

Transcription of BOD meeting from Monday, September 14, 2026

Time meeting began: 2:08 pm

Dr. Gentry: welcomed everyone and asked Ms. Martin to call roll.

Roll Call

Members Present:

Rep. Beryl Amedee

Dr. Susannah Craig

Dr. Misty Davis

Jared Dunahoe

Dr. Vicky Gentry (Chair)

Dr. Greg Handel (Vice Chair)

Kirby Hopkins

Nikki Landry

Dr. Bill Luster

Bill New

Rep. Charles Owen

Dr. Kyle Stephens

Carolyn Wilkinson

Dr. Art Williams

Members Absent:

Leanne Broussard

Thomas Byler (attended via Teams, did not count toward quorum, non-voting)

Dr. Micah Bruce-Davis

Jimmy Long, Jr.

Tana Luther (attended via Teams, did not count toward quorum, non-voting)

Stacey Melerine

Senator Blake Miguez

Senator Alan Seabaugh

Guests Present:

Dr. Jason Anderson (Secretary)
Cheyenne Bertrand
Tedra Cheatham
Angela Couvillion
Kay Creel
Adrian Duruisseau
Dr. Bill Ebarb
Noah Guidry
Dr. Jay Harrison
Ryan Higginbotham
Donald Hodge (attended via Teams)
Dr. Trevor Holland
Monica Llorencia
Dr. Victoria Lloyd
Daryl Martin
Ismail Olumegbon
Michele Robinson
Dr. Wayne Stewart
Ro Myers Slutsky
Randi Washington

Dr. Gentry: Welcomed everyone again, made announcements and introduced the 2 new Board members, Dr. Misty Davis and Mr. Thomas Byler. Dr. Gentry asked Dr. Handel to read their Bios.

Dr. Handel: We are pleased to welcome to the board Dr. Misty Davis, who currently serves as the Executive Director of Attendance Strategy at the Louisiana Department of Education and who fills the seat previously held by Ms. Denise Karmalis. Dr. Davis began her career in education as a high school science teacher in Caddo Parish. Following her time in Caddo, she served as supervisor of student learning in DeSoto Parish before joining the Louisiana Department of Education as a Director of School Improvement in 2021. She earned her BS from LSU in 1998. She studied educational leadership at LSU Shreveport, earning a Master of Education in 2008, and at Louisiana Tech, earning a Doctor of Education in 2015. Please welcome Dr. Misty Davis.

Ms. Regina Pierce pinned Dr. Misty Davis.

Dr. Gentry: Mr. Byler you will receive your pin when you are able to attend in person.

Dr. Handel: We are pleased to welcome Mr. Thomas Beiler to the LSMSA Board of Directors. Mr. Beiler is filling the seat previously held by Mr. Jeff Powell. Mr. Beiler's educational career spans over 33 years as a teacher, coach and assistant principal, and he has been honored as a Louisiana State Principal of the Year in 2018. Currently, Mr. Beiler serves as the superintendent of schools in Vermilion Parrish and since August 2020, and has served as president of the Louisiana Association of Principals and as a vice president of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association Executive Committee. Please welcome Mr. Thomas Byler.

Dr. Gentry: Okay, next, this is just for your information, but I wanted to let you know that Miss Signora Thomas, she's been with us previously. She's a representative from Congressman Cleo Field's office, and she did attend the faculty in-service on August the 10th, I believe. And she had a proclamation that she read and gave to Dr. Jason Anderson as the new executive director. So, we have that available if you'd like to see that proclamation. And I thought that was a very nice thing of her to make the trip and to give that award to him. So, congratulations again to Dr. Anderson.

Dr Anderson: Introduced LSMSA's new SRO, Adrian Duruisseau, and Dr. Jay Harrison

Dr. Harrison introduced new faculty members to LSMSA, Dr. Trevor Holland and Mr. Ismail Olumegbon.

Randi Washington introduced new staff members in athletics, Kay Creel and the LLC, Ryan Higginbotham and Cheyenne Bertrand.

Monica Llorence introduced new staff member Dr. Victoria Lloyd.

Michele Robinson introduced the new President of the Foundation Board, Ms. Tedra Cheatham.

Dr. Anderson introduced an LSMSA student joining the meeting, Noah Guidry.

Agenda Item 2 E1: Approval of June 15, 2026, Board meeting minutes

Motion: Rep. Amedee

Second: Dr. Luster

Roll Call Vote was taken, unanimously passed

Agenda Item 3 E1: Approval of Recommendations from 7.30.26, Executive Committee Meeting

Motion: Dr. Stephens

Second: Regina Pierce

Roll Call vote was taken, unanimously passed.

Agenda Item 4 E1: Ratification of Foundation Faculty/Staff Reimbursements

Dr. Anderson: Ladies and gentlemen, the board, since 2021, the board, per policy, must approve all reimbursements from the LSMSA Foundation. And what you will see is 6 transactions that have that have occurred since our previous board meeting. And if you have any questions about those transactions, I please ask that we can seek an approval of those transactions

Motion: Kirby Hopkins

Second: Bill New

Roll Call Vote was taken, unanimously passed.

