

MARENGO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2022

4:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Mr. Rayvell Smith, President.

Establishment of a quorum.

Members present: Mr. Freddie Charleston, Mrs. Lynda Joiner, Mr. John McAlpine, and Mr. Rayvell Smith.

Mr. Chester Moore was present through ZOOM.

Members absent: none

The invocation was given by Mr. Smith.

Approval of Agenda

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

Second Approval of September 22, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes

The motion for second approval of the September 22, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes was made by Mr. McAlpine and seconded by Mr. Charleston.

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

Business Matters

- **Essex Family – Discussion of John Essex**
Ms. Jacqueline Essex Gibson and several members of the late John Essex family addressed the Board about lowering the agreed upon purchase price of John Essex School from \$125,000 to \$100,000. This is a 20% reduction. Ms. Gibson mentioned that equipment had been removed from the premises and the school had deteriorated from the time of the negotiated priced. They had electricians and plumbers look at the school and some of the estimates were over \$40,000. The Superintendent did not know of anything taken from the school after both parties had agreed upon a price. There had been some items take to other schools within the system and some sold after the school closed, but nothing after the agreement. Mr. Moore mentioned that he was sympathetic about their concerns and he would like to see a possibility of considering the reduced price. Mr. Charleston stated our school system was already low on funds for the students and this money could go toward helping our system. Ms. Gibson wanted a decision before they left and Mr. Smith mentioned that it would not be done now but considered at the next meeting. The Superintendent spoke about the school price being “as is” and the prepared deed was written for \$125,000. The price had been offered to the Essex family after the State Examiners mentioned that it could be sold to them for a “fair” market price without having to go through the bid process. Considering the shape of the facility and the 18 acres of land that goes with it, the \$125,000 was a very fair offer to the Essex family. The Superintendent believed that lowering the agreed upon price could be a violation with the State Examiners. Ms. Gibson asked if everyone would leave the room except the Board members and they could go into executive session to make a decision on their offer. Mr. Smith mentioned that this does not qualify for an executive meeting and everything done will be in the public. Ms. Gibson asked if they could leave and go outside and come back with a decision. The family left and the board meeting moved ahead with Schneider Electric’s update. After several minutes, the Essex family returned and Ms. Gibson pulled out a check for \$100,000 and said that this was their offer. The Superintendent stated that he had another offer that had been given to him recently and it was more than the \$125,000. But, since the Board had agreed upon \$125,000 they would not go back on their word. If the Essex family did not want to pay the \$125,000, the recent bidder would be offered the property. Ms. Gibson asked about the offer and the Superintendent showed her a letter that had an offer of \$145,000. After reading the letter, Ms. Gibson stated that they would pay the \$125,000. She requested all of the keys to the building and would have a check in the morning. The Superintendent agreed to have everything ready. The Board members and Superintendent were glad to see the school stay in the Essex family.
- **Schneider Electric Update**
Larry Perrin and Gordon Alexander gave a project update to the Board members. The fire alarm project is moving along at Marengo High School. They will be moving to Sweet Water High School and then to A. L. Johnson High School. They have had no issues so far. Things are moving along smoothly.
The second project development is coming at the end of the phase 2 work. They are working toward a final scope of work to include the critical electrical updates at Sweet Water High School as well as lighting, building automation system, and district-wide VoIP phones at all schools. They are also working toward the budget given to us by Mrs. Luker and the cash flow discussed with Mr. Bob Young. The savings will help offset the cost of the electrical upgrades. The goal is to present a final project in December to be voted on.
- **Wendy Joiner – Instructional Leader**
Mrs. Wendy Joiner, Instructional Leader, gave the Board members an academic update. The Failure Report for the 1st nine-weeks showed some failures throughout all three of the schools. The report will allow the administrators to target those students and meet with the teachers to develop a plan to improve these grades.

Based on the 3rd grade ACAP Reading Sufficiency Scores, Marengo High School moved from being a Full-Support School to a Limited-Support School. This is a big accomplishment. Sweet Water High School will also be a Limited-Support School while A. L. Johnson High School will be an ARI Full-Support School.

