

The **Springboard** e-newsletter is provided as a community service to inform the public of actions during the monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees. The official minutes from the meeting will be posted online at www.springisd.org once approved by the Board.

Trustees

- Rhonda Newhouse, M.Ed.**
President
- Jana Gonzales**
Vice President
- Donald Davis**
Secretary
- Justine Durant**
Assistant Secretary
- Winford Adams Jr.**
- Chris Bell**
- Deborah Jensen, Ph.D.**

Public Participation is Welcomed

Citizens who want to speak at a Board meeting are asked to register at least 15 minutes prior to the time when the meeting is scheduled to begin.

For more information, go online at www.springisd.org and click on the Public Participation at Board Meetings link under General Info.

The next regular Board Meeting will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 20 at Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, 16717 Ella Blvd.

The Spring ISD Board of Trustees met at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13 at Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center to address items on the agenda. Vice President **Jana Gonzales** called the meeting to order. Dekaney High School Navy JROTC Cadets **Cameron Smith**, **Carl Koulavongsa**, **Tanisha Stewart** and **Taisha Stewart** presented the colors and led the pledges of allegiance.

Recognitions

Since January 1984, the Board has recognized students and staff for major accomplishments beyond the District with Points of Pride awards. ABCD awards are presented to individuals or groups that go Above and Beyond the Call of Duty.

Points of Pride

The Twin Creeks Step Team, coached by Lebrandon Jenkins, was presented a Point of Pride award for winning first place in their age group at a national competition in Orlando, Florida, in December.



The Twin Creeks Step Team joins the Board of Trustees in the horseshoe for a congratulatory photo.



Superintendent Dr. Rodney Watson congratulates members of the Step Team.

Twin Creeks Step Team Recognized for National Award

The Twin Creeks Step Team, coached by Lebrandon Jenkins, was presented a Point of Pride award for winning first place in their age group at a national competition in Orlando, Florida, in December.

"I do believe that this is our first step team award for a national competition in the history of the district and I think that is something that we should take great pride in," said Tiffany Dunne-Oldfield, chief communications officer.

Coach Jenkins said the team started three years ago with 17 members and placed fifth in national competition during their first year. He commended his team members for "a lot of hard work five days a week."

Spotlight



Booker Orff Ensemble students demonstrate their musical skills.



Wunsche's Dawn Ford explains her artwork.



Beneke students inspire, hope, dream and believe during Black History Month presentation.

Students Display Their Talent During Black History Month Presentations

Students from Beneke and Booker elementary schools along with a student from Carl Wunsche Sr. High School entertained a large audience – including Board Trustees, district administrators and family members – with their Black History Month presentations.

Booker Elementary School's Orff Ensemble, directed by **Suzette Fears**, opened the segment with an African song.

Next, **Dawn Ford**, a 10th grader at Carl Wunsche Sr. High School presented her artwork titled Color Blind and talked about how some people are forced to put on a mask in order to fit in. "You can't hide who you are and there is beauty in who you are," Ford said.

In conclusion, four students from Beneke Elementary School – **Alexandra Smith**, **Camille Jones**, **Rodney Watson** and **Kymani Walsh** – performed a variety of selections that demonstrate how Black History is about Inspiration, Dreaming, Hoping and Believing, including the recitation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech and Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise."

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent **Dr. Rodney Watson** opened with highlights from the board work session on Feb. 8 that included a presentation by Huckabee Architects on the new Roberson Middle School replacement campus. Although we saw a variety of great things in terms of the architectural design, I was mostly proud of our teachers' feedback. They raised the energy level in the room based on the excitement that they had (about the campus design)," Watson said.