Agenda Item 5 E1: Approval of FY26-27 Proposed Funding Plan

Dr. Jason Anderson: Members of the board, you were sent a memo this summer when we received information about Governor Landry's executive order that all faculty and staff members who buy coal from the state must receive \$2,000 if you're a faculty and \$1,000 per if you're a staff. That executive order caused a reduction of our MFP. funding for the state in the tune of well over 100 million for us and Allison would say around \$118,000. At that point, we were waiting on further guidance by LDOE on how to handle those stipends. Well, once guidance was given or was received from LDOE, we decided that we understood that the 3% that was part of our salary schedule would suffice and would make us compliant with Governor Landry's executive order. So once we realized that action, we then informed the faculty and staff and to let them know that the 3% would make us compliant

and that it was, in a sense, it's better than the stipend because that salary increase goes to their base salary that would help them in their retirement and everything else. So once that action was given, we decided initially to give 1% because we didn't have any other further guidance on how we were going to receive these monies back. We gave a 1% in the beginning of the year with waiting on further guidance from Besi. We received further guidance from Betsy saying that you would indeed be compliant by issuing the 3% salary schedule. Once we received that information, Miss Monica Llorencia and the fiscal office went ahead in preparations to give the additional 2% to everyone to make sure that the 3% was given to faculty and staff who could receive the actual salary adjustment. Those who did not meet the \$2000 and \$1000 threshold were given additional increases to that salary that make sure we were compliant to the Governor Landry's executive order. And now we just come to you for approval of that planned retroactive to the beginning of the academic year. Are there any questions?

Motion: Dr. Williams

Second: Bill New

Roll Call Vote was taken, unanimously passed

Agenda Item 6 E1: Approval of FY27 Capital Outlay Request

Monica Llorencia: The capital outlay request is due by November 1st. Each year, the school updates its list of recommendations and submits them to the facility planning and control section of the Division of Administration. You have before you is an updated detailed list of items. That need to be included in this year's capital improvements request, and they are presented to you in priority order. Please review that list if you have not had a chance to do so and let me know if you have any questions. Board action is needed on that list of recommendations.

Q 1.) Kirby Hopkins: How were the priorities ordered?

A) Dr. Ebarb: It was staff and needs. The first priority was the Innovation Center. Of course, we've been working on that for several years, and funding was forthcoming, so it had to move to the top of the list. After that, we looked at safety. We looked at situations where we need to do this or that. You discussed possibly later the Auditorium situation, which became a danger to Students. It had to be acted on. It's very high on our priority list. Very high on our priority list would be fire alarm. Replacements and those sorts of things, so

that's the basis for other things that are not pressing, but are needed, obviously, at a moment.

Q 2.) Rep. Amedee: I see on here, priority 7, replace the showers. I remember we had some conversation early on about whether there was any warranty provision since it was that they were improperly installed. Could you tell me whatever became of that?

A) Dr. Ebarb: It was pursued and we passed the period that they were in effect. So, we're on our own with those cases. We were not satisfied, but unfortunately, that's where we are on our own. Okay, thank you. I would add to that I think there was a question of supply. Some showers were substituted, and that was part of our problem, but they were accepted by the school, so we are in that position now. Thank you.

Motion: Kirby Hopkins

Second: Regina Pierce

Roll Call Vote was taken, unanimously passed

Agenda Item 7 E1: Approval of FY27 Funding Formula

Monica Llorence: State law provides for the funding of the school pursuant to a formula adopted by the board of directors. The board annually must adopt A recommended formula that adequately funds educational programs at the school. The law calls for comparison of LSMSA's funding level to peer institutions. That recommended formula shall be submitted to the Division of Administration as a total budget request for the school. The components of the formula include the state general fund, interagency transfers, the minimum foundation formula, which is actually part of your interagency transfers, fees and self-generated revenues, and statutory dedications. The formula is an Average per student cost minus interagency transfers, including minimum foundation program formula funds, minus self-generated revenues, minus statutory dedications equals the amount of state general fund required to fully fund the formula. Again, the board must adopt A recommended formula that adequately funds the educational programs of the school. Are there any questions about the formula?

Motion: Dr. Stephens

Second: Dr. Williams

Roll Call vote was taken, unanimously passed

Agenda Item 8 E1: Approval of EEF (Education Excellence Fund) Budget for FY27

Monica Llorence: LSMSA receives funding through the Education Excellence Fund, also known as EEF. Which was the result of a settlement agreement between the state of Louisiana and tobacco companies in 1999. Each year, LSMSA is provided an allocation of funds from EEF, and that funding is held in the state treasury until such time as a prioritized plan of expenditures for the anticipated receipt of those funds is submitted to the Department of Education and approved. Funds not expended in increase per year are held in the treasury to the credit of the school. This fiscal year, LSMSA's EEF allocation is \$86,907. In recent years, the school has used this allocation for the summer programs which are required by law for professional development expenses for faculty and staff, for a part-time personal counselor for students and an online learning management and compliance platform that is used to deliver required training for faculty, staff, and students. Due to a potential increase in operating costs this fiscal year, there exists a need to request funding above and beyond the annual EEF allocation, primarily due to potential increases in the cost of food and utilities. Sufficient funds may actually in the end exist in the current budget to address all the operating expenses for the school. However, unanticipated situations often arise and the inclusion of funds in these areas of the EEF budget will enable the school to address such issues if necessary. Approval of this budget will simply provide a line of credit from EEF funding. As stated above, any budgeted EEF funds that are not spent in a fiscal year remain in the state treasury to the credit of the school. If you have any questions about the budget, I will be glad to answer those questions for you.

Q 1.) Art Williams: I thought I had understood from a previous meeting that the that the Education Excellence Fund were in some jeopardy due to the governor's desire to... fix the retirement. Something like that. Is that is that not the way?

A1) Monica Llorence: At one point in time, I know there was discussion to that nature and again, Dr. Ebarb may be able to speak to the history of that.

A2) Dr. Ebarb: If I may, you saw two years ago a constitutional amendment that would have eliminated the Education Elections Fund and other funds that are contained in the tobacco settlement situation that failed. The statutory provisions passed, but because the Constitution has to 1st be changed, no effect came in. The governor had attempted that again, and he's still looking at this. The idea is to take money from the tobacco settlement fund and place that into the unfunded liability of the teachers retirement system. This would reduce the amount of money that each school system has to pay into the retirement system on behalf of its teachers. Unfortunately, Louisiana schools is not in that position.

