

# CLAIBORNE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

## MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

April 11, 2024

The Claiborne Parish School Board met in a regular session at the Claiborne Parish School Board office in Homer, Louisiana, at six o'clock, April 11, 2024, with the following members:

*Present: Patricia Stevens, Stewart Griffin, William Maddox, Linda Knox, Yolanda Coleman, Perry Anderson, Tommy Davidson, Roy Mardis, David Nokes, Mark Perot*

*Absent:*

There was also present Mr. William Kennedy, Secretary of the Board.

Mr. Mardis, Board Member, opened the meeting with prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Ms. Coleman to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting held March 7, 2024, Special Called Meeting held March 19, 2024, the Special Called Meeting held March 20, 2024 and the Finance Committee Meeting held March 25, 2024, which had been emailed to the Board Members previously. Motion passed by a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

Ms. Twyla Hilton informed the Board that each year we receive a check from Dr. Patricia Bates, President of the Claiborne Parish Education Endowment Fund, to recognize students with outstanding performances on the last year's tests. Dr. Bates was unable to attend this evening but presented a check to Ms. Hilton earlier in the week in the amount of \$1,500. This money will be distributed between the six campuses. Our district is thankful and appreciative of their support of our students.

Ms. Wanda Finley, Head Start Director for Webster Parish, addressed the Board. She presented statistics of the Head Start Program in Claiborne Parish, which has been in Claiborne Parish for approximately 25 years. There are currently 33 children enrolled in Homer and 25 children enrolled in Haynesville. She emphasized the importance of the Head Start Program and Early Head Start Program in our parishes. These programs help young children prepare and transition into our schools. She asked the Board to continue our collaboration in the future. Ms. Finley thanked Superintendent Kennedy and Ms. Mary Prior (Special Education Supervisor) for their assistance and support through the years.

Superintendent Kennedy requested the Board to grant permission for teachers and students to travel out of state for the National FBLA Convention which will be held in Orlando, Florida. He also asked them to consider giving financial support to the students, sponsors and chaperones who will be attending the FBLA National Convention. Summerfield High had three students who qualified at the State Conference – Shayla Ford, Mailee Jee and Braylin Brown. Additionally, Ms. Bridgette Gray (FBLA Sponsor) and Ms. Katie Hoolan (chaperone) would be attending. Homer High had six students who qualified at the State Conference – Asiah Franklin, Anna Lumbreras, Tytiana Thomas, Andrevious Buggs, Alexis Kennedy and LaDamien Turner.

Ms. Shae Black (FBLA Sponsor) and a male and female chaperone would also be attending. These students will also be fundraising to supplement their trip. Mr. Davidson made a motion to provide financial support to the 9 students, 2 sponsors and 3 chaperones in the amount of \$1,200 each. Mr. Mardis seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Neal Johnson, Board Attorney, reviewed sections of the proposed superintendent contract for superintendent-elect Mr. Chris Brooks. This would be a 3-year contract, beginning June 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2027. He briefly went over salary, car allowance, insurance required, specific performance objectives and targets. Mr. Davidson made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Mr. Nokes. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 10 yays, 0 nays.

|                  | YAYS | NAYS | ABSTAINED | ABSENT |
|------------------|------|------|-----------|--------|
| Patricia Stevens | X    |      |           |        |
| Stewart Griffin  | X    |      |           |        |
| William Maddox   | X    |      |           |        |
| Linda Knox       | X    |      |           |        |
| Yolanda Coleman  | X    |      |           |        |
| Tommy Davidson   | X    |      |           |        |
| Roy Mardis       | X    |      |           |        |
| David Nokes      | X    |      |           |        |
| Mark Perot       | X    |      |           |        |
| Perry Anderson   | X    |      |           |        |

Superintendent Kennedy asked the Board to approve the Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) Resolution. This resolution opposes House Bill 745, which creates the LA GATOR Scholarship Program that provides public dollars for private school tuition and educational expenses, as it is currently written. He stated as it is currently written it does not have accountability system in place to determine if a private school is the better choice of school. Private schools do not have LEAP tests and therefore, are not given a School Performance Score (SPS), which public schools are required to administer and are given. Motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Mardis, seconded by Ms. Knox. Motion passed by a roll call vote of 7 yays, 2 nays, and 1 abstained.

