

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
- Winford Adams Jr.**
Vice President
- Kelly P. Hodges**
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- Justine Durant**
Assistant Secretary
- Donald Davis**
- Jana Gonzales**
- 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. on Tuesday, March 9 at the Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, 16717 Ella Blvd.

The Spring ISD Board of Trustees met at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 9 at the Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center to address items on the agenda. President **Rhonda Newhouse** called the meeting to order and led the United States and Texas 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

Spring High School Senior Named 'Academic All-American' by National Speech & Debate Association

The Board first recognized Spring High School senior **Toneela Shaftner**, a longtime member of the school's speech and debate and student theater groups, who recently received the Academic All-American designation from the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) for the 2020-21 school year. The award recognizes Shaftner's commitment over the course of her high school career to active participation in speech and debate tournaments, training and related activities, both before and during the COVID-19 era.



Toneela Shaftner

"The Points of Pride awards are reserved for one of our highest, highest honors," said Director of Performing and Visual Arts **Dr. Joe Clark** during his presentation at the board meeting. "These are often when we recognize a program or an individual that has garnered either state or national recognition."

The NSDA Academic All-American award recognizes high school students who have achieved the degree of "Superior Distinction" by earning at least 750 points in their NSDA profile through their speech and debate activities and accomplishments. In addition, Academic All-American winners must have completed at least five semesters of high school, demonstrate outstanding character and leadership, and must have earned a GPA of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. According to promotional materials from NSDA, only the top two percent of NSDA member students ever receive the Academic All-American award.

To read more about Shaftner and the Academic All-American award, [click here](#).

Westfield High School College Counselor Named National Counselor of the Year Finalist

Trustees also presented a special Point of Pride award to Westfield High School College Counselor **Dr. Clara Lauderdale**, who was named a Counselor of the Year finalist for 2020 by the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS). Each year, NSHSS recognizes teachers, principals, counselors, and coaches across the country for excellence in and out of the classroom as part of its Educators of the Year award program.



Dr. Clara Lauderdale

According to a statement from NSHSS, the awards "are presented to exemplary educators who have demonstrated an outstanding and noteworthy commitment to preparing their students for success inside and outside of the classroom. They are role models who consistently demonstrate stellar leadership."

To be eligible, candidates must be an NSHSS Educator of Distinction – an award that Lauderdale received in 2019 – and must currently be working within a public or private high school in the United States or abroad. Each year, NSHSS selects one winner and several finalists in each of five categories: Principal of the Year, Counselor of the Year, Teacher of the Year, Band/Music Leader of the Year, and Coach of the Year.

For 2020, the group selected one national Counselor of the Year and only two finalists, including Lauderdale, who attended the board meeting virtually.

"I just want to say that I truly enjoy what I do in Spring ISD, to touch the lives of so many people," said Lauderdale, adding her thanks to Westfield Principal **David Mason** and all of the school's administrators and counseling staff. "It's just not something that I could do alone. Absolutely we work as a unit, as partners in education, so this recognition wouldn't be possible if I didn't have my Spring ISD team."

Members of the board, several of whom are current or former Westfield parents, also praised Lauderdale for her many years of committed effort on behalf of her students.

"You know, Dr. Lauderdale, how proud the Board is of you and all of the outstanding work that you do at Westfield for our students," said President **Rhonda Newhouse**. "I think you're a leader for all of our counselors in college readiness."

To read more about Lauderdale and the award, [click here](#).

Spotlight



From left to right: Jocelyn Chapa, Brianna Dorsey, and Mariam Neal



From left to right: Marshall Elementary School Principal Michael Walker and Bammel Middle School Principal Corey LeDay

Participants Recognized in the District's Chill Out and Read Winter Break Competition

Students and schools who took part in the district's Chill Out and Read Winter Break Competition were recognized for their hard work during the Spotlight portion of the February meeting.

Over the Winter Break, Spring ISD challenged elementary and middle school students to choose their favorite books and take some time to "chill out and read" using the district's online digital library hosted by myON Reader. The program integrates seamlessly with the district's Chromebooks to put more than 6,000 book titles just a click away for students. Winners were awarded with an Amazon Kindle and a certificate. At Tuesday's board meeting, they were also lauded by the trustees.

"Our campuses and our students took the challenge to heart," said Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction **Dr. Matthew Pariseau**. "By the end of the Christmas break there were 41,000 books read across the district, and over 393,000 minutes, so that accounted for 6,550 hours if you did the math."

