



Regular Meeting of St. Mary Parish School
Board
09/03/2026 05:30 PM
Evans Medine Meeting Room
474 Hwy 317, Centerville, LA 70522

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Voting Members

Guienzy Brent, Board Member
Dr. Tammie Wilson, Board Member - Vice President
Lindsey Anslem, Board Member
Debra Jones, Board Member
Ginger Griffin, Board Member
Chad Paradee, Board Member
Alaina Black, Board Member - President
Andrew Mancuso, Board Member
Lawrence Guillory, Board Member

Absent Members

Marilyn LaSalle, Board Member
Rhonda Dennis, Board Member

I. Meeting Called to Order (Mrs. Black)

The meeting was called to order by President Black.

1. Roll Call (Dr. Sanders)

The roll call was conducted by Dr. Sanders.

II. Opening of Regular Meeting

The St. Mary Parish School Board met in regular session on Thursday, September 3, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room at the Central Office Complex in Centerville, Louisiana for the following purposes and to take whatever actions necessary. The meeting may be viewed online at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnZ1z15loF_FZnVcBe09cRQ

1. Invocation (Mr. Ina)

Mr. Ina gave the Invocation.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America (Mrs. Black)

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

III. Approval of Amended Agenda (Mrs. Black)

There was no amended agenda.

IV. Approval of Official School Board Minutes (Mrs. Black)

1. Regular Meeting: August 6, 2026

2. Budget Workshop: August 8, 2026

The board approved the official school board minutes from the regular school board meeting held on August 6, 2026, and the School Board Member Budget Workshop held on August 8, 2026, as presented.

Motion made by: Dr. Tammie Wilson

Motion seconded by: Debra Jones

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

V. Approval of Consent Agenda (Mrs. Black)

1. * Field Trips

A. *Franklin High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) travel to National Conference October 20–25, 2026 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, IN (Ms. Estay)

B. *Berwick High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) travel to National Conference on October 20–25, 2026 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, IN. (Ms. Estay)

2. *Permission to submit the Annual Financial Report (AFR) to the State of Louisiana Department of Education for the year ending June 30, 2026 (Mrs. Voisin)

3. *Proclamations

A. *National Hispanic Heritage Month - September 15 to October 15, 2026. (Ms. Mitchell)

B. *Suicide Prevention Month - September 2026. (Ms. Mitchell)

4. *Request for Disposal and Weeding of Library Materials for the 2026-2027 school year. (Ms. Ransonet)

President Black stated that board members can remove any of the items on the consent agenda for further discussion in the regular proceedings. Dr. Sanders read aloud the items on the consent agenda.

The Board approved all consent items as presented by Dr. Sanders.

Motion made by: Guienzy Brent

Motion seconded by: Andrew Mancuso

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

VI. Personnel:

1. Review and approve updated job descriptions. (Mrs. Gunner)

A. Draft Accountant

B. Draft Administrative Assistant to Superintendent

C. Draft Administrative Assistant-CFO

D. Draft Administrative Assistant - Federal

E. Draft Clerical I - Food Service

F. Draft Clerical I - HR & Printing

G. Draft Clerical II - Food Service

H. Draft Clerical III - Instructional and Vocational

I. Draft Clerical III - Insurance

J. Draft Clerical III - Transportation

K. Draft Clerical III-Human Resources

L. Draft Clerical IV - Human Resources

M. Draft Clerical IV - School Accounting

N. Draft Facilities Services Assistant

O. Draft Instrumental Music Teacher

P. Draft LPN Paraprofessional

During discussion of the updated job descriptions, Ms. Jones asked whether the employee in the accountant position is required to have an associate or bachelor's degree. Dr. Sanders stated that a degree is preferred.

Ms. Jones asked whether the employee would be performing internal school audits as indicated in the draft accountant description. Mrs. Voisin explained that a new requirement mandates audits of all 21 schools each year. External auditors will continue auditing six or seven schools, while internal accounting staff will complete the remaining audits.

Ms. Jones asked if the employee would be assisted by a CPA. Mrs. Voisin responded, "Yes ma'am." When asked who the CPA was, Mrs. Voisin stated, "I am."

