

GENERAL COMMITTEE REPORT
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2015

The St. Bernard Parish School Board met as a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the St. Bernard Parish School Board Office. Following the Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance, the Secretary called the roll. Members present were, Dr. Hugh C. Craft, President, Mrs. Darleen P. Asevedo, Mr. William H. Egan, Mr. Clifford M. Englande, Mrs. Diana B. Dysart, Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr., Mr. Joseph V. Long, Sr., Mr. Ronald J. Nicosia and Mr. Sean K. Warner. Mr. Donald D. Campbell and Mrs. Katherine K. Lemoine were absent.

On a point of privilege, Dr. Craft wished Mrs. Dysart a Happy Birthday on behalf of the Board. Mrs. Dysart thanked everyone for their birthday wishes.

Also on a point of personal privilege, Mr. Cliff Englande mentioned to the Board that a Disney movie titled “The Invisible Sister” that was shot on our own Chalmette High School grounds is now playing on the Disney Channel. Having already watched the film, Mr. Englande noted that the school looked wonderful. Mr. Long agreed as he also had already watched the film. Both Committee Members encouraged people to watch it when it plays next Saturday night at 7 p.m.

Dr. Craft next welcomed Mr. Charles Cassar to present information concerning the upcoming Red Ribbon Week. Mr. Cassar noted that the national and local effort to reduce drug activity will take place from October 23 – 31, 2015. The theme this year is “Respect Yourself. Be Drug Free.” Mr. Cassar noted that rally activities and speakers will be presented throughout the school system during this week. A proclamation of support for Red Ribbon Week will be signed at the Regular Monthly Meeting.

Mr. Englande as Executive Committee Chair welcomed Mr. Ronald Alonzo, Supervisor of Building and Grounds and 5 members of an Entergy Project Lead Team to explore a request from Entergy to purchase a small portion of land in Arabi from the School System for a new Arabi substation. Present for Entergy were, Mr. Craig Canepa, Mr. Aaron Kinchen, Mr. Curtis Navis, Mr. Brenden Oldendorf and Ms. Toni Brown.

Mr. Canepa spoke for the team and stated that this project is expected to create better reliability and restoration of electricity during storm events. The current

substation is 50 years old and located in a hard to reach marsh location in Arabi. Entergy is hoping to place this new state-of-the-art substation inside the levee system in Arabi on property that belongs to the school system where the old Drivers Education driving range is located. Mr. Canepa stated that moving that substation out of the marsh, inside the levee where accessibility would be much easier, with newer equipment would benefit the St. Bernard Community and Entergy. Mr. Canepa also stated that Entergy would be prepared to replace the existing driving range to another location that the School System chooses. An entrance road is being planned to reach that substation and attractive sound buffering fencing is also expected to be part of the substation installation.

After all questions and concerns were addressed by the Committee, Mr. Englande stated that the possibility of this project will be taken under advisement.

Mrs. Dysart as Education Committee Chair welcomed Mr. Tommie Powell to present information on the “Ruler” approach.” Mr. Powell explained that in the summer of 2014 a group of St. Bernard educators travelled to Yale University to learn about emotional intelligence. “Ruler”, Mr. Powell stated, stands for:

- R** Recognizing emotions in yourself and others
- U** Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- L** Labeling emotions accurately
- E** Expressing emotions appropriately
- R** Regulating emotions effectively

Mr. Powell further explained that there are four components to the RULER program.

Charter - a collaborative document that helps schools establish supportive and productive learning environments. It is created by members of the school community, outlining how they aspire to treat each other.

Mood Meter - Using the Mood Meter, students and educators become more mindful of how their emotions change throughout the day and how their emotions in turn affect their actions.

Meta Moment - The Meta-Moment helps students and educators handle strong emotions so that they make better decisions for themselves and their community. The Meta-Moment is a brief step back from the situation when we pause and think before acting.

Blueprint - The Blueprint helps students and educators manage conflict effectively. Using the Blueprint, children and adults consider a disagreement from the other person's perspective, as well as their own. They develop empathy by considering each other's feelings and working collaboratively to identify healthy solutions to conflicts.