Rodney E. Watson

Watson noted that 45 student athletes from Westfield, Dekaney and Spring high schools participated in National Signing Day Feb. 7, signing letters of intent to play at some really great higher educational institutions, like the University of Texas, Clemson and University of Houston. "We know there has been a lot of hard work that the students and their parents have gone through to get to this point and so we just celebrate all 45 students as they get ready to go to the next phase of their life," Watson said. [See story](#)

Next he personally congratulated **Gabriella Sucacin**, Twin Creeks Middle School seventh grader, for taking the top spot in the Spring ISD Spelling Bee, calling for a round of applause. "Not only did she win, but good spelling must run in the family because her brother, who is in fifth grade at Hirsch Elementary School, was the runner up. So there must be something going on with those genes for the brother and the sister to both win the spelling bee," Watson said. [See story](#)

He went on to draw attention to a recent article in the Houston Chronicle that noted Spring ISD has the highest average teacher salary of all of the region's largest school districts. "This is really important as I know this is something you all have been working on for years. I want to personally thank the board for your leadership in really making sure that teachers' salaries are something that stay competitive. So thank you very much for your support," he said.

In closing, Watson acknowledged that February is Career and Technical Education Month and talked about the many opportunities for students to explore different careers among the 45 different career pathways offered, many of those leading to industry-based certifications. He highlighted the new automotive program at Dekaney High School as an example of the opportunities available. [See Video](#)

Trustees Remarks

At each regular board meeting, during Opening Remarks each board member is given the opportunity to share information with those present.



Vice President **Jana Gonzales** invited the trustees to make remarks.

Justine Durant commended the administration at Claughton Middle School for hosting a "great event" on Feb. 12 in celebration of the school's 15th anniversary. "It was such an honor to be there as my daughter was one of the first students to go to Claughton, and I incorporated the PTO at Claughton so it was like going back home. We saw the students perform and it is always exciting when we see a vision come to reality and how successful the kids are. It was exciting and I had a great time," she said. [See Story](#)

Donald Davis asked Dr. Watson to report on the Harris County Association of Black School Educators Teacher of the Year event. Watson said that 14 Spring ISD teachers were recognized at the event and received awards from the HAABSE organization. [See story](#)

"Mr. Bell and I and several cabinet members had the opportunity to go to an event that celebrated the HAABSE Teachers of the Year.

After thanking Watson, Davis went on to congratulate all the Dekaney, Spring and Westfield high school basketball teams for an excellent year.

Chris Bell encouraged those in attendance to make sure they are registered to vote and participate in the upcoming elections, with a reminder that school board elections are held in November.

Deborah Jensen asked Dr. Watson to report on the Principal of the Year selection. Watson introduced the 2018 Principals of the Year, who happened to be in the audience – Beneke Principal **LaTracy Harris**, Elementary Principal of the Year, and Roberson Principal **Tracey Walker**, Secondary Principal of the Year. "Both of them were nominated from their peers based upon specific information regarding student achievement, as well as other qualitative factors, and so we're extremely proud of the work that they are doing, which is evident in their student achievement and leadership," Watson said. [See story](#)

Jensen noted that Ms. Walker was part of the group of Roberson staff who provided feedback to the Board of Trustees at the February work session about the plans for the Roberson replacement school. "There are exciting times ahead, I think, for that school," Jensen said.



Spring Independent School District is an equal opportunity employer. The Board of Trustees and its agents, officers and staff members shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, disabling condition, age, color, religion, national origin, military status, or any other legally protected status in making decisions regarding staff members or students.

Presentation

Jostens Presents \$1,000 Check to District for Harvey Relief

Dr. Gardner Seaholm, Jostens, presented a check for \$1,000 from the Jostens Youth Matter to Superintendent Dr. Rodney E. Watson "to help with the losses experienced due to Hurricane Harvey." Jostens youth Matter is a charitable giving program established to support Jostens' customers and the communities they serve.

Board Acknowledges 52 Teacher Winners in Inaugural EVERYday Counts Attendance Lottery

The Board recognized the 52 Spring ISD teachers who each earned \$1,500 incentive awards Feb. 5 in the district's inaugural EVERYday Counts attendance drawing.