The student winners recognized were:

- **Jocelyn Chapa** – Eicklenroth Elementary School (*Most Minutes Read at Elementary School*)
- **Brianna Dorsey** – Reynolds Elementary School (*Most Minutes Read at Elementary School*)
- **Mariam Neal** – Roberson Middle School (*Most Minutes Read at Middle School and Most Books Read at Middle School*)

The school winners were:

- **Marshall Elementary School** (*Most Number of Minutes Read by Elementary Campus*)
- **Bammel Middle School** (*Most Number of Minutes Read by Middle School Campus*)

Board President **Rhonda Newhouse** congratulated all the winners. "I know your parents are very proud of you. You were home safely reading during the holidays," she said. "We can't say enough about your accomplishments. Thank you."

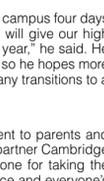
Winford Adams Jr. echoed the praise and noted that reading is the foundation for so much success in school, noting the accomplishments of Spring High senior **Toneela Shaftner**, who was awarded a Point of Pride earlier in the meeting for being named as an Academic All-American by the National Speech & Debate Association.

"This reading program is phenomenal and I just want to say, this is how you get to be an Academic All-American," Adams said. "It's getting the kids into books, reading the books, talking about the books, discussing the books and developing those brain tools."

To read more about Chill Out and Read, [click here](#).

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent **Dr. Rodney E. Watson** opened his remarks by recognizing that February is Black History Month. "We've been commemorating this month across the district by encouraging our scholars to do research around the theme of 'Triumphs and Struggles You Might Not Know,'" he said. "Students are selecting a notable person and working individually or in a group to create a poem, speech or any other kind of project to capture what they've learned." He noted that select projects will be compiled into a digital showcase later this month and urged everyone to stay tuned.



Rodney E. Watson

Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators

Next, Watson congratulated the 24 Spring ISD teachers recognized on Feb. 5 by the Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators (HAABSE). "This is an annual event during Black History Month and a great accomplishment for our educators," he said.

Middle of the Year Academic Data

Watson then noted the robust discussion with the trustees at the Feb. 4 board work session on the Middle of the Year Academic data, including trends related to the pandemic and what's being described as the COVID slide. "That information is important as we continue to develop strategies at the campus level as well as the district level to ensure our students have the supports and interventions they need to get them on track for meeting all grade-level expectations," he said. "I want to thank our trustees for asking extremely insightful questions and for keeping the focus on how we create excellent and equitable outcomes for our students, no matter their learning environment."

High School Schedule Change

Watson reminded everyone that on Feb. 22, high school students learning in-person will return to campus four days a week. "We believe this transition to more face-to-face collaboration with teachers and peers will give our high school students an important academic boost as they work toward a strong finish to the school year," he said. He also gave assurances that the district will remain focused on health and safety at the campuses so he hopes more remote learners will decide to make the change to in-person learning. The deadline for making any transitions to a student's learning option for the 5th Marking Period is Friday, Feb. 12.

Equity Study to Launch

Watson went on to discuss the district's Equity Study, which includes a questionnaire being sent to parents and campus-based staff with instructional responsibilities. "This is part of our ongoing work with our partner Cambridge Education to ensure excellent, equitable outcomes for all students and I want to thank everyone for taking the time to respond to this important questionnaire," he said. "We really need to hear everyone's voice and everyone's perspective as we look at ways to strengthen the educational experience here in Spring ISD."

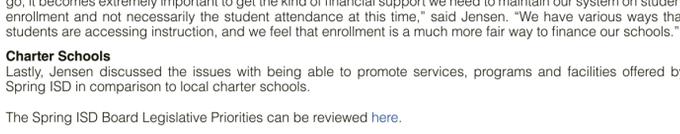
Other Agenda Items

With a full agenda for the evening's meeting, Watson also briefly noted the participation of more than 4,000 staff and parents who took part in the district's calendar survey. He also highlighted a presentation later on the agenda that details the district's work with The Holdsworth Center to develop and grow its pipeline of leaders.

In closing, Watson encouraged everyone to consider being part of the district's new mentoring program, The Vine. Specifically, the district is recruiting adults 21 years and older who are interested in working virtually with students for between 30 and 60 minutes a week. "Now more than ever, our students need to know they have caring adults in their lives to help them be successful in school and beyond," he said. For more information, visit www.springisd.org/thevine.

Trustees Remarks

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



Deborah Jensen Position 1, Kelly P. Hodges Position 2, Justine Durant Position 3, Winford Adams Jr. Position 4, Rhonda Newhouse Position 5, Donald Davis Position 6, Jana Gonzales Position 7

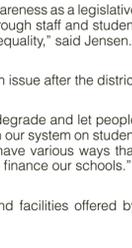
President **Rhonda Newhouse** reported that she attended this year's National Signing Day events in the district virtually.

"It was so wonderful to see the students who signed for their scholarships for next year," said Newhouse. "Even in these COVID times that we're in, our students are still being recognized for outstanding accomplishments. We've had numerous scholarships being given to each one of our [high] schools and all of their sports. I thank the district for doing it by Zoom so that families and friends could get an opportunity to see those students signing their scholarships on that day."

