

MARENGO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board Meeting Minutes  
March 21, 2024

4:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Mr. Freddie Charleston, President.

Establishment of a quorum.

Members present: Mr. Freddie Charleston, Mrs. Lynda Joiner, Mr. Chester Moore, and Mr. Rayvell Smith.

Member absent: Mr. John McAlpine.

The invocation was given by Mr. Charleston.

Approval of Agenda

The motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mrs. Joiner. It carried unanimously.

Second Approval of February 22, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes

The motion for second approval of the February 22, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes was made by Mrs. Joiner and seconded by Mr. Smith. It carried unanimously.

I, Luke Hallmark, Superintendent of Education of Marengo County Schools, do hereby make the following recommendations:

Business Matters

- **Larry Perrin – Schneider Electric Update**  
Mr. Larry Perrin with Schneider Electric gave the Board an update on their project throughout the county. The project is on schedule with the electrical work and this phase should be finished in the summer.
- **Richard Johnson – Financial Update**  
Mr. Richard Johnson, CSFO, gave the Board members a financial update. In the General Fund, the cash balance as of January was \$3,258,925.68. The receipts were \$2,366,983.67 while the expenditures were \$1,276,096.81. This left a February 29, 2024, cash balance of \$4,349,812.54. Financially, things are looking good at the present time.
- **Terry Norton – Technology Update**  
Mr. Terry Norton, Technology Coordinator, spoke to the Board about the bid rejection of the Virtual Reality proposal. There are certain items that must be met before the Board could approve the bid. In this case, the lowest bid did not meet all of the requirements. Mr. Norton also spoke about the system's Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan. This plan is limited to certain members of the school system due to its security program in place.
- **Wendy Joiner – Instructional Update**  
Mrs. Wendy Joiner, Instructional Leader, gave an update to the Board members. Kindergarten registration for 2024-2025 shows A. L. Johnson High School with five, Marengo High School with seven, and Sweet Water High School with 39. PreK numbers show A. L. Johnson High School with seven, Marengo High School with 10, and Sweet Water High School with 32 (and a waiting list of seven). Letters have been sent to students that are not proficient in Reading (K – 3) and Math (K – 5). Staffing is being finalized for each school for the Summer Learning Program. Resources have been ordered and the professional development for teachers has been planned. The Career Coach has scheduled Business and Industry Recruiting day for April 24<sup>th</sup> at the County Extension Office. The Career Coach is also working on completing the Four-Year Plans at each school. On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, the FAFSA portal will be updated. WorkKeys Data for 2023-2024 has four levels of Proficiency. Platinum is the highest, followed by Gold, Silver, and Bronze. Below Bronze is considered a No Level. A. L. Johnson High School showed growth. The previous year they had 47% at No Level and now it is only 27%. Marengo High School increased from 27% to 62% in the Silver category. They also went from 32% in the No Level category to 0%. Sweet Water High School increase their Gold certificates from 22% to 33%. They also decreased the No Level from 15% to 0%. District-wide, Gold and Silver certificates increased while the No Level numbers went from 29% to 7%. These are really good numbers.
- **Legislative Update**  
The Superintendent gave the Board members a legislative update. He mentioned the CHOOSE Act would give up to \$7,000 in tax credits for use on non-public education, including private school tuition. It has support from all groups and appears to be on track to become law. A concerning part of this bill requires the Legislature to appropriate at least \$100 million for the program each year. House Bill 91 and Senate Bill 82 would allow games between the Alabama High School Athletic Association and the Alabama Independent School Association. Currently, schools in their associations may not play a school from a different association. The Senate has approved a gambling package that would include sports betting and multiple casinos with table games along with a state lottery. The bill goes to the House where the lawmakers could go along with the changes or send it back to committee.