Those funds are paid by school systems from their taxes. We have no taxing authority. If the EEF ceases, we simply lose the money. We'll have to go to the legislature and ask them to help us make it up. The original legislation in 1981 requires that we provide summer programs and other programs during and during the summer school situation. And it also requires, I think, the term, bridge programs, short courses, that sort of thing. The legislature has not yet given us direct funding for that purpose, but when EEF came into being, we were able to pay it from there because the board said this is a proper thing to do. So, if this goes away, then we will not get that annual allocation. We will have to go to legislature and seek a true state general fund. At this point, the governor's efforts have not been successful.

Rep. Owen: It was a complex discussion that went on when we, when those discussions were happening about the intent behind those amendments. The intent was to try to give public school teachers a raise with the utilization of that fund, so it just didn't happen. So, Back to the drawing board.

Motion: Dr. Stephens

Second: Regina Pierce

Roll Call vote was taken, unanimously passed

Agenda Item 9 E1: Approval of FY27 Budget

Monica Llorence: This is for budget approval. On July 1st, the school received the official appropriation letter from the Office of Planning and Budget. Included in the final appropriation is an increase in state general funding and EEF Funding Authority and IET Authority. The net increase to the means of financing totals \$1,465,663, which is a 12.76% increase in funding. That increase includes A one-time increase in major repairs and acquisitions, which accounts for roughly 38 to 39 percent of the increase. Last fiscal year, we didn't receive any monies in either of those categories. The school is facing a potential shortfall this year. The state reduced our minimum foundation program funding to cover the cost of the Stipends for certain unclassified employees. We are awaiting the return of those funds. Additionally, it may be necessary to go to the legislature to request funding for several other options. Are there any questions about the budget?

Q1) Art Williams: What major repairs do we have in mind to do?

A1) Monica Llorence: Well, we get actually what we had in the original budget totaled \$843,174, and including included in the acquisitions was \$65,000 for textbooks. We had

money in there to replace some of our computer systems. There was some money in there for an emergency generator, in making repairs. We had money to refurbish the gym floor and to replace the fire alarm system in the high school building, the gym, and the MAB. But our funding was reduced to roughly 68% of what we had requested. So, at this point in time, we've actually had to utilize some of that funding to do some work in Treen, because of the emergency nature of what was needed in there due to falling tiles and loose plaster.

Q2) Dr. Williams: I ask because I'm afraid Mrs. Cheeto and Miss Robinson have plastic all on their head before the end of the meeting.

A2) Dr. Anderson: That's from the roof deck, you know, when we had the damage to the roof years ago was causing the moisture is causing the emulsification.

Q3) Nikki Landry: So hopefully somewhere along the way we'll get some funding to our capital outlay request to address some of these things.

Motion: Dr. Stephens

Second: Bill New

Roll Call vote was taken, unanimously approved

Agenda Item 10: Executive Director's Report:

Dr. Jason Anderson: Thank you, Madam Chair. Ladies and gentlemen of the board. We've had an eventful but great start of the year. Since our last board meeting, I will tell you that a number of, we faced a number of challenges. First, we decided we realized that our budget was going to get cut 120,000, you know, \$120,000 that we didn't and couldn't afford to be cut. But, you know, thank you to our legislative delegation and thank you to the Legislative Appropriations Committee. Thank you, Representative Amedee and those who fought for us. We were able to, they passed the 3%, we were able to utilize the 3% to then we remain compliant to Governor Landry's executive order to give to the unclassified teachers the \$2,000 and \$1,000 stipends. We faced the challenges of all of a sudden having a cold Treen Auditorium right before the school year. We, you know, come to determine that it is not safe. We could not have, Dr. Ebarb, how much does those tiles weigh? Approximately, oh, I think he broke. It is pretty. Catch. About a pound and a half falling from 30 feet. We were, I mean, they were just. I was like, if it goes like that, you're in serious trouble. They were loosening up every day and we were, you know what, we deemed it was unsafe. And we were able to, Ms. Monica, the fiscal office and her team were able to get emergency use of

our acquisitions money to be utilized. So that's Dr. Art, that's why we lost some of that money there because we have to utilize it in an emergency situation to remove said tiles. And now we're going for approval to the interim emergency board so that we can get that 119,000 so that we can utilize it for the fire alarm system and the other uses of that money. So, we faced the challenge of closing Treen. Treen is a comfort place for all of us. We have our convocations, we have our theater shows, we have our dance shows. But we moved to and pivoted to the dining hall. We realized, hey, the dining hall can hold a lot of people. And now we kind of feel like a high school. We're in the dining hall, we're having our meetings and it's working out okay. So we have that issue. Food service. We had an issue with food service because there are new people in the office for state procurement and we dealt with the back and forth of like, hey, you know what? Our students will be arriving in two weeks and you waited all the way to July, late July, to go ahead and announce the bid. So we went back and forth with food service, but guess what? The students are being fed. Food service is running along. We're still in a fight with them. I'm a sponsor. We're still with them, but guess what? We're making progress with that. We've had personnel issues. We've lost staff members, especially in the living community. People are just, they don't, they give you 2 weeks notice and they're gone. But guess what? We pivot. And Dean Washington and her team has stepped up tremendously in those areas. What I want to tell you all is we not only had an amazing school year, we've shown resilience. Starting the school year, and we're now in a place where we're like, you know what, enrollment is stabilizing. We welcomed 134 new eagles and matriculation. A few weeks ago, we have a total of 288 students, and I'm going to discuss this to you when I go over Ms. Shumate's enrollment and management board report, but we are stabilizing. Where we see the fiscal cliff has fallen throughout the state and the nation, we're beginning to stabilize and we're realizing what we need to do moving forward, not in terms of just Recruitment, but retention. That's the key. That's one of the things we're going to focus on. So we've had an amazing start to the year. There is an energy with this group and Dr. Stephens will say that in his faculty report. There is a certain little energy. They are themselves resilient. We know once you look over and hopefully you read over the other directors report, you will see a focus on student wellness and student success. We see student support services under Director Ro Slutsky. They are busy. It is programs after programs after programs. The counselors are being seen. We are working, Miss Cara Stanfield with 504 support. We are engaging and making those personal connections with the students because that's what's needed now. It is the personal connections, the personal engagement. So you see that student support services, is active. Ms. Ro is looking at data and trends and already recognizing the needs of her people while we, of course, take care of, make sure the student needs are met. Academic Affairs, Dr. Harrison has taken the fire hose wide open since the beginning. He's been here a little over two months and he's already has engaged with the faculty. He has met with the faculty

