

Centerville, Louisiana

November 9, 2023

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in regular session on Thursday, November 9, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, Louisiana, with the following members answering to roll call:

**Invocation**

Ms. Estay gave the Invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.**

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

**Introduction of Students and Employees of the Month**

**Berwick High School:**

Principal Toney Linn introduced 12<sup>th</sup> grader Cherish Lewis as Student of the Month at Berwick High School. She was accompanied by her parents, her younger sister, and older brother. Cherish has gone above and beyond her dedication of academics, taking honors and dual enrollment classes, and maintaining a 4.1333 GPA. She was recently recognized by the College Board, earning the African American Recognition Award for her performance on the PSAT taken last year. She was also recently named Berwick High School's Student of the Year. She is a student of the St. Mary Parish Gifted and Talented Visual Arts program. Cherish participates in clubs such as Student Council, HOSA and Beta, and volunteers with sports such as track, youth soccer, and T-ball. She uses her extra time to give back and service projects such as volunteering and school tutoring, Christmas toy drives and school supply giveaways. In the future, Cherish would like to attend Xavier University and major in psychology and premedical pathway. She would like to become an emergency room doctor or a pediatrician. Principal Linn proudly presented Cherish Lewis as Student of the Month at Berwick High School.

Principal Toney Linn introduced Zachary Stewart, biology teacher, as Employee of the Month at Berwick High School. Coach Stewart is a biology teacher, football assistant coach, and baseball assistant coach. He was accompanied by his parents, a nephew, and a brother-in-law. On the field, he encourages students to compete to be the best to their ability and support them to the fullest. He is an educator who emphasizes what it means to have trust-based relationships to meet students where they are and drive them to their full potential. Coach Stewart shows up to school every day with a smile and with a genuine concern for others. His unwavering dedication and passion for students is what makes him truly stand out and why students celebrate as they mention of his name. Principal Linn proudly presented Coach Zachary Stewart as Employee of the Month at Berwick High School.

**Centerville High School:**

Centerville High School was not able to attend the meeting. Principal Jared Ross will introduce Student and Employee of the Month at a later meeting.

**Morgan City Junior High School:**

Principal Amber Monceaux introduced 8<sup>th</sup> grader Whitley Berry as Student of the Month at Morgan City Junior High School. She was accompanied by her parents and grandparents. Whitley is the drum major at Morgan City Junior High School, and she is also a 4.0 student. She was also the September 8<sup>th</sup> grade Top Tiger of the Month. Whitley is a member of the Morgan City Junior High Student Council and volleyball team. Outside of school, she enjoys being a member of the Bayou Vista Baptist Youth Group and Children's Choir, where she enjoys going to camp and fellowshiping with other youth, as well as singing. Her top interest in life is Jesus Christ, dance, and band. Math is her favorite subject, but she also enjoys her Gifted and Talented

Art classes. She completes all work on time and is usually 100 percent correct on everything. She is a model student that all teachers desire. Principal Monceaux proudly presented Whitley Berry as Student of the Month at Morgan City Junior High School.

Principal Amber Monceaux introduced Emily Berry, 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher, as Employee of the Month at Morgan City Junior High School. Mrs. Berry was accompanied by her parents, husband, and daughter Whitley (Morgan City Junior High School student of the month). She is the student council sponsor and a member of Morgan City Junior High School PBIS committee. According to her coworkers, Mrs. Berry's attitude and positive spirit have been inspiring, her bulletin boards and school decorations are truly amazing. Mrs. Berry is always looking for the next opportunity to help someone or volunteer to do something. When Mrs. Berry is not lending her talents to Morgan City Junior High, she is involved at Bayou Vista Baptist Church as the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday School teacher and youth worker, Girls in Action co-teacher, Summer Camp group leader for 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders, and she handles all their vacation Bible School decorations. She is also the Terrific Kids and Bugs chairperson for East St. Mary Kiwanis Club. Most importantly, she's a band mom, a soccer mom. Principal Monceaux proudly presented Mrs. Berry as Employee of the Month at Morgan City Junior High School.

