

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TERREBONNE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

June 25, 2019

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. Matthew J. Ford, Mr. Clyde F. Hamner, Mr. Roger Dale DeHart, Dr. MayBelle N. Trahan, and Mr. Dane Voisin.

ABSENT: Mr. Gregory Harding

Mr. LaGarde 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 Mr. Hamner, unanimously carried, the Board voted to move into executive session (6:25 P.M.) to address the matter bearing upon Policy FILE: C-3.6, Superintendent Evaluation.

Motion of Mr. DeHart, seconded by Dr. Trahan, unanimously carried, the Board reconvened in open session (7:01 P.M.) with all members present, with the exception of Mr. Harding who was absent.

President Benoit announced that the Board rated the overall performance of Superintendent Philip Martin for the 2018-2019 fiscal year as "Satisfactory," the highest rating possible.

Motion of Mr. Ford, unanimously seconded, unanimously carried, the Board accepted the overall rating performance of Superintendent Philip Martin for the 2018-2019 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

Our school district achieved many significant milestones during the 2018-2019 school year. In terms of student achievement, our teachers and students continue improving significantly, and in many areas, excel. In several measures of student achievement, Terrebonne Parish is among the very highest achieving in the state.

INSTRUCTIONAL

The following are highlighted instructional areas of significance:

- Terrebonne is one of twenty-one "A" school districts in Louisiana (previous scale) with a District Performance Score of 100.9 (Attachment #1);
- Terrebonne was listed by the state as an "Outstanding School System" (Attachment #1A);

- Terrebonne was 2nd in the state in percent of Top Growth in English/Language Arts and math (Attachment #1A);
- Terrebonne was listed 3rd in the state for percent of Top Growth in Economically Disadvantaged Students (Attachment #2);
- Terrebonne was 4th in the state for percent Top Growth for Students with Disabilities (Attachment #3);
- Terrebonne ranks 20th overall in Louisiana out of 71 school districts in overall District Performance Scores (Attachment #4);
- Terrebonne, under the new scoring system, is a “B” school district (Attachment #4);
- Terrebonne’s District Performance Score is 83 (new scale), the state average is 76 (Attachment #4);
- Terrebonne ranks 11th in High School Assessment Index (Attachment #5);
- Terrebonne’s High School Assessment Index is 78.2, the state average is 67 (Attachment #5);
- Terrebonne’s K-8 Progress Index ranks 5th in the state (Attachment #6);
- Terrebonne’s K-8 Progress Index is 96.1, the state average is 87.8 (Attachment #6);
- Terrebonne’s High School Progress Index ranks 5th in the state (Attachment #7);
- Terrebonne’s High School Progress Index is 99.8, the state average is 87.1 (Attachment #7);
- Terrebonne’s combined K-8 and High School Progress Index ranks 5th in the state (Attachment #8);
- Terrebonne’s combined K-8 and High School Progress Index is 96.6, the state average is 87.7 (Attachment #8);
- Terrebonne’s ACT Index ranks 12th in the state (Attachment #9);
- Terrebonne’s ACT Index is 83.6, the state average is 73.1 (Attachment #9);
- Terrebonne’s four high school letter grades are 3-A’s and 1-B;
- Twenty-five Terrebonne schools earned an A+ in Progress;
- Terrebonne ranks 17th in percent of students in grades 3 through 8 scoring “Mastery and Above” combining English/Language Arts, math, and social studies (Attachment #10);
- Terrebonne has a lower percentage of “Unsatisfactory” than the state average, at every grade level;
- One of our schools was nominated, by the State of Louisiana, for the National Blue Ribbon Award. Only two schools were nominated as “Exemplary Achievement Gap-Closing Schools” (Attachment #10A);

- Originally we had eight “D” schools; we now have three (soon to be none);
- Our district's graduation rate is 89.5%; this represents a significant increase. The state average is 81.4% (Attachment #10B).

LOOKING AHEAD

The data clearly indicates our schools are improving dramatically. In many areas, we excel and are among the highest in the state. This is a credit to our teachers, students, and administrators. Instruction and improvement will remain our single highest objective. Our goal was to become an “A” district; we achieved that, and the state changed the scoring rubric. There still remains much to be done. There are only four “A” districts in Louisiana, our goal is to become the fifth.