The Civics Exam is given to all seniors. There are only four students that have not passed the exam. All four are at A. L. Johnson High School and they are preparing to take it again.

Recently there was a Behavior Threat Assessment Training. It was provided by the State Department of Education for Central Office Staff, Principals, Counselor, Lead Nurse, Mental Health Coordinator, and the Sheriff's Department. The purpose was "How to Manage Threatening Situations and to Create Safe School Climates." The Principals also used this opportunity to update nSide Portal and complete nSide Academy.

Recent Professional Development included: Learning Blade/Career Blade, STEM Computer Literacy Resource for our STEM Teachers and Librarians (K – 6), and a PreK Conference (three teachers and three auxiliary teachers attended).

Mr. Martin visited to see best practices in leadership and instruction. Other principals have been invited to attend also.

Strong Leaders, Strong Readers program was attended by our principals and Mrs. Joiner concerning AMSTI and ARI updates.

The Career Coach has been busy with the completion of FAFSA, working on career projects and administering College Application Week.

The Black Belt Treasures Arts Integration Workshop trained two teachers from each school on Integration of Arts into the curriculum. For their training, they received a cart of art supplies worth \$3,000.

The Reading Coaches met to discuss goals created by each teacher for students. It is important for teachers and students to know their target. The instruction part created a "non-negotiable" list of things that principals should see in each classroom during classroom visits. The Marengo County Coaching Community for Reading Coaches will be held at Marengo High School (November 2nd – 4th). This PD will impact Reading Coaches as well as K – 3 teachers. This PD will be replicated at Sweet Water High School at A. L. Johnson High School.

The State of Alabama NEAP Scores showed reasons for celebration. In math, the state's rank jumped from last place (52nd) to 40th while the average score on the test went up by less than a point. In reading, Alabama's rank rose from 49th to 39th, with the average score up by nearly two points.

- SSA Priorities

The Superintendent reported to the Board members about the 2022-2023 SSA Policy / Budget Priorities. The priorities included funding a line item for school safety expenditures, lowering grades 4 – 6 divisors, fully funding reading and math elementary instructional coaches, increasing At-Risk funding, and prioritizing funding for school construction projects to offset the rising costs of construction. The next level of priorities includes lowering the ADM to help systems earn assistant principals, lowering the ADM for counselor units, increase funding for school nurses, and fund transportation at 100%.

- Utilities / Black Warrior Telecommunications Consortium Report

The utilities report for September, 2021, was \$37,717.05 as compared to the 2022 totals of \$40,690.35. The Black Warrior Telecommunications Consortium financial statement for September 30, 2022, was \$77,213.93 in the checking account and \$90,410.93 in a CD.

New Business

1. That the following Child Nutrition Program bid be approved:

Bid No. Item

022-514 Milk (1%)

To be accepted:

East Side Jersey	.41 per ½ pint flavored
Dairy / Prairie Farms	.41 per ½ pint unflavored
West Hammond, LA	.60 per ½ pint flavored (shelf-stable)
	.60 per ½ pint unflavored (shelf-stable)

No bids received from the following:

Barber Milk
LuVel Dairy

Personnel Recommendations

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

Employment of Certified Personnel

Jackie Tripp Marengo High School Career Tech Teacher
(effective September 26, 2022)

Promotion

Margaret Sommers Sweet Water High School Child Nutrition Program
(promotion from breakfast and lunch worker to assistant manager effective October 28, 2022)

Mr. McAlpine made the motion to approve items 1 and 2. A second came from Mrs. Joiner. The motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

- School Status Update
- AASB Advocacy Event / Annual Meeting – November 9th and 10th
- COVID / Test Scores / ACT Test Scores
- Football Playoffs / Revenue Sharing
- Lodestar
- Coastal Alabama Meeting
- County-Wide Tax Distribution
- Cybersecurity Grant
- Teacher Shortages
- STEM Program
- Greenhouse
- Special Education Update
- Principals' Meeting
- Legal Issues
- November 8th – Vote
- November – Thank Alabama Teachers Month

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, November 17, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn at 6:08 p.m. was made by Mr. Moore and seconded by Mr. Charleston. It carried unanimously.

Luke Hallmark, Superintendent

Rayvell Smith, President