Ms. Jones questioned whether the job title "Accountant—General Funds" was appropriate since the employee does not hold an accounting degree. Mrs. Voisin explained that the employee has long performed technical accounting work and that her previous job description did not reflect her actual duties. Dr. Sanders is working to correct outdated descriptions.

Ms. Jones expressed concern that the title "accountant" typically implies a degree. Mrs. Voisin stated that the employee performs the work of a degreed accountant and, with 15 years of governmental accounting experience, she would choose her over someone newly graduated.

Dr. Sanders explained that the updated job title is intended to reflect what the employee truly does in the office. She added, "But that's the only impact."

Ms. Jones asked whether someone with an accounting degree could apply for the position. Dr. Sanders replied that if the current employee is no longer in the position and the role must be advertised in the future, then yes, an applicant with an accounting degree could apply.

Mrs. Anslem stated that updating job descriptions is essential for clearly identifying employees' actual responsibilities, which supports accountability and recognition when duties are performed well. She noted that accurate job descriptions ensure employees can be properly acknowledged for their work and held accountable when necessary.

Dr. Sanders stated that when written job descriptions do not match the duties actually performed, evaluations become ineffective. The updates are intended to correct outdated language and align each description with current responsibilities.

Mrs. Gunner stated that these existing positions are updated to reflect actual duties.

Ms. Brent asked whether any positions needed to be advertised.

Mrs. Gunner replied, "No ma'am."

No formal motion was made. The President asked for questions and then proceeded with a vote, stating, "All in favor, motion carried," although a motion had not been offered or seconded.

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

2. Discuss and/or take action regarding employee stipends authorized by the Governor's Executive Order 26-047. (Dr. Sanders)

Dr. Sanders reported that Governor Landry issued an executive order requiring school systems to provide stipends to employees: \$2,000 for certificated staff and \$1,000 for support staff. She stated that the withheld MFP funds are not sufficient to cover stipends for all employees, only for the specific groups identified by the Governor. She listed the employee groups not covered by the MFP stipend funding: principals, assistant principals, deans, counselors, therapists, specialists, certificated district staff, school nurses, pre-K teachers, pre-K paraprofessionals, and long-term substitutes filling full-time vacancies.

Dr. Sanders requested that the board consider providing stipends for all employees, not only those included in the Governor’s designated groups. She stated that doing so would require an additional \$460,000 for the district and noted that the administration has saved funds throughout the year to make this possible. She also requested that teachers on a Temporary Authority to Teach (TAT) receive stipends if they were on a TAT as of the first day of school, August 7, 2026. She further requested that long-term substitutes receive stipends if they were employed on the first day of school.

Dr. Sanders recommended distributing stipends on Friday, April 23, 2027, which is the final check run available before the May 1, 2027, deadline set by LDOE.

During the discussion, Dr. Sanders confirmed that updates are required because the salary schedule must reflect the stipends. She explained that the district will return to the board in October to update the goal book, and that the state must review the district’s documentation before releasing the MFP funds. She stated that the release date of the funds is not yet known.

Mrs. Voisin explained that in recent years, when the state issued the \$2,000 and \$1,000 stipends, the district was required to include stipend language in the goal book, but not in the salary schedule itself. She stated that this has been the traditional process and reflects a historical practice in which the state withholds MFP funds and requires districts to document stipend distribution.

Mrs. Anslem asked whether the stipend notation would count toward a teacher’s top three years of pay for retirement. Mrs. Voisin responded that she would assume so.

The board approved the employee stipends as presented by Dr. Sanders, noting that the Gold Book will be updated with the required stipend verbiage.

Motion made by: Dr. Tammie Wilson

Motion seconded by: Guienzy Brent

Voting results:

Yes: Guienzy Brent

Yes: Dr. Tammie Wilson

Yes: Lindsey Anslem

Yes: Debra Jones

Yes: Ginger Griffin

Abstain: Chad Paradee

Yes: Alaina Black

Abstain: Andrew Mancuso

Yes: Lawrence Guillory

VII. Business Affairs

1. Receive update regarding 2027 commercial group health plan renewal. (Mr. James Perez-DJW Insurance)

Mr. Perez reported that he has not yet received the commercial group health plan renewal, which typically arrives around October 1. To expedite the process, he submitted a request to Blue Cross asking to release the renewal by September 15.