personally. He's met with nearly every faculty member to get to know them, to gain their trust and the students' trust, and he's already moving forward and has initiatives and him and Mrs. Couvillion is making a dynamic team in academic affairs. So, I am proud of Dr. Harrison and Mrs. Couvillion for what they're doing in academic affairs. You heard Monica Llorence, she is busy. This is the time of the year that we are focused about the budget. We're all about the budget. And it's and she's learning. Luckily, we I want to publicly thank Dr. Ebarb for kind of being that special assistant to assistant Ms. Monica as we transition. Ms. Monica going from wearing 2 hats as our CFO and our comptroller. But hopefully in a few weeks we won't have that. We will feel that comptroller. Ohh, neat. So, looking around, Dean Washington has done a great job creating a residential life manual for her employees. And just I want to publicly thank her and her team for making those pivots, those hard pivots when you are your job is to not only you have health services and taking that on and taking on athletics but also making sure that the dorm and staff and the students have an adult to go to. And when that adult makes another pivot in life that she steps in personally, I will take care of this. These are my needs that I need, but you know what? I will step in. We will arrange things to make sure those students are being taken care of. So, thank you, Dean Washington, for that. Her, I mean, the living community is busy. We are in a new athletic league. And y'all, y'all might say, wow, LSMSA athletics. But that was important to the students. Coach Dale went around to all of our sister schools, saw what was going on, came back, told all the students, and we realized that indeed, they want that connection. They want this experience to feel more like their home experience. They want the homecomings. They want the games. And guess what, y'all? At LSMSA, we've actually have home crowds that have outnumbered the visitor crowd. Volleyball is an experience. Those students are loving it, and y'all were actually kind of good. So I went down to a game at Jennings this weekend, and I'm like, beating these teams in this new league. So we competed not only in volleyball this weekend, but we competed in Coach Key as a coach of the cross country team. We did a cross country meet in Lafayette. So first, first time, first time. So we are engaging, we're meeting the students where there are, and that is a journey on itself. We realize that they need the attention, the connections. We're making it through all of the directors throughout campus. So, I want you to know that the state of the school is strong, it is vibrant, there's an energy going on, and just know that we have the, when we don't have the answers, we're looking for the answers. We've engaged with the Centers for Sustained Leadership. That is the consultant group that is going to help build our strategic plan that will govern us in the next 5 to 10 years. We're already in the engagement part of our relationship. They will be reaching out to you board members pretty soon. We have you listed down there. So, know that we're going to involve all of our stakeholders and we're going to put together a strong plan to governors in the future because we know we need innovation. We know we need visibility. We know that marketing is important because we

have to compete for the students in the state of Louisiana. So, Madam Chair. The state of the school is wonderful, and I'm here if you have any questions.

Q1) Nikki Landry: Since you had 134 new students this year, how does that number compare to the last few years?

A1) Dr. Anderson: It's slightly increasing every year. You see, it's just a slight four or five students, slight four or five students. But what we're seeing more are new juniors. We're seeing more juniors than sophomores. And that's a welcome plus.

Q2) Nikki Landry: So that number is all new students?

A2) Dr. Anderson: Yes, that's all new students. Not just sophomores.

Agenda Item 11: Report from the Faculty

Dr. Stephens: Good afternoon, colleagues. It's always great to see you. I took a survey of my colleagues, and you know it's an unscientific survey because I'm the one who conducted it. But if I operated the calculator app on my phone correctly, the Louisiana school instructors have a combined 738 years of teaching experience. If you condense all that experience into one instructor, that teacher would have begun their career in the year 1288. And I was thinking, why do we do what we do? There are a million reasons, of course, but a dim memory came back to me 5 1/2 years ago. I was walking down the hall here and it was dead empty because it was March of 2021. We had a partially full campus because the COVID crisis was still going on. In fact, the campus felt more deserted even than it actually was. We tried to pump life into it, but we missed the crowds, we missed our kids. And I'm walking along, alone in the hall, along with my thoughts. And I look up and I see a student, a friendly bear of a guy, a second-year senior, and I haven't seen him in a year. It's been one year to the week because we sent the kids home on March 13, 2020. And I'm masked, he's masked. But we recognize each other from 50 feet away. And without raising his voice, he just sort of says down the Hall. Doctor Stephens. What is up? And it was one of those simple, joyful moments where you want to go home and give thanks for getting to do what we do. And that student was one of those kids you wish you had 10 more just like him. It was the simplest possible interaction, and yet it was one of the highlights of my career. But you know what? I just had 30 days like that. Those small, everyday miracles happen every hour on this campus. And my 38 colleagues can tell you 100 stories just like that we've got a truly strong incoming group. I know I say that every September, but I'm not kidding. They're particularly bright and more important, they're particularly curious. We had short

classes today because of the morning college fair and we've got educators and parents in the room. Y'all get it. Sometimes when there's a short class, the kids are just like, it's not a real class. Let's just suffer for 25 minutes all three of my American history classes were totally dialed in to the witchcraft crisis. They were disappointed when I had to let them go to come down here and prepare for the meeting. We've got an unusually large cohort of first year juniors, and I have a sort of soft spot for first year juniors as a reminder that you do not have to spend all three years here. If you spend your senior year here, you are just as much an eagle. So, we're delighted. We've got folklore and fairy tales. I'm getting into the meat and potatoes of my favorite class ever, the history of the Cold War. I'm not kidding, Representative Owen. I might reach out to you and have you come in and tell some stories if you're ever in the mood, we're ready to go now. We have educators and parents in the room, so you know that I'm not saying we live in Never Neverland. We do teach teenagers. Some are golden children; some are lovable scoundrels. I had a young man, fell asleep on Monday, I woke him up. Fell asleep on Wednesday, I woke him up. On Friday, I just let him sleep. And he was having the most beautiful dreams imaginable. And I hope he enjoyed the unexcused absence when he woke back up. With 738 years of teaching experience, we're going to get everyone on board. I believe you feel it's going to be a fantastic year. The faculty are glad to have had the summer break, but this is what we do and we're glad to be back in the swing of things. I'm happy to answer any questions y'all have.