In conclusion, our successes are the direct result of a committed and supportive School Board, parental support, dedicated professionals, and hard-working students. Our educational mission has many moving parts. Success doesn't just happen; it requires coordination, direction, and resources. These are significant challenges that will all result in significant successes.

FINANCIAL

Our district's financial standing is a testament to the Board's commitment to fiscal responsibility. We must adhere to those principles that have served the district so well.

Our area has lost 2,500 jobs just over the past year and more than 16,500 total (Attachment #11). This doesn't happen in isolation; there are consequences for a school system. Less revenue, fewer students, and home disruptions, just to name a few, all impact a school system; and ultimately have a financial impact. As school districts around us struggle, Terrebonne continues to maintain a healthy financial profile. Maintaining high levels of student achievement, with far less resources, is a tribute to the Board, staff, and most of all to our teachers and students.

Some key indicators of our financial status are:

- Our district received the Meritorious Budget Award. This prestigious award is given to districts that demonstrate transparency, thoroughness, and maintain high standards in budget preparation and implementation (Attachment #12).
- Our audits (local, state, and federal) both district and program audits continue to receive the highest ratings possible.
- Media has recognized the school district's fiscal responsibility and excellent returns (Attachment #13).
- Terrebonne has also been favorably recognized for local spending per student, when compared to the rest of the state (Attachment #14).
- Terrebonne spends 75% of our total revenue on instruction, among the highest in the state.
- Terrebonne's fund balances reflect recommended percentages.
- We have a viable Building Fund of approximately \$16 million.

- We have recently received 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.
- The new Southdown Elementary School will open in the fall.

As has been noted by several sources, Terrebonne Parish schools are operated with far less resources than a vast majority of districts. Local revenue is significantly less than neighboring districts with fewer students (Attachment #15). Our cost per student, local revenue available, and substantial student outcomes are all indicative of a highly financially effective district.

Maintaining this financial viability is dependent upon continued fiscal responsibility. The Board has clearly established and has been recognized for "...doing more with less." (Attachment #13)

MOVING FORWARD

The Board is completing the last phase of its promise to the public. Ten years ago, voters approved dedicating a portion of the 1¢ Sales Tax for construction addressing flooded schools, aging schools, over-crowded schools, and grades 9-12 high schools. These have been addressed. Now is the time to begin a new plan. The Board has authorized a Facility Plan. This is an opportunity to accomplish several factors. Primarily, the plan will define where we are going and how to get there. This is probably an over-simplification since there are many components that will ultimately be necessary.

These are but a few of the components in a comprehensive plan:

- Board involvement
- Community/Stake holder involvement
- Professional input
- Time period projection
- Public outreach
- Facility assessment
- Recommendation on funding
- Cost estimations
- Consolidation of facilities
- Population projections
- Sequence/Chronological order

This is an opportunity to present to the public in a coherent, transparent, and factual manner exactly what our facility challenges are, both today and in the future.

There are many "wants" and, quite frankly, many good things our district may look at, but in reality we can't financially do all things; we must prioritize. I feel a well-developed plan will provide clear targets and what we must do to get there. I am optimistic that with prudent fiscal responsibility, establishing clear targets, maintaining a plan, and exercising fiscal restraint that our district has only scratched the surface of our potential.

This coming year, our highest financial priority must be passing the upcoming millage renewal. This is **crucial** to all things in our district. Without it, plans for anything will be futile. We will renew this millage. I know the Board is committed to this. I am committed to this. On the surface it appears to be an easy sell. The

facts are, **this is a renewal**, we are a high achieving district, our cost per student is one of the lowest in the state, and our millage is one of the lowest in the state. Even though, factually, this appears to be an easy decision; we cannot take anything for granted. Our challenge will be to clearly and simply convey these facts, with complete transparency. I look forward to working and coordinating with the Board on this issue. Together, we will be successful!

PM/dc

Attachments

Motion of Mr. DeHart, seconded by Mr. Hamner, unanimously carried, the Board voted to adjourn its meeting **(7:07 P.M.)**.

/s/ Philip Martin, Secretary

/s/ Debi Benoit, President

RLB