No action was required at this time. This was an informational update.

2. Receive 2027 MAP plan renewal and take appropriate action. (Mr. James Perez-DJW Insurance)

Mr. Perez corrected the renewal options chart, noting that Options 2 and 3 should reference 2027 Blue Cross Blue Advantage revised benefits. He reported

that the initial Medicare Advantage renewal from Blue Cross reflected a 25% increase, later reduced through negotiation to a 10% increase, raising the premium from \$316 to \$348 per member per month.

He reviewed four Medicare Advantage options for retirees:

Option 1: Maintain current benefits, with retirees absorbing the \$32 per member per month increase; no cost impact to the board.

Option 2: Revise benefits to avoid any premium increase. Retirees would have a \$500 deductible, a \$10 specialist co-payment, and a \$50 per-day inpatient co-pay for the first 10 days, with a \$1,500 annual out-of-pocket maximum. This option would save the board over \$200,000.

Option 3: Allow retirees to choose between the current plan (with the \$32 increase) or the revised plan with deductibles and co-pays. Premiums remain unchanged for those selecting the revised plan; no cost impact on the board.

Option 4: Move coverage to United Healthcare, which offered identical benefits at \$286 per member per month, saving the board approximately \$288,000. Mr. Perez noted that United Healthcare also provided a two-year rate guarantee, with the premium set to \$315 in 2028, slightly below the current \$316 rate. Under this option, premiums would decrease in 2027 and return to current levels in 2028, with no change in benefits.

Mr. Perez stated that retirees overwhelmingly favored Option 1, citing comfort with Blue Cross and concerns about service disruptions and prior authorization requirements under United Healthcare. He explained that any carrier change could cause minor transitional issues, such as ID card delays, though typically affecting fewer than 5% of members.

He recommended deferring the decision until the October 1 meeting to allow the board to review the commercial plan renewal, which may significantly affect budget planning. He expressed concern that recent legislation may increase prescription drug spending and potentially raise commercial plan costs.

Ms. Brent commented that many retirees strongly favored Option 1, noting that some retirees, particularly those who may be incapacitated, do not want any disruption in their medical services. Ms. Brent stated for the record that these individuals have served their time, paid into their insurance, and rely heavily on their current coverage, and therefore prefer to avoid any changes that could interrupt their care.

Ms. Jones noted for the record that retirees who attended the retirees' meeting expressed concerns about changing from Blue Cross Blue Shield to United Healthcare. She stated that many retirees believed their prescription medication coverage had been better under Blue Cross Blue Shield and viewed this as a significant concern.

Mr. Perez clarified that while pharmacy networks and co-pay amounts would be the same, prior authorization requirements under United Healthcare had previously affected access to certain medications, which may explain retirees' concerns.

A motion was made to **table** the Medicare Advantage plan renewal until the October 1, 2026, regular board meeting.

Motion made by: Andrew Mancuso

Motion seconded by: Dr. Tammie Wilson

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

3. Approve casualty insurance for year commencing October 1, 2026. (Mrs. Carmel Breaux-Norris Consulting)

Mrs. Carmel Breaux of Norris Consultant, provided the Board with a renewal update on its liability insurance package, including general liability, automobile

liability, errors and omissions, and cyber liability coverage. The general liability renewal with LMA reflected no changes in coverage, with a total premium of \$309,572, a slight increase over the prior year. In the automobile liability section, the presenter recommended eliminating medical payment coverage after reviewing 18 years of claims data showing \$215,810 in premiums paid but only \$12,673 in claims. Removing this coverage would reduce costs, and updated vehicle schedules also produced an additional savings of approximately \$41,223. The total auto liability premium, reflecting these adjustments, was \$301,278. Errors and omissions coverage remained unchanged, with a renewal premium of \$38,179. Cyber liability coverage through Coalition decreased by about \$3,400, with a renewal premium of \$22,598. The total recommended liability renewal cost was \$671,627, representing an \$11,000 decrease from the prior year.