Agenda Item 12 E5: Division Reports Enrollment Management and Outreach

Dr. Anderson: An interesting topic that I know you're going to be, you're going to like, enrollment management and outreach. So I'm going to pinch hit for Mrs. Shumate. And this topic is, I am uniquely, let's say, just qualified, you know, working with enrollment management through my Excel days. I get a unique perspective of, you know, what they undergo and the students that they're bringing in and the strategies kind of moving forward. So from her viewpoint, our incoming students, as Dr. Stephens just alluded to, we have 134 incoming students and we have more juniors, more first year juniors than we've seen in the past. That's a welcome sight. That is, we love our sophomores, we love our babies, as we call them, but that having more first year juniors, you see that that shows that extra year maturity, that extra year of, you know, what they're more prepared to leave home. They're less homesick and they're moving further in the curriculum. So they see the Cold Wars and they see the other courses and they like, you know what, I'm right there. I can get to those courses just a little, you know, a tad bit quicker. So we have a, you know, a strong class, 134, that is a stronger number in the face of what we've seen from an enrollment what's happening in Louisiana. And I know many of you have seen the, you know, the recent articles that have come out in the Advocate that, you know, East Baton Rouge talked about

their decline. The state as a total has talked about, you know, just the decline in Latin, you know, five years, losing 60,000 students, you know, parishes are shuttering districts every year. We're losing multiple districts throughout the throughout the throughout the state. So seeing 134 new students let us know that you know what we are, now, we're stabilized. So I know it's 135, we lost one student, so that's why the number is 134. But what you see up here is, you know, 288 students. And again, that number represents A stabilization of our enrollment since the COVID pandemic. And if you go back and then there's more data to show, you will see that, you know, the rates that are even that Parrish, the rates of decline of enrollment, we are under that, where they're in the 20%, we're in the teens. So understanding that, you know, we're starting to stabilize and we are engaging these students from all over the state is refreshing, and they're bringing that same exact energy into campus, into the classrooms, and into the residence halls. So again, what you see here is, you know, we still, you know, our sex is still more female than male. That's been our trend for quite some time. Not the two to one ratio that existed for a few years, but we still have more females than males. Again, the highlight of we just have more children. I mean, that's that is a site and that's a good site. Well, I have one first year senior, a little different than what we've had years past. We've had as many as five or so, but we have one new senior, and you can see the racial demographic breakout breakdown of, and we and we're we see an uptick in our African American population, a little decrease in our Asian population, but you know, it's always the goal with enrollment services to reach out to as many individual, not just, you know, from racial demographics, but geographically to hit all of the parishes, hit the Lincoln parishes, hit the Richland Parrish, hit those Delta parishes and those that we typically, it's just harder for us to get students. Yeah. This is, of course, what you expect from the Louisiana school and its strong data. We are getting the best and brightest throughout the state. There are more for us to dig in and to grab, but you see here where our mean and median ACT numbers are almost coalescing with 24 from those 134 students, but you see the, you know, 33% of them score 26 or higher. That is amazing. So that's already letting you know that, I mean, these students are coming in with a good base. You see some, that are, you know, score 9, you know, a 19 or more, maybe some of those are potentially Excel students, but those are Excel students going through four weeks of preparation with our faculty in the summer. They're more prepared for LSMSA life than many of our other incoming students. That program does a great job of preparing them. So, you see strong numbers from them, from standardized scoring. You see their incoming GPA is pretty amazing. Their 4.0s are there. We tell them, don't hang on to them too long. They may, you may lose them along the line. You never know if you come across a Cold War kindness or something else that's going to challenge you and learn quickly to not focus on that net of gray, but focus on the content that they that they take it on in. Interesting what we're seeing throughout the years, we're seeing...a lot more alum, a lot more faculty,

