

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TERREBONNE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

June 23, 2020

The Terrebonne Parish School Board met today at **6:00 P.M. in special session** at its regular meeting place, the Terrebonne Parish School Board Office, 201 Stadium Drive, Houma, Louisiana, with Mrs. Debi Benoit, president, presiding, and the following members present: Mrs. Stacy V. Solet, vice president; Mr. Michael T. LaGarde, Mr. Gregory Harding, Mr. Matthew J. Ford, Mr. Clyde F. Hamner, Mr. Roger Dale DeHart, Dr. MayBelle N. Trahan, and Mr. Dane Voisin.

ABSENT: None

Mr. DeHart led the Board and audience in the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

President Benoit stated that this special meeting was called for the sole purpose of evaluating the Superintendent in accordance with Policy FILE: C-3.6, Superintendent Evaluation.

At this time, Superintendent Philip Martin presented his opening remarks.

Motion of Dr. Trahan, seconded by Mrs. Solet, unanimously carried, the Board voted to move into executive session (6:30 P.M.) to address the matter bearing upon Policy FILE: C-3.6, Superintendent Evaluation.

Motion of Mr. Voisin, seconded by Mrs. Solet, unanimously carried, the Board reconvened in open session (6:50 P.M.) with all members present.

President Benoit announced that the Board rated the overall performance of Superintendent Philip Martin for the 2019-2020 fiscal year as "Satisfactory," the highest rating possible.

Motion of Mrs. Solet, seconded by Mr. Hamner, with the exception of Mr. Ford who objected to the evaluation process, the Board accepted the overall rating performance of Superintendent Philip Martin for the 2019-2020 fiscal year as "Satisfactory" (highest rating possible) and ordered Superintendent Martin's opening remarks spread across the minutes, as follows:

Superintendent Martin's Opening Remarks

The 2019-2020 school year was a year like none previous and hopefully will never be repeated. Easily, the most significant event was the statewide and nationwide closure of schools due to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. Our school district, like many others, had to close abruptly on March 13, 2020.

This closure and subsequent actions of the district in response to this closure did highlight something we all know: we have amazing employees in this school district!

A time of crisis is when some may falter, hesitate or collapse. It is also a time where dedication, commitment, self-sacrifice, and loyalty are revealed. The latter has been the response of our employees.

At every level, in every department, there has been a spirit of cooperation and a "What else can I do?" attitude.

A feeding program at four sites, that provides meals 5-days a week, has been in place and expanded to include breakfast. This will continue throughout the summer. This is in contrast to districts that are not providing daily meals but once or twice a week and some not at all. Some deliver only at one location. This endeavor also requires warehouse staff, delivery personnel, school food service technicians, and managerial staff.

The instructional program that was "assembled" almost overnight is high quality and accessible. Learning packets for each grade level are distributed every two weeks. These packets have been very well received; we are up to 800 copies for each grade at each site.

The district's online instructional delivery program is fully functional for every grade and school. The district has issued computers (chrome books) to students that need them as well as Wi-Fi (hot spot) devices for those that do not have internet access. This online delivery will be the platform that the district intends to use for our Compensatory Summer Learning Program.

The third-leg of the instructional package is a daily television program, *Terrebonne Teacher Time*. This focuses on early learners and is taught by our teachers.

We will emerge from this pandemic in many ways a stronger, more cohesive school district.

INSTRUCTIONAL

Terrebonne Parish's current District Performance Score (DPS) is 84.3 (B). To put that in context, the state average is 77.1. Terrebonne is 7.2 points higher than the state average.

Our highest priority remains quality instruction and meaningful student achievement. Some data points that indicates our progress in this area are:

- We have 22 schools that earned an A+ from the state in the Progress category;
- We have 13 schools that have been labeled "Top Gain" schools by the state;
- There are 6 schools that have been named "Equity Honoree" which means outperforming 90% of all schools in the state;
- Some individual schools' data points of interest are: (does not include Select Admission or Magnet Schools)
 - 1) Upper Little Caillou Elementary has the 3rd highest Progress Score out of the 916 elementary schools in Louisiana;
 - 2) Legion Park Elementary is 8th highest in Progress and 23rd highest growth in School Performance Score (SPS) out of 916 elementary schools;
 - 3) Dularge Elementary has the 12th highest School Performance Score (SPS) out of 916 elementary schools;
 - 4) South Terrebonne High has the 26th highest SPS of 176 high schools in Louisiana;

- 5) Terrebonne High has the 22nd highest Assessment Index out of 176 high schools;
 - 6) H. L. Bourgeois High has the 19th highest graduation rate out of the 176 high schools.
- Our K-8 District Assessment Index, overall, is 66.8 compared to state average of 62.7 (TPSD +4.1);
 - Our High School District Assessment Index, overall, is 75.9 compared to the state average of 65.6 (TPSD +10.3);
 - Terrebonne Parish was ranked in the “TOP TEN” of parishes for growth (#7);
 - Established the school health clinic at Acadian Elementary;
 - Terrebonne’s District Performance Score (DPS) of 84.3 ranks 17th out of all 70 districts in Louisiana;
 - Our graduation rate increased by 7.1 percentage points and is 7th highest in the state (newspaper article);

LOOKING FORWARD

Although the data indicates substantial growth and improvement, to continue that trend, under the extremely different and new circumstances, will require major adjustments and alignments within the instructional setting. Due to the current pandemic, we must drastically re-think, plan, and implement our approach instructionally both now and in the future.