The incentive program is part of the district's strategic compensation work, which recognizes and rewards high performance from every employee. [See story](#)



Board Vice President Jana Gonzales congratulates a teacher lottery winner.

Action Items

Board Approves 2018-19 Instructional Calendar

The Board of Trustees on Tuesday approved the 2018-19 Instructional Calendar that will have students starting classes on Aug. 15, 2018, with the last day of school for students on May 30, 2019.

In voting for the calendar, trustees considered the results of a community survey, which drew feedback from nearly 2,500 respondents on two proposed calendar options, A and B. The preferred option in the survey, with more than 70 percent of the vote, was Option B, which was approved by the trustees on Tuesday.

Under the adopted 2018-19 calendar, students will begin their winter break on Dec. 19, returning to school on Jan. 8. Teachers will have a teacher preparation day on Dec. 19, then start their winter break on Dec. 20. Teachers will also return one day ahead of students at the end of the break, for a staff professional development day on Jan. 7.

The approved calendar will give students two days off in April. One would be for a teacher professional development day on April 5 and another would be for the district's Spring Holiday on April 19.

The Spring ISD Advisory Committee on Education (ACE), which includes both staff and community members, reviewed the calendar proposals presented to the public in the community survey. The approved calendar meets all state requirements.

In a new addition this year, the calendar also includes the dates for summer professional development opportunities for teachers. Although these trainings are optional, the district is looking at the possibility of paying teachers who attend.

The 2018-19 Instructional Calendar is located on the Spring ISD website at www.springisd.org/calendars.

Board Votes to Launch EMERGE Program for High Potential Students

The Spring ISD Board of Trustees voted Tuesday to launch the EMERGE program to prepare high-potential students from underserved communities to attend and graduate from selective colleges and universities from across the nation.

The program will kick off this spring for current juniors as district becomes the third in the area to partner with the EMERGE Fellowship, which currently works with students in both the Houston and Spring Branch independent school districts.

"We are very excited about bringing this program to Spring," said Superintendent Dr. Rodney E. Watson. "EMERGE has a proven track record of getting students into top universities and making sure they have the skills to be successful there."

Since its launch in 2013, EMERGE has grown to serve hundreds of HISD and Spring Branch ISD students. In addition, the district plans to select the first group of rising seniors to participate in EMERGE in the coming months.

The four-year partnership with EMERGE approved by the trustees on Tuesday will be funded using a combination of district and grant monies. The district's portion of the funding for the 2018-19 school year will total \$73,810.

"We believe this is an investment that will pay tremendous dividends," said Dr. Lupita Hinojosa, chief of student support services and school leadership. "This program will strengthen our ability to support students through an application process that can often seem overwhelming and confusing."

Specifically, students in the EMERGE program will attend college admissions workshops, get personalized assistance with applications, receive SAT/ACT preparation and visit universities during a special summer tour. They will also have an opportunity to meet with current college students from the Houston area, who can provide mentoring and advice.

In another advantage, EMERGE often opens the door to full-ride scholarships for students accepted into the nation's most selective colleges and universities.

Trustee Justine Durant applauded the partnership as an important step in making students aware of all the possibilities and opportunities in higher education. "The impact of this moment will be realized for years," she said.

In other action the Board approved:

- The annual renewal of the contract with the College Board;
- A Memorandum of Understanding with Harris County District Attorney's Office;
- A Memorandum of Understanding with the Harris County Sheriff's Office;
- First reading of proposed revisions to Board Policy DEC Local and DFBB;
- Second reading of proposed revisions to Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Local Update 109 Board policies BBE, CDA, CKC, CNA, CO, DF, DH, EHBFA, EJ, FEA, FFAA, FFF, FFI, GBAA, GKA, GKC and GKE;
- 2017-18 Second Budget Review;
- Financial Update - Actual Expenditures -December 2017;
- Annual Report on Purchasing Cooperative Fees for the 2016-17 fiscal year, and
- Taxpayer refunds.