#### **Appearances:**

#### **Introduction of Pre-Educator Courses at Morgan City High School and West St. Mary High School and recognition of teachers.**

Ms. Kristin Percle and Mrs. Noelle Lowrimore announced the launch of St. Mary Parish's Pre-Educator Pathway opportunity at Morgan City High School and West St. Mary High School. These courses have been crafted to introduce St. Mary's students to the dynamic world of education, equipping them with skills and knowledge. Students in these courses are gaining practical exposure, which provides invaluable insights into the teaching profession, fostering a deep-rooted passion for education.

Recognition of the two Pre-Educator instructors was Ms. Leslie Smith of Morgan City High School and Ms. Grace Gordey of West St. Mary High School. These two educators are truly sharing their compassion and expertise in education with their students.

#### **Recognition of Ashley Velez from Franklin Senior High School, as she has been selected as the JAG President-elect for the state of Louisiana.**

Principal Natasha Jackson proudly recognized Mrs. Ponchella Doucet, Franklin Senior High School's exceptional JAG (Jobs for America's Graduates) teacher, who has been a valued member of St. Mary Parish School's community since 2008. She took on the role of a JAG specialist at Franklin Senior High School in 2016. Mrs. Doucet has earned accolades such as Franklin High's 2021-2022 Teacher of the Month, Teacher of the Year, and even achieved the esteemed status of a semifinalist for the Teacher of the Year for the State of Louisiana.

Mrs. Doucet proudly introduced Ashley Velez, a senior of Franklin Senior High School, as she has been selected as the JAG president-elect for the state of Louisiana. She became a member of the Jobs for America's Graduates program in Junior High, and she quickly fell in love with the program. She later continued her JAG journey at the high school level and was elected as the local secretary. She is also a member of FFA and Student Council. Ashley was later elected by the local chapter to serve as Franklin Senior High School's 2023-2024 JAG Career Association president. She competed further and was elected as president elect for the state of Louisiana. She is highly motivated, passionate in helping others and extremely dedicated to the JAG program. She will also be the very first in her immediate family to graduate high school. She will adequately represent St. Mary Parish, as well as the State of Louisiana.

#### **Recognition of School Health Service Provider of the Year.**

Ms. Estay proudly presented Mrs. Lydia Duval as the St. Mary Parish School Board's selected school health service provider of the year. She will also go to the state level to compete for school service provider. Mrs. Duval has been a certified ancillary school nurse and health occupation teacher for 29 years at the St. Mary Parish School Board. She served on committees with the Louisiana Department of Education, Children's Hospital's, and Office of Public Health Region 3. She served as an adjunct faculty member for Nicholls State University, Young Memorial

and nursing assistant coordinator and director of the EMT/EMR programs for the district. She is the liaison for the school-based Health Center with Teche Action Clinic and Ochsner Saint Mary's and has served to help develop programs for students and staff with nutrition, wellness, and health. She is a lifelong learner, and she is highly trained courtesy of the St. Mary Parish School Board. Mrs. Duval would like to be a Pink Lady at a hospital when she retires from the St. Mary Parish School Board.

**Approval of Amended Agenda.**

No amended agenda.

**Approval of Official School Board Minutes.**

Ms. Jones offered the motion and Mrs. Griffin offered the second to approve the official school board minutes from the regular school board meeting held on October 12, 2023. All in favor and the motion carried. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Approval of Consent Agenda.**

President Black stated that Board Members can remove any of the items on the consent agenda for further discussion in the regular proceedings. Dr. Fegenbush read aloud the items on the consent agenda as follows:

**New Business**

**Personnel:**

**Item 1.** \*Approval of policies from Forethought Consulting as revised by Hammonds and Sills

- A. \*Executive Sessions (BCBK)
- C. \*Emergency/Crisis Management (EBBC)
- G. \*Maternity and Adoptive Leave (GBRIC)

**Item 6.** \*Permission to advertise for bids for alligator tags

**Item 8.** \*Field Trips

- A. \*Morgan City High School, Close Up travel to Washington, D.C. Metro Area  
January 21-26, 2024.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the exception of pulling Items 1-B, 1-D, 1-E, and 1-F, as presented by Dr. Fegenbush. Mr. Mancuso made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.