children from home, and that's actually one there. That's Miss Shumate's daughter, Kelly, and that background right there. So you see that connection to alumni, and the alumni trusting the institution and saying, you know what, hey, this is a place where you can grow and nurture, just like I was taught, and nurtured. You see, again, we're a public school ourselves and many, and we got to get that message out there. But 76% of the students come from public schools. And you see, this number is a number to really be proud of. 33% are first generation when they attend college. So that misnomer of us, oh, you just have, you have the best students and they come from these two parent households. No, not necessarily true. They're coming from everywhere. And the fact that they will, 33% of them will be first generation, that is something to behold and that's something that we take pride in because you know what? Those students, we're giving them the opportunities that may not have been afforded to them in their home parishes. So that is a strong and proud number to actually display we'll try to keep getting this number up, right? We're hitting as much as possible. 36 different parishes, you see. The primary parishes, of course, being St. Tamaney, Rapides, Natchitoches, of course, and then you're hitting St. Martin and Lafayette, South Louisiana, and then if we can engage with them somehow, some way early on, hey, you come to a young poet workshop. Hey, you come to an artist workshop. You come to a writer's workshop. We already have the McGrath math competition. Start engaging with them early. Then again, we identify with them. And then all of a sudden, the Rise, to Summer @, from Summer@ to LMSA. So we're trying to build a pipeline for these middle school students. And with the Innovation Center, where, you know, coming along in the next year and a half or so, we'll have another reason to be able to, and another method of engaging those students. So recap of last year, summer at 176 campers, amazing experience. We had a lot of LSMSA employees work for it. And again, it's a huge outreach. We know that's our mechanism. That's our big mechanism for our students and our future students. This is what's coming. And again, the rigor, innovation, scholarship and enrichment, we're going to, you know, we're going to base it on standardized test scores or recommendations from counselors. And we're just, again, it's an opportunity to engage is to get to them. So, it's like, okay, we have this opportunity to bring them to Anderson MC because we know once we get them here, they're so, they're so, they look at the dog. Wow. They get into Dr. Stephens class. Wow. There is, I mean, yes, but we have to get them here. And we know that's been some of the issue is getting to those students. So, this program, the enrollment and Emily is taking this one. She's taking it that goes by the horn in terms of getting, getting this ready to go. And again, it's all sharing what you know, my strategic, my vision for the school, of course, is increasing the visibility. How can we locally, regionally, and statewide become more visible that people actually know LSMSA exists? That getting, that's a big hurdle. Once we could get over that hurdle, then I think, you know, everything else will begin to fall into place. But that is the goal for enrollment management this year,

really getting rides off the ground, getting help with Dr. Harrison and the department chairs, starting to get some of these programs rolled out in the spring so that we can begin to see, you know, what impact this will have on future enrollments. So again, look at middle schoolers. Look at some of them in the lab, some of them playing Dungeons and Dragons, some of them doing artwork, some creating some funky science, some learning about I don't know what Dr. Tichenor was doing right there. Something with Latin, I'm presuming. But they all had a blast that introduces them to us and all of a sudden they're like, we got to come to this school. This school is really cool.

Q1) Nikki Landry: What outreach or is it possible that the school has with military families?

A1) Dr. Gentry: To my knowledge, we do not. Not Specifically. There are visits to Fort Polk.

Rep. Owen: I would like to make a recommendation. I lived around Barksdale for over 15 years. Continuing visits to let the education office know and senior officers know, because for good or for bad, and it's actually bad. Louisiana has a terrible reputation nationwide. People don't take the assignment here because they don't want to go to Louisiana schools. Bossier has good schools, but everyone else's poor performance harms us. But, if they know this is available. So, I would really recommend an annual or semi-annual visit to both of those installations. So, their senior people know that, hey, there's also an option. Does anybody have a high achiever that's not interested in public schools?

Regina Pierce: I was thinking the very same thing when he was talking. And as a conversation I had with Dr. Stephens earlier is, a local doctor in Bossier Parrish. He has a very bright son with a perfect ACT score in the 8th grade. And he had no knowledge of any kind about the school. And he just happens to live in one of those parishes, Representative Owens, that doesn't allow us to go in those schools and recruit. So, it is not something that they're not doing. I think it's just choices and lack of opportunities. He had no knowledge. Now, he also volunteered to come and speak at the school to anyone in the future.

Nikki Landry: I would say our State has thousands more best and brightest than just the 300 who are here.

Dr. Williams: My suggestion was, excuse me, my suggestion to Jason was that we look at some statewide organizations, and I'm thinking particularly of organizations like FFA, which would dovetail with biology, things in biology, environmental science. And some of those kids are very quick and very, very aware. The Caroline Dorman Preserve in the northern part of Natchitoches Parrish will be hosting in October a forestry competition, which is going to

attract several hundred of those students. And there might be some purpose in in having some representation there, and since I'm on the board there, I can be, could be the representation. But moving slightly away or adding to our concentration on schools and school districts and looking at some organizations that cut across the board and attract the more motivated kids, I think would be helpful.

Jared Dunahoe: You know, it's been my observation. I know we've talked about this several times, but ever since we have tied funding to performance, and I'm not saying that's a bad thing, we have run into this problem where you have principals and superintendents that do not want to lose their best students and lose those test scores because that affects their livelihoods and their performance and how they're judged. And I know that there's been some discussion about why can we not give our test scores back to those districts so they continue to benefit from those bright students while also encouraging those principals and superintendents to recommend LSMSA to those students. I know that there are some legislative actions that would have to be taken, I guess, assume on the state and federal level, such that we could allow our test scores to go back to those home districts. You know, I understand the federal angle may be more difficult, but we've got two effective representatives sitting here. I think if we start on the state level and do what we need to do, talking with the Department of Education about starting that conversation about how we can get those test scores back to the local districts.

Rep. Owens: It's bewildering to me that it's not there now. I'll be glad to pick that torch up and run with it. And I am not at all interested in pressing Washington either. This is about Louisiana and our students in Louisiana. I would be glad to pick that up. Even if it's just for a year, maybe not the whole, if they come here as a... A trial. Just, yes. Let's see what happens.

Bill New: I mean, my youngest, my oldest son came here and he graduated in '05, so... I mean, it's been a long time, but it's always, always, always the high schools do not want Louisiana school there recruiting. They don't. I mean, you can argue with them that, you know, it's the best thing for the student. But they don't, well, you would think that would end the conversation, but it doesn't, that doesn't, that doesn't carry even before the performance scores got to be so important and. You know, that's why a lot of times you're doing better recruiting at the junior high level, is those kids are leaving the junior high anyway. They're going to high school somewhere. And, but it's difficult. You know, the amount of misinformation there is about Louisiana school to this day astounds me. It's been here 40 some years now and still people are so misinformed about this place.

Rep. Amedee: I still find people who don't even know it exists.

