

Board Meeting 4/21/25

Zoom Meeting ID: 874 6332 5544

Zoom Passcode: 807397

Call to Order: Board Chair, Bishop Mark Tolbert

- Bishop Tolbert called to order the monthly Board Meeting at 7:05pm.

Roll Call

- Mark Tolbert
- Aldon Jones
- Derrick Parker
- Linda Edgely
- TuJuania Scott

“Thank you all for the time you give to be a part of this Board and to try and do something to help our students learn, expand, and understand the horizons that are available to them. I’ve heard many stories over the years where students were told by counselors and teachers that they needed to go find some little piddly job because they weren’t college, business, or leadership material. And I wanted to assure students in our community that they would never be limited by somebody else’s opinion of them. And so I think, over the last 25 years, we’ve achieved that, and I hope for the next 10-20 years we are able to continue to achieve that.”

- Bishop Tolbert

Questions about February’s minutes

- Bishop Tolbert – The first thing on the March minutes were something about the insurance. Dr. Mitchell, have we looked into that?
 - Dr. Mitchell – Yes, I spoke with Joi Slaughter this afternoon. She said there’s nothing that we need to do at this point in time for renewal, but she has reached out to Bukaty Insurance to ensure that there’s nothing else that we need to do, and she’s waiting to hear back from them.
- Bishop Tolbert – I saw a bid from Waste Management, and then I saw a late bid come in (Republic Services). Ms. Middlebrooks, are you on here? We were fortunate that Waste Management lowered their bid from \$3000 something a month down to about \$1055 a month.
 - Cynthia Middlebrooks – Yes, so I don’t know anything about Republic Services. They called at the end of the day, and then they sent the proposal over. It’s a little lower than the other bids, but I haven’t had a chance to really look at the fine print.
 - Bishop Tolbert – I think that rather than to keep kicking the can down the road, since Waste Management dropped their bid over \$2000, I think we go ahead and lock them in

for a year with the caveat that, as I was reading through their contract, they wanted an automatic renewal. Scratch that out and write annual renewal.

- Aldon Jones put forth motion to accept the Waste Management bid on an annual renewal basis.
- Clyde Irvin seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

First Motion: Motion to approve March's minutes.

- Linda Edgely put forth the motion to approve March's minutes.
- Clyde Irvin seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

Questions about March's monthly bills

- Bishop Tolbert – I saw that there is going to be a request for a staff appreciation event, and then I see on the bills, there's a staff appreciation gift. Is that two different asks?
 - Cynthia Middlebrooks – Yes sir, one is an activity and the other is a gift. So they are going out to a location in Kansas. They are going May 9th.
- Bishop Tolbert – Is the staff appreciation event where these staff appreciation gifts are going to be given out?
 - Dr. Mitchell – The staff appreciation gifts will be given out at the discretion of Dr. Hayes, the Principal, whenever she deems they will go out.
 - Dr. Hayes – The gifts will be given out during appreciation week when we do all those different functions for them while they are at school. The luncheon, that was the one they couldn't get together for Christmas, and so they changed it over for their appreciation week. So that just for them going out and having fun as a staff.

Second Motion: Motion to approve March's monthly bills.

- TuJuania Scott put forth the motion to approve March's monthly bills.
- Clyde Irvin seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Mitchell

- On the Superintendent's report this month, you'll see our enrollment chart, which is the pretty much the same as last month. We've not had any new students come in.

- Mr. Ben Brentano has taken on some of the core data duties and is doing a wonderful job. And so, we have adjusted his salary because he's taken on quite a bit more responsibilities. I have spoken with Mr. Clark and Ms. Middlebrooks, his direct supervisor. I just wanted to alert the Board that this is what is taking place with him. Also, just for the Board's remembrance, the core data position is a position that was vacated by Ms. Eatman last November.
- Reminder to all Board Members to please remember to go on the Missouri Ethics Commission and file your personal financial disclosures. That has to be done by May 1st. Most of our Board Members have turned them in, but starting on May 1st, there will be a \$10 late fee per Board Member per day assessed if we don't get it in. They have added a caveat this year, after a certain amount of days, the fee goes to \$100 per day. I don't think that that's per Board Member. That a \$100 a day added on top of the \$10. Now, that doesn't start till the end of May, but we are asking all of you to go into your email and look for the Missouri Ethics Commission. The password and everything has been set up for you. All you have to do is go on and file. If you cannot find it, just let me know, and I'll have the Missouri Ethics Commission resend it to you. And again, if you need any help, please let me know.
- In your Board Docs, on the Superintendent's report number 4, there is a correction. This 100% submission will be a 93% after tonight. We have to submit tonight's Board minutes in order to get that to a 100%. So after tonight's Board Meeting, when Mr. Brentano sends out the minutes, they will be uploaded in tonight's agenda and we will be back at 100%.
- I wanted to make sure to keep our Board aware of the various legislative ideas and policies that are being proposed in the Missouri House and Senate. Of particular note, one of the most important ones that is going forth that has got traction again is the open enrollment. That is something that the Missouri House is back discussing. Do we allow school districts to open up their enrollment to any student in any area. So, of course, larger school districts would benefit from that, but I will keep you posted. There's been no decision made on that, but that is some of the new legislation that is floating back out there, the Missouri open enrollment.
- In your Board Docs, there's an update on the ESL policy, which, signifies that TaJaree Berry is our ESL Coordinator for our building. The Board of Education initially adopted the ESL policy in 2009, but there have been some revisions submitted to you that you can look over. They are located in your Board Docs, titled ESL update. If you could read that over, they are the same policies, but it's just updated with new names, and that is our current ESL policy being led by Ms. TaJaree Berry. We can approve it, but it's the same as before just updated.

