

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors**  
**March 28, 2022 – 6:30 PM**  
**Via Teleconference**

- A. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM by Robert Wiley.
- B. Prayer**
- C. Pledge of Allegiance**
- D. Approval of the Meeting Agenda** – A motion to approve the agenda was made by Hollis Downs and seconded by Ed Watley. The agenda was approved without opposition from the Board.
- E. Adoption of Previous Minutes** – Pamela Stewart moved to adopt the previous minutes with the stated corrections. This was seconded by Barbara McIntyre. The previous minutes were adopted without opposition from the Board.
- F. Roll Call**
- a) Present Members**
- Barbara McIntyre
  - Ed Watley
  - Hollis Downs
  - Robert Wiley
  - Clara Lewis
  - Pamela Stewart
  - Don Tatum
- b) Absent Members**
- Elizabeth Smith
  - Eddie Robinson III
- G. Public Comments** – Although the meeting was open to the public, no members of the public were present to comment.
- H. Report of the Executive Director** –
- a)** Enrollment is currently at 656 students, with 47 of those in alternative placement at New Living Word. This year’s enrollment period has changed since the last meeting and will end after the last new student enrolls tomorrow. The lottery will be held on 5/12/2022, which meets the requirement of a minimum of 30 days. Mr. Ford explained that, during the open enrollment period, applications are put in for the coming school year. Students currently enrolled and their siblings are automatically accepted. All other applicants are admitted by lottery. For the lottery, each student is assigned a number at random. Then they go down the list of students for each grade until running out of seats. Any additional applicants are placed on the waiting list. Pamela Stewart inquired about the process for if a student is chosen during the lottery who also has a sibling on the applicants’ list. Mr. Ford stated that if no seat is available for the sibling, the parent would have the option to enroll only one student until a seat becomes available for the other. This has happened once in the past, and the parent opted not to enroll only one of the children.

- b) There have been some issues with the buildings at the temporary campus. Two of the buildings have roof leaks, and three need floor repairs due to possible water damage. The buildings with floor damage are being used, but the damaged areas are not frequently used and are blocked off. The buildings are under warranty, and a warranty team will be coming to repair them at no cost. One entire side of the cafeteria has already been replaced.
- c) Athletics: baseball, softball, and track seasons have started. A middle school track team has started and has about 35 students. The girls' athletic teams are larger than ever due to the cheer coach requiring students to be on an athletic team to be eligible for cheer tryouts. 63 students tried out for cheer, and 33 made the team. All of those students are currently playing softball or running track. Lincoln Prep is not hosting any track meets, and the team practices at the GSU track, which is open to the public. The students in Tae Kwon Do participated in their first tournament recently in Texas.
- d) Additional updates: Weekly covid testing is ongoing at Lincoln Prep and New Living Word. Tests are completed on Monday for those who have signed up. The results can be reviewed as early as Tuesday in the portal. This is voluntary for students but mandatory for unvaccinated staff members. The school Social Worker and Counselors held interactive mentoring sessions via Facebook recently. Males and females had separate sessions and discussed things pertaining to young students, such as maturity for the girls and tying neckties for the boys. Pamela Stewart would like to contribute to this effort in some way and suggested possibly writing notes for the students. There is not a set schedule for these sessions currently. They wanted to do a few sessions to get feedback before working on a schedule. The TAPS program has started and is meeting twice per week with plans to increase to 3 times per week. This program is designed to foster better relationships between youth and law enforcement. Speeches will be made by the District Attorney, a judge, and various law enforcement officers. Meetings are held in the Lincoln Prep cafeteria during the last period of the day on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students participated in a Drone Workshop at ULM recently and reported enjoying it.
- e) Lincoln Prep was accepted as 1 of 20 recipients of the Campti Field of Dreams Grant. This is a conservation grant that is designed to teach people how to farm sustainably. When the new campus is completed, ¼ acre will be used as a sustainable farm to produce fruits and vegetables. This will be funded directly from the grant, and the fruits and vegetables will be used in the school cafeteria, as well as in the community. This is a recent approval, and more information will be provided when it is available.

## I. Reports

- a) **Financial** – Revenue was estimated at 66% and is currently at 61% collected. The final numbers for the February 1 count were submitted last week. Based on those numbers, the school should receive an additional \$500k in installments. The goal is to have this year's enrollment completed before the end of summer so that those students will be counted and funded at the beginning of the next school year. The State and Local amounts differ because the State number is calculated based upon the formula passed by the Legislature and the Local number is based on local tax receipts. Almost the full \$500k difference comes on the local side and is mostly due to the tax passed last year. The breakdown of these numbers will be slightly different but very close to the

projected amount. Federal grants for January have been received, and the request for February was sent today. The reimbursement amount is \$141k for February and \$141k for March. The previously discussed cash flow issues have been resolved with the increased MFP and the new line of credit. The variance between January and February is due to the funds received in January including some spending dating back to August. The food service is profitable. Meals are being cooked at GSU and transported. February 2022 was the largest month for the food service due to students in after-school tutoring being provided a snack and dinner. Personnel is the largest share of the budget and is below the curve at 65.6%. General Administration is slightly above the curve but is a small line item. Overall, spending for the year is below the curve, at 65%.