Dr. Luster: I graduated in 01, and the best recruitment at that time was a postcard when you took the ACT for any reason, like Duke Tip, and then people who went to the summer camp and took a high school class in 6th grade, 7th grade, 8th grade. And a big chunk of my class was people who had gone to vets. Without that, a lot of us probably wouldn't have known it existed. So, I'd agree with... kids that are younger, I don't know how you find the bright 6th and 8th, 7th graders, but get the word out, expand the summer camps like we're doing now, and find the kids that are interested and aspiring for various reasons.

Bill New: Yeah. Certainly, with Duke Tip going away, that's been a...It's been a challenge. Because that's frankly where I first heard about Louisiana schools. Was Duke tip.

Dr. Luster: I think there are a lot of parents that wouldn't mind sending their middle schoolers off to a summer camp to get an extra class in. And that's an easy step as opposed to my 9th or 10th grader or 11th grader is going away to this place far away. That's a big step for a lot of parents even to lose their kids.

Regina Pierce: I agree with you and also they're vested in those extracurricular things at that point that they don't want to step away from. So, prior to that, they may not be so vested. So, I think there's that gap where we should pick them up.

Carolyn Wilkinson: Can you reach out directly to the junior highs? Um, like...to the counselors, if you have these students that are advanced across the board and meet, like, here's some opportunities. I mean, I was at a rural Title I public junior high and I would have loved to have been able to like, hey, look at your advanced scores and they could go here. I would have I would have bet on that.

Dr. Gentry called for a quick recess of the meeting at 3:40 pm. All members of the Board were present at 3:46 pm when Dr. Gentry resumed the meeting.

Agenda Item 13: Other Business

Dr. Art Williams: Made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss the results of the Executive Committee session, which took place on June 24, 2020

Second: Jared Dunahoe

Dr. Williams: Can you say what this is about, what this is in response to?

Wayne Stewart: There can be a discussion.

Jared Dunahoe: The point of this, I'm sure, like many of ya'll, I've been inundated with emails regarding.

Dr. Gentry: Excuse me, don't we need a roll call vote?

Wayne Stewart: I'm saying to explain the basis of the the basis of this. For the discussion. That what the content is of this and why this would be raised, but.. just for the purposes of adding to the agenda, just so that understand so that they can follow.

Art Williams: There were allegations against a staff member on the part of some students that were taken up by the Executive Committee at that time. And the Executive Committee of the board took certain actions. Those actions have been called into question recently, so we want to affirm what actually took place.

Dr. Gentry: Thank you for that clarification. Please continue Mr. Dunahoe.

Jared Dunahoe: Yeah, the point of this discussion is to address some of those concerns that y'all probably received by e-mail. So I would just ask all of y'all to vote to amend the agenda, approve Dr. Art's motion, and then we can get into a more detailed discussion about what took place.

Roll Call vote was taken to Amend the Agenda to discuss what was talked about during the Executive Committee's from June 24, 2020, and passed unanimously.

Jared Dunahoe: Last week

Donna Martin: Hang on just a second. If everyone could please turn off all of your recording devices and your cell phones, and if everyone who is a guest....

Jared Dunahoe: No, no. We're not going into executive session. That was not the motion. The motion was to discuss what was talked about in executive session, but this should be a public, my understanding of the motion that was passed was this is a public meeting.

Wayne Stewart: Okay. Just please confirm that it was a unanimous vote.

Donna Martin: It was a unanimous vote for us to have discussions. Yes, yes, to amend the agenda.

Jared Dunahoe: Okay, so it has been moved. All right. Last week, a former staff member of LSMSA was arrested by the Louisiana State Police for some inappropriate sexual contact or behavior with minors. And I know I have received numerous emails over the last 24 hours from concerned alumni and parents about that fact and what did the school do and what our actions were. I think... The school should and the board should be very proud about how we handled this situation. I think there's been some misinformation about what took place. And I think it's important for the board to explain to the public, to our alumni, to our parents, what we did when we received these allegations and communicate that to them so they're reassured. So, I was going to go kind of over a brief timeline of what took place. On June 19th of 2020, Dr. Horton received a complaint regarding Mr. Thorne Lacaz. Immediately, a Title 9 investigation was commenced. On June 23rd, he was placed on leave. On June 24th, we had an executive committee meeting where we went into executive session and to discuss those allegations about Mr. Thorne Lucaz. And I'm going to read the motion that was made in that executive committee meeting. It was a motion made by me and seconded by Dr. Anderson and unanimously passed that the board authorize to authorize and instruct Dr. Steve Horton and the board chair, Ms. Sharon Gahagan, to contact the Natchitoches Parrish District Attorney regarding those allegations regarding Thorne Lacaz, and to instruct Dr. Horton to contact the Office of Risk Management regarding these matters. That same, excuse me. The next day, Dr. Horton and Ms. Gahagan met with the district attorney and sheriff and informed them of the allegations and told them that we would, once the investigation of the Title 9 under Title 9 investigation was completed, all of the documents would be provided to law enforcement. As a result, during that investigation, the end of August 2020, Mr. Thorne Lucaz resigned, which terminated the Title IX investigation. September 15th of 2020. All documents, the complete files were provided to the district attorney and to the sheriff, which was then passed on to the Louisiana State Police. He was eventually now arrested some six years later. But I think it's important for the public to know that that's what happened. I would ask Dr. Anderson to prepare a press release that explains this or a response to all of these emails that gives this timeline out, informs these alumni and these parents what took place, what actions we took. I'd like to commend Dr. Horton and Ms. Sharon Gahagan for what they did. They received these allegations. They complied with the law. They notified the chief law enforcement officer for this Parrish and the sheriff. And I don't know what else we could have been expected to do. So I'm proud of the school's response and if ya'll have any questions, to the extent that I know it, I'll answer.

Dr. Gentry: Dr. Stewart is there anything you would like to add?

Dr. Stewart: No, ma'am

Dr. Gentry: Anything else?

Rep. Amedee: In your comments you mentioned, I think you said that the board should direct that a timeline or some statement for the public to be drafted. Do we need to make that an actual action of the board? Do we need to make a motion?