Questions about the Superintendent's Report

- Clyde Irvin – Regarding the Missouri Ethics Commission, are you saying the Board will be charged or the Board Members who don't file will be charged?
 - Dr. Mitchell – The school district itself will be charged \$10 per Board Member per day.
- Bishop Tolbert – Regarding the Missouri open enrollment, that's not Choice, is it?
 - Dr. Mitchell – It's not specifically called Choice, but that's really what it is. So if I'm a student that lives in Kansas City public school zone, I could request to go enroll in North Kansas City. It's up to the receiving school district to accept you in, which, of course, creates inequities and that type of thing. So it's just another word for Choice, but that's what the ultimate road is leading down. Open enrollment then, eventually, school choice to be on the agenda.

- Bishop Tolbert – You had something on here about retirement system?
 - Dr. Mitchell – That is from the Charter School Association. Those are just part of the legislative updates. The facilities funding, the retirement system, and defense of Boone County are some of the things they will be discussing at its next meeting.
- Bishop Tolbert – Are you attending that meeting, Dr. Mitchell?
 - Dr. Mitchell – This one, I don't attend. I'll attend the summary of that meeting, which will be the second Tuesday in May (5/13) at the Grand Street Café. That's when they will update us on that. I attend that once a month.
- Bishop Tolbert – So the thing you were telling us we might need to approve, is that on the back of your Superintendent's report?
 - Dr. Mitchell – I made it a separate document with the Board Docs, and it's says ESL update. Ms. Berry submitted this to me today. It's something that she has to submit to the state that shows that our Board of Education has seen the ESL policy. There are no deadlines on it. It's more of an FYI.

Principal's Report – Dr. Hayes

- Just to give you an update on where we are with our preparation for MAP testing, we are working on two things right now. One is keeping data, additional data to show truly where we are as a school as far as students that have been with us for a while and what their MAP scores are vs. students who are coming in. It's some data that when we talked to Saint Louis University, they had talked about. So we have been careful to make sure that we are keeping that data as we go along this time. Going forward, we will have that data ready for whoever ask to look at it from us. We are also doing data walks through all of our 3rd-8th grade classes, and bringing the students in to a separate room and just going through all of the standards that they are going to test on the MAP and just asking them one standard at a time. We are focusing a lot on math right now. They are still having art, music, and gym but for one of their specials, we are sending them to a special class. We have someone in the special class that is re-teaching them those assessments. We have been looking in to our Evaluate data, and the Evaluate data for the two classes that we scored the lowest in last year on the MAP; 3rd and 5th grade. So we are keeping that data for all of our prospective sponsors to see.
- The second set of data that we are looking at is our transfer report. We have two of them. One that is showing that the students who have been with us for 3-5 years are showing a 19%-20% increase each year. So we have a spreadsheet ready that shows if a student stays with Lee A. Tolbert that those percentages go up. We also have a spreadsheet for the students who transferred into Lee A. Tolbert that shows we received students in the middle of the year, from various local charter schools, and how that has also affected our MAP data. We received 7 transfers, just from last year that came in after school started. During the year before that, 2023, we had 12 students from various other charters. Those are different types of data that we have been keeping, so if they look at the full picture they can see if they stay at Lee A. Tolbert for any length of time that they will be proficient.
- In teacher retention, we have been doing a lot to keep our teachers and to grow our own teachers. At this point, other than the one teacher that is retiring, we may be losing just one other certified teacher. I think the rest of them have all signed their contracts. The 5 teachers

that we have in our teacher education program, ABC Teach, will be taking the test to become certified within the next year.