Several issues must be restored and accounted for, these include:

- Recoupment of lost-learning time. Although our district was very progressive in promptly providing quality instructional opportunities, such as distance learning, learning packets, and televised learning, these are gaps in learning and will continue at all levels. These gaps must be identified and addressed. The district must approach this issue effectively;
- A robust and rigorous instructional plan is essential to adequately address lost learning. It will include:
 - 1) A compensatory summer learning program is currently being planned. This program will be 100% virtual. It will be open to all K-8 students. The focus will be English/Language Arts and Math;
 - 2) It will not be connected to pass/fail for the school year;
 - 3) It will not be graded;
 - 4) All students will be encouraged to participate;
 - 5) The new school year will not be business as usual. Obviously, all protocols for a healthy environment will be implemented. This in itself will change the “normal” operation of the school day. This district will abide by all recommended protocols issued by the appropriate agencies, as well as locally enacted procedures;
 - 6) During the school year, compensatory help for all students will be implemented. This will include, but not be limited to, extended school

day; additional one-on-one tutoring for struggling students, continued virtual online instruction, an online “classroom” check-in that students (or parents) can go to for specific assistance.

Lastly, all teachers are going to be asked to approach this school year with a renewed sense of urgency. I am confident our teachers will do exactly that. Other potential new approaches are:

- In preparing for the upcoming school year, we must prepare for the possibility that in-person classes may not be possible at some time during the school year;
- A full-scale conversion to online intervention must be in place and ready to be activated. It would have to include components such as grading, attendance, direct interaction with a teacher;
- The district must provide professional development necessary for all teachers to be able to deliver a virtual classroom instructional program;
- We will have a one-to-one device (computer) for every student and teacher;
- We will ensure internet accessibility for every student;
- We will identify and address individual student learning gaps and regression issues.

FINANCIAL

The finances of the district are currently solid, as the Board has exercised fiscal responsibility. As a result, we will weather this storm of an economic downturn of epic proportions.

We can anticipate a significant decrease in revenues in the future. Sales tax revenues are already reflecting a significant decline. We can expect no increase in state funding; indeed, we will be fortunate not to see a decline here as well. It is anticipated that job losses will accelerate as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic combined with the enormous downturn in the oil industry. These factors do not happen in isolation, all result in financial consequences for our school system.

The Board is currently in the midst of a Facility Task Force study. There remains much work to be done on this project. Once completed, it can serve as a “road map” for short-term and long-term facility issues. It is an opportunity to present to the public a coherent, transparent, and factual plan as to what our facility challenges are, both today and in the future.

This process has included:

- Board involvement
- Community/Stake-holder involvement
- Professional involvement
- Facility assessments
- Public outreach

Work that remains to be done:

- Completion of facility assessments
- Facility recommendations
- Consolidation possibilities
- Cost estimations
- Sequence/Chronological order
- Funding plan

Projects completed (2019 Board Accomplishments attachment):

- Installed playgrounds at all elementary schools
- Opened the new Southdown Elementary School
- Renovation/re-model of South Terrebonne and Terrebonne High Auditoriums
- Installed artificial turf fields
- New A/C system at Bourg Elementary
- All HVAC piping changed at Terrebonne High
- Boilers replaced at Broadmoor Elementary, Terrebonne High, and Ellender Memorial High
- New gym floor at Terrebonne High
- Began security installations at all schools (on-going)

The district's financial management is accentuated by the following:

- Our district has again received the prestigious Meritorious Budget Award. This award is given to districts that demonstrate thoroughness, transparency, and maintain high standards in budget preparation and implementation.
- Our audits (local, state, and federal) continue to receive the highest ratings possible.
- We have a AA bond rating.
- Our district's Financial Risk Assessment was reviewed and rated as "Excellent" by the Finance Department of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).
- We have fund balances in line with recommendations.
- We have a significant Building Fund (\$16 million).

MOVING FORWARD

Clearly, the most significant issue in the economic future is the passage of our millage renewal. This will go to the voters in August. This single issue must be our immediate priority.

We must recognize that we will see decreased revenues. The current downturn has been fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic and the oil sector problems. We can anticipate less revenue, how much and for how long is not clear. Fortunately, we do have reserves that will see us through the short-term.

Our plan, moving forward, must be one of financial caution. A conservative approach is a requirement in such uncertain times. We will meet the challenge and continue to move our district forward. I look forward to working and coordinating with the Board on these issues. Together, we will be successful!

PM/dc

Attachments

Motion of Mrs. Solet, seconded by Mr. Voisin, unanimously carried, the Board voted to adjourn its meeting (**6:53 P.M.**).

/s/ Philip Martin, Secretary

/s/ Debi Benoit, President

RLB