Mrs. Anslem asked whether removing Med Pay coverage would create liability and how other districts handle such claims.

Mrs. Breaux explained that other boards simply pay a small number of claims out of pocket, noting St. Mary Parish would do the same. When asked about creating a reserve fund, she advised waiting to see actual costs for the first year before setting one up. It was also noted that the board's budget allows for approximately \$58,000 in savings under the proposed renewal.

A motion was made to approve the casualty insurance renewal as presented by Mrs. Breaux.

Motion made by: Andrew Mancuso

Motion seconded by: Lindsey Anslem

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

The motion was amended to reject the uninsured motorist coverage under the automobile policy and to authorize either the superintendent or the board president to sign all required documentation related to that rejection.

Motion made by: Andrew Mancuso

Motion seconded by: Lindsey Anslem

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

4. Approve resolution adopting operating budget of revenues and expenditures for fiscal year ending June 30, 2027 (Mrs. Voisin)

Chief Financial Officer, Becky Voisin, stated that the 26/27 Consolidated budget books have been provided to all board members. The three maintenance districts' shared expenses are budgeted evenly at 33.33%. This budget includes postponing Maintenance District II's remaining three (3) \$249K loan payments for 5 fiscal years (from 26/27 to 30/31, resuming in 31/32). As mentioned in the public hearing held prior to this meeting, the school board is required to adopt the budgets annually on or before 09/15; therefore, Mrs. Voisin requested the board to approve the adoption of the resolution included in your board packets.

Motion made by: Andrew Mancuso

Motion seconded by: Dr. Tammie Wilson

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

5. Approve proposed employee meal price for school year 2026-2027. (Ms. Chaisson)

Ms. Chaisson reported that the Louisiana Department of Education set 2026–2027 minimum adult meal prices at \$2.54 (breakfast) and \$5.19 (lunch). The district's current employee prices are \$2.25 (breakfast) and \$3.75 (lunch) are below the minimum and keeping them requires the general fund to cover the difference. Ms. Chaisson asked whether the board wishes to continue offering discounted employee meal prices, with the general fund covering the difference.

Motion made by: Dr. Tammie Wilson

Motion seconded by: Chad Paradee

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

6. Approve proposed visitor and extra meal price for school year 2026-2027. (Ms. Chaisson)

Ms. Chaisson explained that the state's at-cost minimum does not reflect full local meal preparation costs. The district's current visitor meal prices already exceed the minimum and provide a reasonable margin to cover variable costs. The recommendation was to maintain the existing visitor meal prices of \$3.75 for breakfast and \$5.60 for lunch.

Motion made by: Lawrence Guillory

Motion seconded by: Guienzy Brent

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

7. Memorandum of Understanding between St. Mary Parish School Board and St. Mary/Vermillion CAA Head Start Program with provisions of Public Law 102 - 119 (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Public Law 97 - 35 (Federal Head Start Act). (Ms. Monica Harding-St. Mary CAA Head Start Director)

On behalf of Ms. Monica Harding, Director of the St. Mary Community Action Agency, in her absence, Dr. Sanders explained that this is the annual approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the St. Mary Parish School Board and the St. Mary/Vermilion CAA Head Start Program. She noted that two MOUs (Items 7 and 8) are required each year, including one specifically addressing services for students with disabilities. Head Start serves as the district's lead agency, and state law requires an MOU with the lead agency to maintain compliance.

Motion made by: Guienzy Brent

Motion seconded by: Debra Jones

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

8. Memorandum of Understanding between St. Mary/Vermillion CAA Head Start Program and St. Mary Parish School Board. (Ms. Monica Harding, St. Mary CAA Head Start Director)

Dr. Sanders explained that Items 7 and 8 represent the annual Memoranda of Understanding between the St. Mary Parish School Board and the St. Mary/Vermilion CAA Head Start Program. She noted that one MOU covers services for students with disabilities and the other covers all remaining students and confirmed that there are no changes from last year's agreements.