- Regarding changes in reading and math going in to the next school year, we have been working with the teachers and have changed our program so that we are bringing in a literacy coach. We are not bringing in a new employee, but we are using one of our Title I teachers. She's been keeping all of our data for Kiewit and keeping all of our data for the phonics program that we have to turn in to the state. She's been doing that anyways, so we are going to add a little bit more to her plate. She is also going to be going around to all the classrooms just to make sure that we are teaching reading with fidelity, and everybody's teaching it the same and using the Istation with fidelity. So that's the direction we are going with regarding reading and ELA. For math, we are going to keep that second math class. They will go to reading, then science, then math, then ELA, then specials, and then back to math again. So we are keeping that math class because our data is showing that they need that extra kick.
- We have a new direction, also, for our entrepreneurial program. We have not only help from EntreEd, who we have been using forever, but, also, we have another new program and a new person that's coming on that is going to be flying into this from another entrepreneurial charter school. Even though ours is unique, we want her to see someone in full motion that's having an entrepreneurial program across the whole school where it's infiltrated all the classrooms, and she's also just bringing a little bit different flavor to the entrepreneurial program, making sure it's a major theme. When you walk in the door, you'll have a feel that this is a business school right away. So that's the direction that we are going in.

Treasury Report – Mr. Clark

- What I wanted to highlight is year to date, we are sitting favorably. I want to say it's about \$340,000 roughly and most of that favorability is driven by the reimbursement we got for the extra funds that carried over into this year. So if you take that away, we are sitting at about \$100,000 or so favorable, which is what we had in the budget. And what we have got to look at is, as we get these additional expenditures coming on, what are we going to try to fund out of this year? What are we going to try to fund out of next year? We have got that net income line that we can kind of pull dollars from this year. So we just need to look at the timing of that.

Items for Consideration/Approval

- **Request approval for Teacher/Staff Appreciation outing**
 - Bishop Tolbert – I see something that says Tolbert Academy – Dawnisha, located in your Board Docs. It talks about Indoor Courtside View, Court 3 “Sweet Spot”, and Court 4 “The Kitchen”. So its pickleball courts, and the total on the front page says \$900.
 - Cynthia Middlebrooks – The \$900 is the remaining balance. I already paid \$700 of the total. I was told the Board was going to pay \$400 of that \$900 from the Gala fund so we technically are really only paying \$500.
- Clyde Irvin put forth motion to pay the \$400 toward the staff appreciation outing out of the Gala fund and the remaining balance out of the General fund.

- TuJuania Scott seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

- **Request approval for Teacher/Staff Appreciation gift**

- Bishop Tolbert – I saw that there is going to be a request for a staff appreciation event, and then I see on the bills, there's a staff appreciation gift. Is that two different asks? And where are these staff appreciation gifts going to be given out?
- Cynthia Middlebrooks – Yes sir, one is an activity and the other is a gift. So they are going out to a location in Kansas.
- Dr. Mitchell – The staff appreciation gifts will be given out at the discretion of Dr. Hayes, the Principal, whenever she deems they will go out.
- Dr. Hayes – The gifts will be given out during appreciation week when we do all those different functions for them while they are at school. The luncheon, that was the one they couldn't get together for Christmas, and so they changed it over for their appreciation week. So that's just for them going out and having fun as a staff.

- **Request approval for I Station Math**

- Bishop Tolbert – I see something on here says request approval for Istation math. Does it cost anything?
- Dr. Mitchell – Yes sir, that is what Dr. Hayes was speaking about, before she left, with some of the interventions for math and reading. The Istation is the supplementary computer programming for those programs or for that initiative. The approval request was two components, one for Summer School (\$1424) and one for the school year (\$20,980).

- Mr. Clark put forth motion that we approve the Summer School component for \$1424 and then push the \$20,980 into the budget discussion for 2025 to next school year.
- Bishop Tolbert seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

- **Request approval for I Station Reading**

- Bishop Tolbert – I see something on here says request approval for Istation math. Does it cost anything?
- Dr. Mitchell – Yes sir, that is what Dr. Hayes was speaking about, before she left, with some of the interventions for math and reading. The Istation is the supplementary computer programming for those programs or for that initiative. The approval request was two components, one for Summer School (\$1424) and one for the school year (\$20,980).