Mr. Powell introduced Mrs. Andrea Licciardi, Assistant Principal of Andrew Jackson Middle School and Mr. Paul Tran, Counselor at St. Bernard Middle School, to explain how the use of this program has affected students in their schools. Mrs. Licciardi and Mr. Tran both had positive things to say about the use of this program with both students and staff. Both found the tools of this program easy to share with their middle school students who need to learn positive ways to express the feelings that are ruling their actions.

Mrs. Dysart thanked Mr. Powell, Ms. Licciardi and Mr. Tran for appearing before the Committee and was impressed with their commitment to a program like this to help regulate the emotions of their students.

Ms. Voitier presented the Personnel changes for October 2015. Mrs. Voitier acknowledged retirees Ms. Barbara Everhardt, Cafeteria Manager at Trist Middle who has been with the system for 31 year and Mrs. Deborah Lord a teacher for 34 years know for her work in Special Education. Ms. Voitier also noted that there was a request for Leave without pay from Ms. Karen Westcott which requires a Committee vote for recommendation.

Dr. Lewis moved to recommend to the Board to approve the leave without pay for Ms. Karen Westcott. Seconded by Mrs. Dysart, the motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of the members present.

Mrs. Dysart also added her congratulations to the retirees stating that Ms. Lord has been an incredible teacher and Ms. Everhardt has been a dedicated employee. She wished them both a successful retirement.

Mr. Englande as Executive Committee chair invited Ms. Voitier to present the next agenda item regarding a resolution to authorize the Board President to sign an Act of Donation for the Meraux Elementary School property.

Ms. Voitier explained that the School System Administration is nearing the end of the legal process for the Meraux Foundation to donate the property on Paris Road for the new Meraux Elementary School. Ms. Voitier hopes to bring Mr. and Mrs.

Gue of the Meraux Foundation to the October Regular Monthly Meeting to make that donation. A resolution has been developed to allow Board President, Dr. Hugh Craft, to accept the donation.

Mr. Warner moved to recommend to the full Board to approve the resolution allowing Dr. Hugh Craft, Board President, to sign and accept the donation of land from the Meraux Foundation to build the Meraux Elementary School on Paris Road. Seconded by Mrs. Dysart, the motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of the members present.

Mr. Nicosia welcomed Mrs. Joni Blum to present a request for permission to advertise for bids for Paper, Cleaning and Custodial Supplies for a six month period.

Mr. Long moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of the request for permission to bid for Paper, Cleaning and Custodial Supplies for a six month period. Seconded by Mr. Warner, the motion passed with no objections by a roll call vote of the members present.

Mr. Nicosia next welcomed Mr. David Fernandez, Finance Manager, to present the revised 2015 – 2016 General Fund and Special Revenue Fund budgets. Mr. Fernandez noted that the changes in the General fund reflect year end encumbrances and fund balances; the only other change is pay raises that were granted to all staff. He also noted that some adjustments were also made in regard to grant amounts. In reference to the Lunch Fund, Mr. Fernandez noted that the only change was in the aforementioned pay raises. Mr. Fernandez pointed out that the changes to the Special Revenue Funds reflected the final amounts awarded for these programs.

Dr. Craft moved to recommend to the Board to approve the revisions to the 2015 – 2016 General Fund and Special Revenue Fund Budgets. Seconded by Mr. Egan, the motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of the members present.

Under Superintendent's Recommendations, Ms. Voitier hopes to have the donation of the Meraux Elementary land ready to appear on the Regular Monthly Meeting agenda and also the Audit Report for the 2014-2015 fiscal year will be presented. She also reminded everyone that October 22, 2015 will be a professional development day for teachers in the morning and report card conferences will be held in the afternoon into the evening.

There being no further business to discuss, and on motion of Mr. Warner, seconded by Mrs. Asevedo and passed by a unanimous voice vote of the members present, the meeting was adjourned.