grades K through 12, which represents a decrease of approximately 6 percent from last year equating to 494 students. Declines in student enrollment are common across the state this year, and it is an area of deep concern. Given the impact that it has on funding for districts, just as they are experiencing the financial burdens associated with COVID-19. A second student count will be submitted on February 1, 2020, that will also factor into the MSP budget for St. Mary Parish. The state recently released some important student data from 2020, despite the suspension of accountability. St. Mary’s ACT composite average remained steady at 18.3 for 2019-2020. While unofficial calculations of another aspect school performance score increased significantly. Referred to as a DCAI (Dropout Credit Accumulation Index Data) is based on the number of course credits earned by ninth graders by the end of their freshman year, which is designed to indicate the successful transition into high school. St. Mary’s DCAI (Dropout Credit Accumulation Index Data) for 2019-2020 increased by 12.4 points, moving from 133.5 to 145.9. The ability of students to earn high school credit in both middle school and during their first year of high school is demonstrated through our continual gains in DCAI (Dropout Credit Accumulation Index Data). Finally, the state released data regarding the newly instituted Interest and Opportunities index, which will be part of every school’s performance for this year. The information is taken from various enrichment course that students are enrolled in from K through 12. St. Mary’s K through 8 interest in opportunities index was reported at 109.7 and the high school at the highest rate of 150. In the 2020-2021 school year, this information will account for 5 percent of the school’s performance score. In closing, Dr. Bagwell recognized Pre-K teachers at Maitland Elementary, Ms. Rebecca Nguyen, and Ms. Laura Cortez for earning the state’s highest excellent rating in the early childhood performance for four consecutive years.

# Other Business as Allowed by Act 131.

None

# Closing:

## Resolution of Respect

With there being no further business to address, the meeting adjourned out of respect for the late Allen “Fly” Adams, Jr. (former custodian), Alma B. Ina (retired guidance counselor), and Elton Taylor (retired 7th grade science teacher and principal).