Motion made by: Ginger Griffin

Motion seconded by: Debra Jones

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

9. Approval of the 2026-2027 Pupil Progression Plan. (Dr. Percle)

On behalf of Dr. Percle in her absence, Ms. Hoffpauir explained that the annual Pupil Progression Plan is developed using the state-issued template and updated each year to reflect new Louisiana Department of Education requirements along with existing local policies. The plan organizes district procedures for K-12 student placement, promotion, and retention.

This year's updates improve clarity, remove outdated or duplicated language, and provide flexibility as programs and platforms evolve. The most significant revisions relate to virtual/online learning, academic interventions, placement procedures, and career exploration requirements. Local policies remain unchanged.

Approval of the updated plan was requested.

Motion made by: Ginger Griffin

Motion seconded by: Andrew Mancuso

Voting results: Unanimously Approved

VIII. Committee Reports

- 1. The Policy Committee met on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 4:30 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room in Centerville, LA to discuss and/or take any action regarding Louisiana School Board Association (LSBA) 300, 400, 500 and 600 series policies. (Mr. Mancuso)**
- 2. Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 4:30 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room in Centerville, LA to discuss and/or take any action regarding Louisiana School Board Association (LSBA) 700, 800, and 900 series policies. (Mr. Mancuso)**

Mr. Mancuso requested that Items 1 and 2 under Committee Reports be presented together.

The Policy Committee met to continue the district’s transition to the Louisiana School Boards Association (LSBA) Simbli policy platform. Committee members reviewed approximately 60 policies across the 300, 400, 500, and 600 series, discussing and revising them as needed to align with district needs and LSBA standards. The meeting was lengthy but productive, and appreciation was expressed to the committee members and staff who contributed to the review process.

The remaining 700, 800, and 900 Simbli series policies will be addressed at the next Policy Committee meeting, scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. in the Evan Medine Meeting Room in Centerville, Louisiana. Once all sections have been reviewed, the fully updated policy manual will be presented to the full board. No action is required at this time.

- 3. The Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2026, at 4:30 p.m., in the Evans Medine Meeting Room in Centerville, LA. (Ms. McClarity)**

On behalf of Ms. Debra McClarity in her absence, Dr. Sanders reported that the item was brought forward solely to establish the date and time for the upcoming SPE Advisory Council meeting scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2026.

IX. Staff Reports

- 1. Chief Financial Officer's Report (Mrs. Voisin)**

- A. Sales Tax Update**

- Mrs. Voisin reported that the July 2026 sales tax collections totaled \$2,789,600, which is approximately \$370,000 (16%) above budget. The favorable variance is primarily due to a one-time sales tax receipt of \$344,000 received during the month.

- B. Financial Statements (Major Funds Only)**

- Financial statement actuals through July 2026 for the major funds were included in the Board packet for their review.

- C. Other Significant Items**

- No other significant items were reported.

X. Superintendent's Report (Dr. Sanders)

Dr. Sanders thanked the board for approving stipends for all employees, noting that every position is essential to the district’s success.

She announced upcoming dates: September 7 (Labor Day, schools closed), September 9 (progress reports sent home), and September 11 (district flags at half-staff in remembrance of 9/11).

She reported that 32 employees are currently enrolled in alternative certification programs or serving as resident teachers, strengthening the district’s internal teacher pipeline. She also recognized the celebration honoring Patterson Junior High Principal Lauren Renthrop, Louisiana State Principal of the Year, and thanked the City of Patterson for hosting the event.

Dr. Sanders closed with a reminder about student safety related to social media threats, urging parents to monitor their children’s online activity and report concerns to school administrators, law enforcement, or through the district’s anonymous reporting app that is found on every school site. She said, “Together, we can protect our children from the dangers of social media.”

XI. Resolution of Respect (Mrs. Gunner)

Mrs. Gunner read the Resolutions of Respect for the late Janet Hyman (retired teacher), and the late John Richard (retired principal).

XII. Closing - Adjournment (Mrs. Black)

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Motion made by: Dr. Tammie Wilson

Motion seconded by: Debra Jones

Voting results: Unanimously Approved