- Mr. Clark put forth motion that we approve the Summer School component for \$1424 and then push the \$20,980 into the budget discussion for 2025 to next school year.
- Bishop Tolbert seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

- **Request approval for LINC Summer Addendum school based contribution**

- Dr. Mitchell – I met with LINC a couple of weeks ago. The new funding formulas coming down from the Department of Education, through the current Presidential administration, has caused some of the grants that LINC receives to dry up. So because some of those grants have dried up, they are having to reallocate funds. And so, for each site that they serve in Kansas City, they are asking to contribute to their Summer School program because they don't have enough money to fund the staffing for the before and after school program. LINC services 162 of our students for before and after school programming. Most of those students will be in the Summer School program. So they are asking us to contribute \$29,000 for the Summer and \$30,000 for the next school year to help offset the lack of funding that they are going to receive because of the changes at the Department of Education. So the main grant that LINC receives is still intact, but some of the supplementary grants that they receive to help fund before and after school for Summer School, and future school years, has been drastically cut.
- Bishop Tolbert – I think that we have to separate the issues. I think we have to talk about Summer School as a standalone, and we have to talk about next year's contract as a standalone. We have got to decide whether we can have Summer School without an after school program. And if, in order to really have a Summer School program, we have to have that LINC partnership.
- Dr. Mitchell – From my perspective, we could do Summer School, but it would greatly affect the number of students that would enroll. My fear would be that student's parents would just send their students to other school and enroll them. And I don't want to stand a chance to lose them because primarily the same kids that used before and after school program for the summer are the ones who use it now. And that is a large number, 162 students, which is almost half of our student body that rely on that before and after school care, and that's just up until 5th grade since LINC doesn't service middle school. So just looking at K-5th, LINC services more than 50% of our students for the before and after school program. Without that, I think parents would choose other options. That is just my prediction.
- Bishop Tolbert – Did you all talk about the LINC contributions in your budget meeting?
 - Dr. Mitchell – We addressed it in the budget for next school year, not the budget for this summer since it was just kind of a last minute thing. We have made a provision for it for next school year, but not this school year. One thing I do know that Dr. Hayes and her team have been rallying students to apply and get in Summer School. So, of course, the higher enrollment the more funding we may receive from the state, which puts us in a better position to pay that. Dr. Hayes and her team have been doing a pretty good job of in-house recruiting, sending flyers home, and a great majority of the parents are signing their students up in house. We have not done a whole lot of out of district recruiting yet because we haven't necessarily had to.
- Dr. Mitchell – We do have a provision for next school year to cover it, but we don't have a provision, of course, for this summer. Next school year, we have made some adjustments that we could cover, but not for Summer School. For next year's provision, we have a couple of people who are retiring and a couple of other people who are not coming back whose salaries are on the high end, and one of those positions is not going to be filled. So that savings alone, we could cover that contribution for next school year.

- TuJuania Scott put forth motion to give Bishop Tolbert the authority to negotiate up to \$29,000 to pay the LINC contribution for the before and after school program for Summer School.
- Aldon Jones seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

- **Request approval for LINC Anti-Gun Violence**
 - Bishop Tolbert – There is an anti-gun violence program that was approved that LINC has been sending us an invoice on. If we pay those invoices, then we will get reimbursed for that. Dr. Mitchell or Ms. Middlebrooks, do you want to explain that a little better than me?
 - Dr. Mitchell – It is a part of the LINC contract that they partner with anti-gun violence. It is a monthly bill that's right around \$3000 per month, but it's a program that's also approved by DESE. So when you do it, DESE gives you a 100% reimbursement. Part of the issue was they were sending the email to the wrong individual, but that has been corrected. This anti-gun violence program is a provision of one of the grants that LINC receives that they have to operate this program in the schools that they serve. It is a monthly program where they talk to students about anti violence, anti-guns, and choosing peace over other things.
 - Bishop Tolbert - We need to have a motion to pay those invoices, going back to September, because it is time sensitive. Once we pay it, then we will automatically bill DESE, and they'll refund us.

- Linda Edgely put forth motion that we pay the LINC invoices.
- Clyde Irvin seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

Informational Items

- Bishop Tolbert – Evaluation, Aldon Jones, talk a little bit about the evaluation that's coming up.
 - Aldon Jones – We have partnered with Mr. Kent Peterson to do evaluations of administration in our school. We will be doing that, coming up before the school year. We will do it twice a year, once in the beginning of the school year, and one at the end of the school year to make sure we are meeting our goals for our administration throughout the school. Just as the administration currently evaluates the teachers and staff, we will be doing that as a Board to evaluate our Superintendent, Principal, and our other administrative staff to make sure they are meeting goals, standards, policies, and regulations in the state of Missouri so we can make sure we are functioning properly and at our best, at Lee A. Tolbert Charter Academy. That will be taking place soon, and we will have more information by the next Board meeting.
 - Bishop Tolbert – Kent Peterson used to be with UMKC. He has a contract with School Smart now, and so they are doing this for our school at no charge.

- Aldon Jones put forth motion for adjournment.
- TuJuanita Scott seconded the motion.
- Motion approved.

Next Board Meeting: Monday May 19th at 7pm