**Personnel:**

**Item 1.** Approval of policies from Forethought Consulting as revised by Hammonds and Sills (moved from consent)

Mr. Mancuso stated that he pulled Items 1-B, 1-D, 1-E, 1-F from the consent agenda for further discussion.

- B. Annual Operation Budget (DC)

Mr. Mancuso made a motion and seconded by Mr. Paradee to approve Item 1-B by adding the last sentence of the first paragraph back into the policy which stated, "In addition, no later than September 30th of each year, the School Board shall post the most recent budget and general summary on its website." All in favor and the motion carried.

- D. Public Health Emergency (EBBI)

Mr. Mancuso made a motion and seconded by Mrs. Dennis to approve Item 1-D by revising the first paragraph of the policy to state, "When a public health emergency is declared by the Governor by proclamation or executive order of the state of Louisiana, the St. Mary Parish School Board shall grant the Superintendent broad authority to develop, implement, and maintain administrative regulations and procedures necessary to protect employees and students from the conditions giving rise to the declared emergency." All in favor and the motion carried.

**E. Student Transportation Management (ED)**

Mr. Mancuso made a motion and seconded by Mrs. Anslem to remove the first sentence under school activities on page 1 and also remove the word, however, from the beginning of the second sentence. All in favor and the motion carried with Mrs. Griffin voting nay.

**F. Sick Leave (GBRIB)**

Mr. Mancuso made a motion and seconded by Mrs. Anslem to revise the wording of the fourth bullet under TERMINOLOGY on page 2 to state, "The use of the term employee shall include all full-time employees of all three (3) categories of personnel reference in the policy." All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 2. Approval of policies from Forethought Consulting as revised by Hammonds and Sills**

**A. Audits (DID)**

Mr. Mancuso made a motion and seconded by Mr. Paradee to approve the Audits (DID) policy with changing "shall" to "may" in the last sentence of the first paragraph under INTERNAL FINANCIAL AUDITS. All in favor and the motion carried.

**B. Video/Audio Monitoring of School Board Property (EBCB)**

Mrs. Anslem made a motion and seconded by Mrs. LaSalle to approve the Video/Audio Monitoring of School Board Property (EBCB) policy revised by Hammonds and Sills, as presented by Ms. Estay. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Business Affairs:**

**Item 3. Consider proposed January 1, 2024, renewals for the following employee benefit plans and take appropriate action.**

Mr. Perez provided a brief summary of the 2024 renewals for the employee benefit plans. The fully insured renewal plan will increase a little over \$1,700,000 for the year, which the Board agreed to absorb. There will be no adjustments to employees and no changes in benefits.

Self-funding would better serve the long-term interest for the St. Mary Parish School Board and the employees. However, due to large claims in the month of October, it would not be the time for self-funding. Mr. Perez recommended that the Board remain fully insured for 2024 and consider moving to self-funding effective in 2025.

**A. Commercial Group Health Plan-Consider Fully Insured and Partially Self Options.**

Mrs. Griffin made a motion and seconded by Mr. Paradee to approve the Commercial Group Health Plan-Consider Fully Insured and Partially Self-Funded Options, as presented by Mr. Perez. All in favor and the motion carried.

**B. Voluntary Group Vision Plan**

The Voluntary Group Vision Plan renewal information was provided in the Board's packet. This is a voluntary vision plan for active employees, which is completely paid by employees. Mr. Perry recommended that the Board remain with Davis Vision Plan, as illustrated in the packet, which had a slight increase in premiums and is accepted by Walmart.

Mrs. Anslem made a motion and seconded by Ms. LaSalle to approve the Voluntary Group Vision Plan, as presented by Mr. Perez. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 4. Permission to add an additional \$24,000 in capital funds to complete the \$48,000 funding for lockers at Franklin High School.**

Mr. Wiese indicated during the special projects meeting this summer, \$24,000 was set aside to purchase lockers at Franklin High School. He is requesting to transfer an additional \$24,000 of District I Maintenance Funds to Capital Funds for a total of \$48,000 to be added to that project.