- Mr. Downs expressed concern about a large amount of milk being wasted when the students were located at Trinity. It was reported to him that staff had to give students the milk, even if they did not want it. Mr. Ford clarified that, per Federal law, they are required to provide all meal components to be reimbursed. He added that, at Lincoln Prep campus, they can manage and reduce waste by tracking and trending the amount of milk the students drink and adjusting their vendor order accordingly. The cafeteria team tries to monitor and serve things that the students want to eat, even if it is repetitive.
- Barbara McIntyre asked if teaching positions are open that need to be filled and was assured that filling positions is not a concern for Lincoln Prep. Being a Charter School gives Lincoln Prep some flexibilities that other schools in the parish do not have, such as certification not being a requirement for teaching staff. Mr. Ford discussed faculty members that will be hired soon and stated that they are certified in the state they are moving from but not in Louisiana and will be eligible to be paid the full teacher's salary. He added that a certified teacher in Louisiana is not required to take a pay cut when moving from one school to another. This is not a rule for Charter schools but is enforced at Lincoln Prep. He stated that he and Coach Hall are the only Lincoln Prep employees that have been hired at a lower salary than in their previous job. He added that they have been hiring paraprofessionals with the goal of moving them into teaching positions and several have gotten certifications and been moved into classrooms. Barbara McIntyre stated that GSU is offering programs and scholarships for African American male teachers, and Mr. Ford stated that he plans to hire one of those participants next year.
- Mr. Ford stated that a brand new, 9-month teacher at Lincoln Prep has a starting salary of \$48,127 not including the raise from the State. Lincoln Prep has been successful in hiring paraprofessionals because they are offered full time positions with benefit eligibility and a starting salary around \$21k. He added that 4 paraprofessionals have been hired in the past 3 months, all of whom previously worked for the Lincoln Parish School System. Paraprofessionals at Lincoln Prep are in the classroom all day, versus only being allowed to work 4 hours per day in the Lincoln Parish School system. Lincoln Parish maxes paraprofessionals out at 28 hours per week, likely to

avoid having to get health insurance for them. If a teacher misses work one day, they are not permitted to make the hours up a different day.

- Clara Lewis inquired about the bonuses for teachers. Mr. Ford stated that the intent was to pay at the bonus level that is paid to teachers in the Lincoln Parish school system but had to wait to ensure that the funding was there. The actual funding from the new tax does not go onto the budget until next year, but current funding allowed for them to receive the bonus this year. He explained how the teacher funding works at Lincoln Prep. The feedback initially obtained from the teachers was that they wanted all the funds on their paycheck with no bonuses. The amount including bonuses was calculated and made to be their salary. However, there have been some complaints about teachers at other schools getting bonuses that Lincoln Prep teachers did not get. Mr. Ford reiterated that the bonuses for Lincoln Prep teachers are calculated into their annual salary and included in each paycheck. Last year, Lincoln Parish school teachers did not receive a bonus, but Lincoln Prep's budget allowed them to not cut the teachers' pay. Next year, Lincoln Parish teachers will have a base scale, and bonuses will total \$8300. Lincoln Prep will have the bonuses divided onto 3 paychecks. Some additional bonuses are available for teachers who are qualified to teach advanced or college classes, activity pay for coaches, etc.
- Mr. Downs requested a comparison of Lincoln Prep's pay versus bordering parishes and was informed that the only bordering parish that pays more is Bienville. Clara Lewis added that Bienville Parish gives incentives for teachers showing up on time, etc. Mr. Ford stated that those incentives were attempted at Lincoln Prep in the past but did not go well.

**b) Alumni and Community Relations – No report**

**c) Transportation and Facilities Update –** Mr. Watley expressed concern about the communication protocols for bus drivers, as only one person can communicate with them during their route. Mr. Ford stated that bus drivers are to answer urgent calls from him or Coach Hall but are to follow the communication protocols otherwise. 2 new bus drivers were hired recently from Winn Parish. A 10<sup>th</sup> bus is added during sports season because teams must leave school early for travel games. There are 9 bus routes during the rest of the year. When the new location opens and enrollment maxes out, Mr. Ford expects 11-12 buses to be needed. He added that fuel is purchased at a negotiated rate that is less than what appears on signs at the gas station.

- Mr. Tatum requested clarification regarding the classification Lincoln Prep will be in for sports when enrollment maxes out. Mr. Ford stated that the number for classification is based on the number of high school students. Currently, there are 60 per class with a total of 240 students. The smallest AA school is Jonesboro, with 236 students and the smallest A school is Slaughter. If the number of students does not require the school to be AA, the school can choose to be A or AA. Half of Lincoln Prep's schedule is AA, and the other half is A. Lincoln Prep has played and beat several of the AA schools, so it may be beneficial, both financially and for the students, to move into AA classification.