Dr. Gentry: I would think so, yes.

Jared Dunahoe: I could formulate it better. I would move that the board authorize and instruct Dr. Anderson to prepare a press release setting forth the timeline and the actions taken by Dr. Horton and this board regarding Thorn Lacaze and that that be provided to any press operation that asks for it and that it provided to all the individuals that have emailed us, all the alumni and parents, such that they deserve a response. They wanted to know what we did. Let's tell them what we did. We should be proud of what we did and how we handled it and let them know what we did.

Multiple responses: I second the motion.

Nikki Landry: Should we say that his response in consultation with the attorneys

Regina Pierce: and whatever the entire board?

Unsure of who's voice: We are limited in what we can say about the law

Nikki Landry: Yes, this is involving a child.

Jared Dunahoe: I don't think we need to get into who made what allegations, but yeah,

Dr. Gentry: So, we have a motion.

Motion: Jared Dunahoe

Co-Second: Regina Pierce and Dr. Stephens

Rep. Amedee: Pardon the interruption, but Dr. Luster just asked a question

Dr. Luster: We need to be careful in what we say and don't say because there potentially are children involved. I've heard some of this from hearsay, it all happened before I was on the board, but what can we say about what the allegations were or were not against him.

Jared Dunahoe: I think you just leave it at the description of allegations were received that required a Title IX investigation regarding Thorne Lacaz and leave it at that.

Dr. Luster: I would say to add, whenever someone in the medical practice makes a mistake, people aren't necessarily as upset about what happened as we don't want this to happen again. So we probably need to include some verbiage about investigating him and potential others who may or may not be out there because we really never want this to happen again. Is that something we can't include or should we?

Female voice: We're not investigating anyone.

Dr. Luster: I've had people email me saying "I'm a victim" years ago. I don't know if it was.

Jared Dunahoe: I don't think there'd be anything wrong with something at the bottom of it that if you're a victim and you need to contact, give them the information that they're supposed to make complaints to. There may have, because there may be students that were victims that have never talked to about it, and now that this information comes out, they may feel emboldened or the need to disclose that, and we need to provide the information about how they do that to the school.

Regina Pierce: I say the sooner the better, ASAP, because this is going to affect the enrollment of this institution, which is what we've talked about for the last two hours. And we just need to do this, get it out, and get it over with. And let's move on to the next thing.

Dr. Williams: It's affecting morale of the whole school community now, right?

Regina Pierce: It is, I'm just saying the sooner we vote on this... I'm with Jared Dunahoe, the job that that board did is exceptional, considering that time frame, and six years later... Times have changed, but they're still children. So, nothing should be said in the public about this meeting.

Nikki Landry: How might the policies and procedures and plans to protect.....

Dr. Misty Davis: That was my wonder, were there any adjustments to policy as a result? I wasn't here so I don't know.

Jared Dunahoe: No, because the Title IX was not completed because it's required to terminate when he resigned. What the state police did with it, what they're able to prove, Jared Dunahoe continued: the man's presumed innocent. All we can handle is how we addressed allegations that came to us. The law dictates, you know, how we are supposed to handle that. I don't think Dr. Horton and Chair Gahagan could have handled it any better. They're mandatory reporters that would involve children. They immediately, they didn't just go to some sheriff's deputy. They went and met with the DA for Natchitoches Parish and the sheriff and provided all of this documentation to them. Which then was passed on the Louisiana State Police. And it may have taken a long time, but as a result of those actions, and I'm sure a tone more by the state police. It got to the point where they were able to make an arrest. And so I'm proud of the actions taken by our school. And I think our Alumni should make an effort to inform other alumni about those actions to correct the record so there's not misinformation that is spread. And that's why I think it's important to publicize this information because there's obviously been some misinformation that's been passed along.

Regina Pierce: You have a gentleman behind you who wants to speak.

Dr. Gentry: Yes, sir.

Guest Noah Guidry: I understand that this is just a law that a Title IX investigation must be canceled after the resignation of an employee. But has LSMSA ever looked at maybe forming a policy to prevent an employee from resigning to avoid a Title IX investigation?

Jared Dunahoe: I don't know if you can tell somebody when they can and can't resign from an institution or their employment. If they want to resign they can. People work where they want to work.

Guest Noah Guidry: I understand that, but it

Jared Dunahoe: And that's why it's important that the information was passed on to law enforcement. Because I see the problem. Somebody gets accused of something, and investigation started, and they can end that investigation just by resigning. That's why it's important to also provide that information to law enforcement, because their investigation is not affected by the fact that the man resigned from here.

Dr. Stewart: Madam Chair, I recommend, based on the fact that you allowed for the public comment during this, is to have the individual identify themselves if they wish to, for purposes of the record.

Dr. Gentry: OK, so that's important that every person in the room that's a guest be identified in the minutes?

Dr. Stewart: No, ma'am. Just the individual who you allowed to make comments identify themselves as he spoke.

Dr. Gentry: Ok. And your name is?

Guest Noah Guidry: Noah Guidry,

Dr. Gentry: Noah Guidry, G_U_I_D_R_Y?

Guest Noaah Guidry: G_U_I_D_R_Y

Dr. Gentry: G_U_I_D_R_Y. You have that, Donna?

Donna Martin: Yes, ma'am

Jared Dunaho: That was a great question.

Dr. Gentry: We are ready for a roll call vote based on the motion and the two seconds that were made.

A Roll Call vote was taken, unanimously passed.

Dr. Gentry: The last item on the agenda are some important dates to remember.

Dr. Anderson: Important dates such as Connections weekend, Fall Break, Veterans Day Program, Thanksgiving Break, and the Natchitoches 100th Christmas Festival.

Dr. Gentry: Is there a motion to adjourn?

Motion: Dr. Stephens

Second: Dr. Williams

Meeting adjourned at 2:14 pm