|                  | YAYS | NAYS | ABSTAINED | ABSENT |
|------------------|------|------|-----------|--------|
| Patricia Stevens | X    |      |           |        |
| Stewart Griffin  | X    |      |           |        |
| William Maddox   | X    |      |           |        |
| Linda Knox       | X    |      |           |        |
| Yolanda Coleman  | X    |      |           |        |
| Tommy Davidson   |      | X    |           |        |
| Roy Mardis       | X    |      |           |        |
| David Nokes      |      | X    |           |        |
| Mark Perot       | X    |      |           |        |
| Perry Anderson   |      |      | X         |        |

**RESOLUTION**

A Resolution expressing opposition to state legislation establishing Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), including House Bill 745 which creates the LA GATOR Scholarship Program, that provide public dollars for private school tuition and educational expenses and to urge the Claiborne Parish legislative delegation to vote **NO** on any bill proposing an Education Savings Account, and otherwise to provide with respect thereto.

WHEREAS, there is a renewed and concerted effort at the legislature to pass bills that will give public funds directly to parents to be used for private school tuition and other educational expenses with little to no oversight; and

WHEREAS, for the past 20 years, the state has failed to adequately fund K-12 public education; and

WHEREAS, during that same period the state has continuously placed new accountability demands on both our students and our schools; and

WHEREAS, the Claiborne Parish School Board provides free public K-12 education to **any** student who resides in our school district within the guidelines set by both the state and federal government; and

WHEREAS, diverting public dollars to private schools and other programs through Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) without fully funding public schools disadvantages our students and schools; and

WHEREAS, providing public dollars to ESAs without requiring the same state accountability testing imposed on public school students is irresponsible public policy.

THEREFORE, the Claiborne Parish School Board does hereby express its **OPPOSITION** to legislation creating and/or funding Education Savings Accounts.

FURTHER, the Claiborne Parish School Board directs the superintendent of the Claiborne Parish School System to deliver a certified copy of this Resolution to each member of the legislative delegation of Claiborne Parish.

YAYS: 7  
NAYS: 2  
ABSENT: 0  
ABSTAINED: 1

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <hr/> William Kennedy, Superintendent | <hr/> Perry Anderson, Board President |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

Superintendent Kennedy requested to approve policy revision – BE (School Board Ethics). Motion to approve was made by Mr. Davidson, seconded by Ms. Coleman. Motion passed by a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

Ms. Micki Turner reviewed the March 2024 financials with the Board.

Superintendent's Report:

1. Ms. Prior – Dyslexia screeners will be given to all kindergarteners by the end of the school year.
2. Ms. Hilton – Testing is currently underway. She is working on data review for the high schools.
3. Mr. Brooks – Jump Start Summers Grant has been 100% funded. In the next few weeks will have confirmed students for the program.
4. Ms. Haynes – April 17<sup>th</sup> is the beginning of the LEAP testing window. The Reimagine Grant will be ending in September 2024. She will be giving a more in-depth update at next month's meeting.
5. Mr. Martin – KARE graduation will be May 15<sup>th</sup>. There should be 4 graduates. He invited the Board to attend. At the LA Tech recruitment event, 2 certified teachers were hired. We also have possibly 4-5 more certified teachers to be hired.
6. Superintendent Kennedy reminded everyone of the upcoming parish-wide maintenance tax election on April 27<sup>th</sup> with early voting beginning next Saturday. He asked the Board to be prepared to answer questions they may receive from constituents.
7. There was an article in last week's issue of the Guardian Journal on the Louisiana Recovery School District Program. He stated the article was not accurate in stating Homer Jr. High would be one of the schools taken over by the State. After a conversation with Dr. Pamela Schooler, Recovery School District Superintendent, she reassured him that Homer Jr. is a potential school to receive help, but it is not being taken over. Apparently, the article was originally written in the Louisiana Illuminator.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

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Perry Anderson, President  
Claiborne Parish School Board

ATTEST:

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Mr. William Kennedy, Secretary  
Claiborne Parish School Board