Reclassification happens every 2 years. At that point, Lincoln Prep will either have the number of students required to be moved into AA or be able to decide which classification they wish to be.

- d) **Education** – Mr. Ford will provide feedback for the Executive Director Evaluation by the end of this week.

**J. New Business – Dropout Recovery Charter School Proposal**

- a) Mr. Ford discussed the possibility of a new Charter School that would serve as an alternative high school that would target students ages 15-21 who are not currently enrolled in high school. It would target students that have been expelled or dropped out of school and would have a different accountability measure than what is used for some other schools. The Lincoln Parish alternative school only accepts students that have been expelled. Mr. Ford added that the average dropout rate in this area is about 10-12%, so this alternative high school could be very beneficial. Ideally, enrollment would be approximately 50-100 students. The Lincoln Parish alternative school only caters to students that have been expelled, not students who have dropped out. These students would have the opportunity to obtain a high school diploma and have access to other options available at Lincoln Prep, such as the Early College Academy and vocational programs. 21-year-old students would have the option to be trained to become commercial truck drivers. This is a pathway that the State has that is not used often due to the age requirement. This would be a partnership with an organization currently operating 4 schools like this in Louisiana (3 in Jefferson Parish and 1 in Lafayette). Those schools have been successful and use Edgenuity, which is used by Lincoln Prep for credit recovery. Mr. Ford met with the leader of this organization, and they concluded that the best way to do this would be for the Grambling High Foundation to apply for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Charter School. Several location options are being explored for this school. Clara Lewis expressed concern about having 21-year-old students in the same environment as 15-year-old students. Mr. Ford stated that the students would be separated on campus. They would arrive and depart at different times so that the groups of individuals would not interact during the school day. He plans to start the application process in January 2023 to have the school open in the fall of 2024.

**K. Old Business**

- a) **Construction Update** – Construction is currently in Phase 1. A formal ribbon cutting is planned for the day after Christmas. The latest date to be able to occupy the campus is during Christmas break. The construction completion dates are as follows:  
Administrative and Library – 11/8/22, Cafeteria – 10/18/22, high school wing – 12/1/22, middle school wing – 9/23/22, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade wing – 9/8/22, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade wing – 9/8/22. Phase 1 is approximately 21% complete. Phase 2 consists of the football stadium, turf, track, lights, goalposts, field house, baseball, and softball stadiums. The completion date for this is still to be determined. The contract to purchase the temporary building has been executed, but the purchase has not been completed. The bond hearing for this is in April.
- b) **Desegregation Case Update** – The order from the court to release Lincoln Prep from the Desegregation Case has been completed, but the attorney advised that it is not final until the appeal time of 60 days is exhausted. If it is not appealed during that time,

Lincoln Prep will be fully released. If anyone wished to bring this case up again, they would have to file a new lawsuit and have proof of discrimination. Once released, Lincoln Prep will no longer be under the threat of closure or only permitted to operate at this facility for 2 years before going back to court. Previously, they were required to go to court every summer and request permission to remain open. Lincoln Prep will also be permitted to use GSU athletic facilities, just as any other school is permitted. They were unable to do so during the case because they had to prove to be a separate entity from GSU. Mr. Ford added that Lincoln Prep had to show compliance with all requirements to be released from the court order before the Bond Commission would approve funding for the new facility.

**c) Bond Sale Update** – Discussed during the construction update.

**d) Relationship between Grambling High Foundation and Grambling State University** – Lincoln Prep continues to use the cafeteria at GSU to prepare meals and deliver to Lincoln Prep students. Mr. Ford requested to use the GSU Assembly Center for graduation. Graduation was previously held at Temple due to Covid restrictions but may not hold the number of people expected to be in attendance for this year's graduation. Mr. Tatum inquired about where prom would be held. Mr. Ford stated that the Events Center at the Lincoln Parish Library is being considered, as that is where the last prom was held. He added that the Event Center may be used for kindergarten graduation, also. More information is forthcoming.

**L. Future Meetings**

**a) Next meeting** – The next meeting will be April 25, 2022, at 6:30 PM with committees meeting at 6:00 PM if needed.

**M. Announcement** – No announcements.

**N. Executive Session** – Mr. Watley moved to enter Executive Session. This was seconded by Barbara McIntyre. The room was cleared of all non-Board members and the Executive Session began at 7:43 PM. No votes were taken during the Executive Session.

**O. Adjournment** – The meeting returned to open session at 7:49 PM. Upon coming out of Executive Session and prior to adjournment, Mr. Downs commended Mr. Ford on the tremendous job he has done and for going above and beyond and expressed our gratefulness for all that he has done leading the school, working through the legal case, planning and designing our new school site(s), etc. We also want to make certain that Mr. Ford has support and assistance to work with him to accomplish the goals he has so ably led us to reach. With nothing further to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 PM.