To read more about Spring ISD's National Signing Day events, [click here](#).

Board Governance Update

The Board's committee on governance, led by Trustee **Justine Durant**, provided a short update on its legislative priorities as lawmakers meet in Austin. Trustee **Dr. Deborah Jensen** said the committee has been able to narrow down its priorities to four major ones. They include:



COVID-19

Jensen described the ongoing pandemic as a top priority for the district, stating that Spring ISD will need help from the state of Texas to identify and address student needs. "Under this time, we are still under special rules and regulations, and different types of assessments," said Jensen. "We will continue to support that type of legislation."

Equity

One of the main focuses in Spring ISD is equity, with Jensen stating diversity and cultural awareness as a legislative priority. "We are reaching out to Texas to support diversity and cultural awareness initiatives through staff and student education, and restorative teaching and disciplinary practices that treat all students with equality," said Jensen.

Public School Finance

Another legislative priority for Spring ISD surrounds finance, which Jensen explained as an issue after the district experienced some decreases in student enrollment due to the ongoing pandemic.

"When you have classroom teachers hired, and you do not want to let your organization degrade and let people go, it becomes extremely important to get the kind of financial support we need to maintain our system on student enrollment and not necessarily the student attendance at this time," said Jensen. "We have various ways that students are accessing instruction, and we feel that enrollment is a much more fair way to finance our schools."

Charter Schools

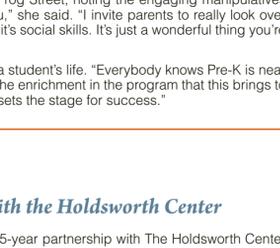
Lastly, Jensen discussed the issues with being able to promote services, programs and facilities offered by Spring ISD in comparison to local charter schools.

The Spring ISD Board Legislative Priorities can be reviewed [here](#).

Public Hearing

District Approves New Prekindergarten Curriculum

Trustees on Tuesday voted unanimously to adopt the Frog Street Pre-K curriculum to be used across the district next school year, which will offer robust teaching and learning resources for students and teachers in English and Spanish.



The vote followed a presentation at the board work session on Thursday, Feb. 4, as well as a public hearing at Tuesday's board meeting. The curriculum scored 100 percent in all 11 areas reviewed by the Texas Education Agency's Texas Resource Team. It also got high marks from Spring ISD educators and administrators who recommended Frog Street after an extensive review.

"The clear winner was Frog Street," said Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction **Dr. Matthew Pariseau**, who in a short presentation shared some of the positive comments from teachers on the review committee. He noted that Frog Street has improved its resources, particularly in the areas of literacy, STEM and manipulatives used by students.

Trustee **Winford Adams Jr.** requested that the curriculum resources be available to any families who are learning remotely. Trustee **Dr. Deborah Jensen** praised the selection of Frog Street, noting the engaging manipulatives as well as the bilingual resources. "I just want to compliment you," she said. "I invite parents to really look over this whole program. It's not just language, it's science, it's history, it's social skills. It's just a wonderful thing you're doing for our Pre-K students."

Trustee **Justine Durant** noted the overall importance of Pre-K in a student's life. "Everybody knows Pre-K is near and dear to my heart," she said. "I'm really excited and proud of the enrichment in the program that this brings to our prekindergarten students. Giving them that foundation really sets the stage for success."

Presentations

Trustees Hear Details about District's Work with the Holdsworth Center

In the Spring of 2019, Spring ISD was selected to take part in a 5-year partnership with The Holdsworth Center to help develop a pipeline of district and campus leaders to better support students. On Tuesday, as the district completes nearly two years of work with Holdsworth, trustees heard a detailed update on the Leadership Definition.

"I'm really excited about it," said **Dr. Julie Hill**, the district's chief of human resources and human capital accountability, "because it brings so many things together." Hill noted that the work with Holdsworth has built on the district's vision, mission, guiding principles and core values and gives the district a blueprint for moving forward.

She then invited the district's support consultant, **Shanthi Radhakrishnan** of The Holdsworth Center, to detail how the partnership with Holdsworth has evolved to help shape the Leadership Definition, which is now being rolled out to all employees.

"I've been honored to work with the district and see the commitment that staff across departments, campuses and everywhere have to student outcomes and really doing the best they can for their students," she said.

Radhakrishnan highlighted the collaborative process used to develop the Leadership Definition, which involved the result of many cross-functional committee meetings involving people at all levels of Spring ISD. That work included studying best practices, diving into the work of other highly successful school districts and really trying to get at the qualities and behaviors that all staff in Spring ISD should bring to their roles. The result of that work is a Leadership Definition that includes three categories of behaviors: Outcome-Driven, Service-Oriented and Relationship-Centered. Within each of those categories, there are specific indicators to help drive and guide behaviors.