- The Superintendent discussed the monthly Revenue Abstract on the comparative tax collections for the month. The total change so far from FY 2023 to FY 2024 is up 1.12% or about \$71 million. There is a concern that a comparison of Sales Tax Revenue from February, 2023, to February, 2024, dropped 8.41% or about \$19.7 million.
- Utilities Report / Black Warrior Telecommunications Consortium  
The Black Warrior Telecommunications Consortium financial statement balance for February 29, 2024, was \$70,411.66 in the checking account and \$90,908.14 in a CD. The utilities report for February, 2024, was \$41,020.80 as compared to \$31,601.60 in February, 2023.
- The 2023 Statement of Economic Interests Form are due by April 30, 2024.

#### Executive Session

Mr. Smith made a motion at 4:58 p.m. to enter into Executive Session. A second came from Mrs. Joiner. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Joiner made a motion at 5:36 p.m. to come out of Executive Session. A second came from Mr. Moore. It passed unanimously.

#### Unfinished Business

1. That the Board approve proposed new FILE: IEBC (Library Policy) that was presented to the Board on February 22, 2024.

#### New Business

2. That the Financial Reports for February, 2024, be accepted.
3. That the General, Federal, Capital Projects, Accounts Payable, and Payroll account bank statements as reconciled by Chief Financial Officer and reviewed by the Superintendent for February, 2024, be accepted.
4. That the Board approve a Resolution requesting the District Tax Election Extension to be put on the November, 2024, ballot.
5. That the Board approve the 2024-2025 School Calendar.

6. That the Board approve pursuing the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant.

7. That the following bids under Bid No. 024-518 (Virtual Reality Hardware, Instruction Content, and Licenses) for a five-year period be rejected:

Rejected:

Transfr	\$3,614,560.00
(did not submit bid bond)	1,540,960.00

Victory XR	431,222.96
(did not submit bid bond)	

No bids received from the following:

Bluum Technology  
Inspirit

8. That the low bid for reroofing Sweet Water High School K – 2 Building under McKee Project No 24-148 (McKee & Associates Architects) be accepted:

To be accepted:

Page Properties Construction	\$43,785.00
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Other bids received:

Alabama Roofing & Sheet Metal Co., Inc.	97,250.00
Amerson Roofing, Inc.	86,861.00
Assurance Service Group, Inc.	119,347.00
Home South	145,311.00
Johns & Kirksey, Inc.	124,300.00
Metal Roofing Solutions	66,000.00
Norman Enterprises	121,500.00
Old South Construction	74,680.00
Professional Roofing & Construction	98,560.00
Roofing Solutions	90,000.00
Summers Roofing & Construction	91,055.00
Willoughby Roofing & Sheet Metal, Inc.	61,975.00

Personnel Recommendations

9. That the Board approve the Superintendent's personnel recommendations as follows:

Family and Medical Leave

Jerry Grace (effective March 20, 2024, with return date of April 22, 2024)	Transportation	Assistant Transportation Director
LaShay Nelson (effective February 14, 2024 with return date of May 1, 2024)	Sweet Water High School	Nurse

Disability Retirement

Gwendolyn Green (effective April 1, 2024)	Marengo High School	Child Nutrition Program Assistant Manager
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Resignations

Janice Deason (effective May 24, 2024)	Marengo High School	Teacher
Courtney Hyatt (effective March 11, 2024)	Sweet Water High School	Child Nutrition Program Assistant Manager

Retirement

Anita Lynn (effective June 1, 2024)	Sweet Water High School	Teacher
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Mrs. Joiner made the motion to approve items 1 through 9. A second came from Mr. Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

With the Superintendent search extending into April, the Board members and Superintendent agreed that Luke Hallmark would serve the month of April in his present position. Since the Superintendent has not rendered his retirement papers to the Retirement Systems of Alabama, the resolution passed at the January 25, 2024, Board Meeting for assisting a new superintendent and pay for accumulated vacation days will continue through April 30, 2024.

Superintendent's Report

- Broadband Project
- AASB Hybrid Meetings

Date and Time of Next Regular Meeting of the Board

The date and time of the next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, April 18, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 5:49 p.m. was made by Mr. Moore and seconded by Mrs. Joiner. It carried unanimously.