



## Ruston 21 plan reviewed

School board members expected to take action tonight

Chris Butler, Reporter

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Members of the Lincoln Parish School Board will gather tonight and consider whether they want to formally adopt three important goals for the school district, as suggested by the Ruston 21 education committee.

Board members will decide tonight whether to formally adopt the following three goals:

- Work to have the Lincoln Parish School District become one of the top 12 school districts (in academics) in Louisiana by May 2013



- Work to have the Lincoln Parish School District become one of the top seven school districts (in academics) in Louisiana by May 2015

- Work to have the Lincoln Parish School District become the No. 1 ranked school district in Louisiana (in academics) by May 2017

Ruston 21 committee members suggested in January that board members adopt those goals.

Board members, however, might discuss whether the school district can afford any or all of the means to meet the goals.

Members of the community formed the Ruston 21 Committee last spring to find ways for the school system and the public to better support one another. Churches, businesses and parents in the parish are the ones who need to involve themselves the most with local public schools, according to the committee's report from January.

Superintendent Danny Bell argued on behalf of the Ruston 21 recommendations at last month's school board meeting.

"If we fail, then we all fail together. Right? What is it that we need to do within the community? How many (people) do we need to get on board. True obstacles relative to funding are going to be there, and we are going to have to fight that. I worry about it every day. I am worried about what is coming next year," Bell said, referring to a recent report that school sales tax and oil and gas extraction revenue has declined significantly.

School board member George Mack, for instance, supports most of the goals, but he has a few concerns. He is concerned about one Ruston 21 suggestion that the school system incorporate the Head Start program into the public school system. He is also concerned about a suggestion that school district officials evaluate the future of the I.A Lewis sixth grade school, given concerns about its academic performance.

Board members are scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. tonight at the Lincoln Parish School Board Office.

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