Mr. Pontiff made a motion and seconded by Ms. Jones to approve the additional \$24,000 from District I Maintenance Funds to Capital Funds, completing the \$48,000 funding for lockers at Franklin High School, as presented by Mr. Wiese. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 5. Permission to advertise for bids to purchase 310 lockers at Franklin High School.**

Ms. Jones made a motion and seconded by Mrs. Anslem to grant permission to advertise bids to purchase 310 lockers at Franklin High School, as presented by Mr. Wiese. All in favor and the motion carried.

**Item 7.** Discuss and take action on school board president to sign and approve normal board member travel arrangements.

The Superintendent is currently approving the board member travel arrangements. Ms. LaSalle proposed that the school board president approve board member travel arrangements.

Ms. LaSalle made a motion and seconded by Mrs. Griffin to approve school board president to sign and approve board member travel arrangements.

Ms. LaSalle also stated that the Board needs to write a policy explaining board member travel after a member reaching the allocated amount of \$6,000 per member and the request shall be presented to the Executive Committee for approval after the amount has been reached.

President Black replied that the School Board Member Compensation and Expenses (BBBE) policy will be updated and presented at the December 14<sup>th</sup> regular school board meeting.

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

## **Reports**

### **Committees:**

The Special Education Advisory Council met on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 4:00 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, Louisiana.

Ms. McClarity reported that a quorum was not met for the Special Education Advisory Council Meeting. However, the committee proceeded with the agenda discussing items that did not require action. The Special Education Advisory members and Special Services staff that attended the meeting were introduced. Mrs. Carmen LaGarde, Coordinator of Special Services provided a handout and a brief summary on LEAP Connect for Elementary Schools. Dr. Katherine Drexler, Coordinator of Special Services provided a brief summary on LEAP Connect for Junior High and High Schools. The Special Olympics Track meet time and date will be determined later. Ms. McClarity thanked board members who attended the Special Olympics Bowling event, which was held at the Bowling Alley in Morgan City on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Staff Report:**

#### **Chief Financial Officer's Report:**

##### **Sale Tax Update**

Mr. Perry reported that the sales tax collections for four months into the fiscal year collected \$1,700,000 versus a budget of \$1,560,000.

#### **Financial Statements (Major Funds Only):**

The Board was provided financial statements for major funds only to review at their leisure.

#### **Other Significant Items:**

None

#### **Superintendent's Report:**

Dr. Fegenbush reported on October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, school systems report student enrollment numbers in grades K through 12 that are used to determine funding allotments, according to the state's Minimum Foundation Program. St. Mary Parish Public Schools reported a total of 7,238 students, which is down 210 students from the 7,448 students reported at the same time last year. A second student count will be submitted on February 1<sup>st</sup>, which will also be factored into the overall MFP budget for St. Mary Parish schools.

Schools and district performance scores will be publicly released by the Louisiana Department of Education on Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. The St. Mary Parish School system will issue an additional media release of the performance of our schools and district at that time.

November 11<sup>th</sup> is the traditional recognition of Veteran's Day across our great nation. Across our school district, ceremonies were held today and will continue to be held tomorrow, to recognize the contributions of our nation's veterans. On behalf of the St. Mary Parish School Board, Dr. Fegenbush thanked the veterans of the armed forces for their sacrifices that have allowed us to live as free citizens.

In closing, Dr. Fegenbush wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. May the time you share with your family and loved ones remind you of the many blessings that we all share.

**Strategy session and/or action concerning pending litigation.**

As authorized by La.R.S. 42:17(A)(2), there may be an executive session to discuss strategy in litigation entitled "Boudreaux, et al vs. School Board of St. Mary Parish," bearing Civil Action No. 6:65-11351 on the docket of the United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana.

There was no strategy session and/or action concerning pending litigation to discuss currently.

**Closing:**

**Resolutions of Respect**

Ms. Estay read the Resolutions of Respect for the late Angie Gauthier (retired high school guidance counselor), and Margaret Scelfo (retired clerk typist II).

**Adjournment:**

With there being no further business to address, Mrs. Anslem made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 p.m. Mr. Mancuso made a second, all in favor and the motion carried.