She noted that the district is now in the middle of a communications campaign to help spread the word, "so that it's not just a sheet of paper that gets filed somewhere and is forgotten, but really we want folks to embed this into the system, integrate it into the way they are working together and bring it to the language that they're using with each other."

The first focus of the campaign is to help explain Outcome-Driven and a video was played at the board meeting to showcase what that looks like in the district by showcasing the work of employees. Upcoming months will focus on Service-Oriented and Relationship-Centered.

Trustee **Dr. Deborah Jensen** praised the work to date: "I think there are some real complexities to excellent leadership and you've plotted it out so that you can see the big picture and then go for what actual characteristics and outcomes that you're looking for in the leader."

The Future of Guidance and Counseling in Spring ISD

Trustees on Tuesday heard a detailed overview from the district's new director of academic guidance and counseling, **Dr. Crystal Collins**, about the plans to create a comprehensive school counseling program that meets the academic needs of students, as well as addressing social, emotional and mental health needs.

Specifically, by bringing all counseling needs under one umbrella, the goal is to ensure that students have access to the services they may need, no matter their grade. Collins reviewed the current counselor ratios in the schools and noted that Spring ISD is doing better than the Texas requirements for high school for counseling.

Those ratios are important because they help ensure that counselors are accessible to students and can build meaningful relationships with them. "We don't want our students, our families to be concerned with not being able to meet with their counselors," Collins said. "We want our counselors to be accessible."

Collins detailed the goals of providing social-emotional support to students, which she said aligns to the district's mission to ensure students are ready to be "lifelong learners, critical thinkers and responsible citizens who display good character, ready to contribute, compete and lead in today's global society."

"Children who are able to really effectively manage their thinking, their attention, their behavior are also more likely to have better grades and higher standardized test scores," she said. On the topic of mental health, Collins said the focus would be on addressing those issues that are keeping students from learning and to ensure students who are at-risk have access to the services they need, including mental health and behavioral health specialists.

Trustees praised the framework outlined by Collins and also highlighted the importance of social and emotional learning to help students be successful, especially now amid the stress of the pandemic.

In addition to focusing on the needs of students, Collins also noted that the goal is to provide ongoing professional development for counselors so they have the tools and resources to provide a high level of services. Finally, she highlighted the importance of establishing community partnerships to provide mentoring opportunities for students who may need extra support in high school and beyond.

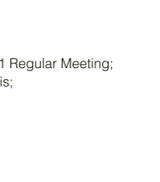
In the coming months, Collins said the district will be conducting a counseling needs assessment to help set goals, identify strategies and develop an implementation plan.

The presentation on Tuesday drew some questions from trustees about timelines, benchmarks and engagement with current counseling staff, data collection and budget issues, all of which Collins promised to address as part of her work.

"I know I can speak for my colleagues, we all have a heart for what's best for kids," said Trustee **Justine Durant**. "And I think if they're not OK, when we aren't giving them the guidance they need, we're failing them, and so this is really critical and important. I'm very passionate about it so I'm excited that you're here and looking forward to your findings."

Board Approves 2021-22 Instructional Calendar

The Board approved a 2021-22 Instructional Calendar on Tuesday that will have students starting classes on Aug. 11, 2021 and finishing school on Thursday, May 26, 2022.



Dr. Lupita Hinojosa, chief of innovation and equity, walked trustees through the process of how the district creates at least two options of the calendar, which is developed by the Spring ISD Advisory Committee on Education (ACE), then presented to staff and the community in a survey before being approved by the board.

"This year, we had many more people participate, so that really tells me that the ACE got out there and shared with their community members and their own schools," Hinojosa told trustees. "We had almost 2,000 more votes and input. You can see survey participation of relatives of students."

Both options were similar except for the start and end dates to the school year and a minor difference with the Spring Holiday. Trustee **Justine Durant** praised the community for input and feedback from more than 4,100 people.

"It's encouraging because I think this is the first time we've seen the community and relatives participate higher than administration and staff," said Durant. "This is another positive effect that we're getting more input from parents."

Both options met all state requirements for instructional time, including 180 days with 440 instructional daily minutes to build in make-up days if necessary.

To learn more and access printable calendar downloads in English and Spanish, [click here](#).

Action Items

In Other Action the Board Approved:

- Minutes from the Jan. 7, 2021 Board Work Session and from the Jan. 12, 2021 Regular Meeting;
- An updated Interlocal Agreement with Lone Star College System - North Harris;
- A review of Investment Policy CDA(LOCAL);
- Taxpayer refunds
- Ratifying actual expenditures as of December 2020;
- And the second budget review of 2020-21.



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