

SCHOOL BOARD PROCEEDINGS

The Avoyelles Parish School Board met in special session Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. at the School Board Office with the following members present:

Robin Moreau, President; Rickey Adams, Vice-President; Latisha Small, Lynn Deloach, Chris LaCour, Stanley Celestine, Jr., Chris Robinson, Van Kojis, and Aimee Dupuy.

Absent: None.

1. Superintendent Blaine Dauzat addressed the Board regarding the effects of school closures mandated by Governor John Bel Edwards.

Mr. Dauzat presented a resolution for the Board's consideration and adoption regarding a "Declaration of Public Emergency" in Avoyelles Parish.

Mrs. Jenny Welch, Food Service Supervisor, briefed the Board on the Feeding Program in the school district. She stated that the food service department is presently feeding breakfast and lunch at seven locations in the public schools from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon.

President Robin Moreau requested that the principals notify the parents of the availability of lunches; and he thanked Mrs. Welch and the food service employees for their hard work and dedication.

Superintendent Dauzat also presented a work schedule for Avoyelles Parish School Board employees. He stated that principals will meet with their faculties on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, in a large area on their campus, along with "social distancing" in an effort to compile study packets for the students for the next three weeks. Mr. Dauzat stressed that the public schools are completely closed to the students.

Superintendent Dauzat addressed the matter of pay for employees. He stated that the salary of employees may be covered by FEMA and under State policy, in emergency situations, the Board can pay time and a half in pay to employees.

Board Member Chris LaCour stated that the Cabrini Health Care Center will remain open (located at the Avoyelles High School Campus). Mr. LaCour outlined the services that will be provided by the clinic.

On motion by Van Kojis, seconded by Chris LaCour, the Board adopted a "Declaration of Public Emergency" resolution as follows:

Avoyelles Parish School Board
Declaration of Public Emergency
COVID-19

Whereas, on December 31, 2019, officials in China alerted the World Health Organization (“WHO”) to several cases of an unknown respiratory illness primarily concentrated in the City of Wuhan, Hubei Province; and

Whereas, after further investigating the illness and ruling out the recurrence of other previously known viruses, officials, on January 7, 2020, announced the discovery of a new virus belonging to the coronavirus family of viruses (“COVID-19”); and

Whereas, over the following weeks, the Chinese government began to report additional cases of the virus, evidencing a propensity of the virus to spread throughout China and beyond; and

Whereas, by January 30, 2020, approximately eighteen countries, outside of China, were reporting cases of the virus, causing the WHO to declare the virus a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern;” and

Whereas, over the following weeks, the virus continued to spread to nations around the globe, infecting thousands of individuals; and

Whereas, on March 11, 2020, the WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak a “Global Pandemic;” and

Whereas, on March 11, 2020, the Governor of the State of Louisiana declared a “Public Health Emergency” over the coronavirus outbreak; and

Whereas, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States of America declared a national emergency due to the coronavirus outbreak; and

Whereas, in an attempt to combat the spread of the virus, the Governor, on March 13, 2020, ordered the closure of all public elementary and secondary schools in Louisiana, beginning on March 16, 2020 and ending on April 13, 2020; and

Whereas, many children depend on the services of the Avoyelles Parish School Board (“School Board”) for essential services such as the provision of healthy meals; and

Whereas, while the cancellation of school will hopefully serve to combat the spread of the virus, such cancellation may put children at risk of not receiving enough healthy meals during the prolonged closure; and

Whereas, the spread of the virus and its impact on the everyday lives of the School Board's students, faculty, staff, and their family members requires the School Board to take unprecedented steps to combat the spread of the virus and to serve the children of Avoyelles Parish; and

Whereas, the sudden closure of all schools until April 13, 2020 or later has also caused confusion and concern to employees of the school district about their ability to continue to be able to support their families through receipt of compensation from the School Board.

Now, Therefore, the above recitals considered, the School Board desires to utilize its assets in the fight against the coronavirus, as more fully set forth below.

And Now, Considering the Foregoing, the School Board hereby declares as follows:

Be It Declared, that the Avoyelles Parish School Board declares a public emergency due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

Be It Further Declared that, notwithstanding any policy or rule to the contrary, the School Board hereby confers emergency power upon its Superintendent of Schools, for purposes of leading the School Board's response to the outbreak. Such emergency powers include, at the sole discretion of the Superintendent:

(1) The authority to enter into any agreement or contract, without any further Board approval, for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, or services for sanitation, cleaning, technology, and other Covid-19 related services and supplies on behalf of the School Board.

(2) The authority to supply and arrange for the delivery of meals to all children of the parish, eighteen (18) years of age or younger, at no cost to the child or his/her family.

(3) The authority to continue to pay school employees their regular compensation during the period schools are closed.

(4) The authority to adjust curriculum, work schedules, compensation, and staff assignments without any further Board approval.

(5) The authority to adjust the school calendar.

(6) The authority to apply to BESE, LDOE, and/or USDOE, or any other governmental body for waivers of regulations or requirements, the compliance of which is impacted by COVID-19.

(7) The authority to apply for waivers, grants, reimbursements, aid, and other COVID-19 related matters on behalf of the School Board.

(8) The authority to provide non-mandatory, supplemental educational resources to students.

(9) The authority to take any other action reasonable necessary to implement the above directives.

Be It Further Declared that the Superintendent is required to report, in writing and at reasonable intervals, to the School Board as to the amount of expenditures made pursuant to this Declaration, as well as, the actions taken by the Superintendent pursuant to this Declaration.

Be It Further Declared that, in accordance with the Governor's declaration, any bidding requirements of the Louisiana Public Bid Law (La.R.S. 38:2212 et seq.) applicable to any purchases related to the School Board's response to the coronavirus outbreak are hereby suspended.

Be It Further Declared that this Declaration shall remain in effect until withdrawn by the School Board.

Be It Further Declared that notice of the provisions contained herein shall be published in the official journal of the Avoyelles Parish School Board within ten (10) days hereof.

This Declaration is adopted by the Avoyelles Parish School Board, at a Special Meeting held on the 17th day of March, 2020 in Marksville, Louisiana.

/s/Blaine Duzat
Blaine Duzat, Board Secretary
Avoyelles Parish School Board

/s/ Robin Moreau
Robin Moreau, Board President
Avoyelles Parish School Board

Furthermore, Superintendent Duzat stated that the State of Louisiana has suspended all School Performance Scores and District Performance Scores for the 2019-2020 school year.

There being no further business, on motion by Van Kojis, seconded by Rickey Adams, the meeting was adjourned.

AVOYELLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

Robin Moreau, President

Blaine Duzat, Secretary-Treasurer

