

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

Deborah Jensen, Ph.D.
President

Chris Bell
Vice President

Rhonda Newhouse, M.Ed.
Secretary

Justine Durant
Assistant Secretary

Donald Davis

Rhonda L. Faust, J.D.

Jana Gonzales

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, Aug. 8 at Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, 16717 Ella Blvd.

The Spring ISD Board of Trustees met at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 13 at Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center to address items on the agenda. President **Dr. Deborah Jensen** called the meeting to order. Trustee Donald Davis led the pledges of allegiance.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent **Dr. Rodney E. Watson** reported that Spring ISD leaders participated in a four-day Summer Academic Institute at Westfield High School June 5-8 that introduced new principals and returning administrators to key areas of focus for the coming school year.

Watson announced that the 2017-18 Budget would be a big presentation at the meeting and thanked **Ann Westbrook**, chief financial officer, and her finance team for their leadership and hard work during the nine-month budget development process.

Next, he urged those present to take a drive on Imperial Valley Road past Dekaney High School and Booker Elementary School to see the new sidewalks that have been constructed by Harris County Precinct One. "We are extremely pleased with the work that Harris County Precinct One has been doing with their Safe Routes to Schools Project," Watson said. [See Story](#)

Other improvements across the district are the result of the 2016 Bond election. "We are really excited about the bond bringing new upgrades to our campuses," Watson said. "We will be replacing over 3,500 obsolete computers at campuses across the district this summer." [See Story](#)

He concluded his report with a video about the partnership between Spring Early College Academy and Claughton Middle School. "We are always saying we 'Win as a Team,' and when I had the opportunity to see the video that you are going to see tonight, it really epitomizes the work of our students mentoring other students and helping them to bring about a goal." [See Video](#)



Rodney E. Watson

Trustees Remarks

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



Deborah Jensen



Chris Bell



Rhonda Newhouse



Justine Durant



Donald Davis



Rhonda L. Faust



Jana Gonzales

Board President **Dr. Deborah Jensen** invited trustees to make remarks.

Justine Durant began by thanking Trustee **Chris Bell** for representing Spring ISD during a panel discussion at the 2017 Bridging the Gap: "Launching New Dimensions of Education and Advocacy" event hosted by Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority at the M. O. Campbell Educational Center. She said the discussion focused on current legislative issues affecting local school districts and bond election results. "If we come together and we begin a dialogue between the district and the community, we can work together to emphasize the importance of public education, because right now it is under attack."

Durant went on to report on board members' work as part of recently established ad hoc committees. "One of the things that we implemented is the Board of Trustees Employee Recognition Award, which will actually start in the fall, so we are really excited about that," Durant said.

In addition, Durant said the committee regarding governance and oversight is looking at how policies would support curriculum and instruction as well as policies that address rental agreements. "I am really excited about some of the work we are doing and I want to thank **Deborah Jensen** for her vision and my committee for their support this year. I'm looking forward to us continuing to be a governing body, as you have elected us to be," said Durant.

Donald Davis acknowledged the success of the district's ROTC programs, which continue to provide opportunities for cadets to grow and develop throughout the summer. "Those cadets are doing great things," he said. Davis also recognized Superintendent **Dr. Rodney Watson** and the Child Nutrition Department for being highlighted this year in the AASA School Governance and Leadership publication. "I want to thank Dr. Watson for his leadership and the (Child Nutrition) department for what they have done to be recognized at the national level in that publication. [See Story](#)

Chris Bell referenced Trustee Durant's comment regarding public education being under attack and shared numerous reasons why public schools are really beacons of light. "Sometimes public schools are the only green space that a community has and Spring High School, during one of the hurricanes was opened as an evacuation center," Bell said. "So I don't think people give public education, our facilities and our staff the credit that they deserve. We want to encourage everyone to be proponents of public education. Tell folks that we are beacons out there," Bell said.

Rhonda Newhouse, who has been an advocate for sidewalks with Harris County Precinct One, echoed Dr. Watson's earlier remarks about the new sidewalks being constructed in the district. "Dr. Watson, I know you are happy, and I am too, about our sidewalks, but the process shouldn't stop here. "I had an opportunity to meet with Commissioner (Rodney) Ellis, and I must say he was delighted to continue the work that the previous commissioner had started and is willing to continue to work with us on some additional improvements in the next year or so," Newhouse said.

Jana Gonzales thanked the Communication Department for the volume of timely information about the district and its schools that can be found on the Spring ISD website, Facebook and Twitter. "There are so many things going on, and it is just a delight to log on to Twitter every day and see the activities ... teachers being recognized ... students going off to camp ... it's just, again, exciting to see all of the great things that are going on in Spring ISD."

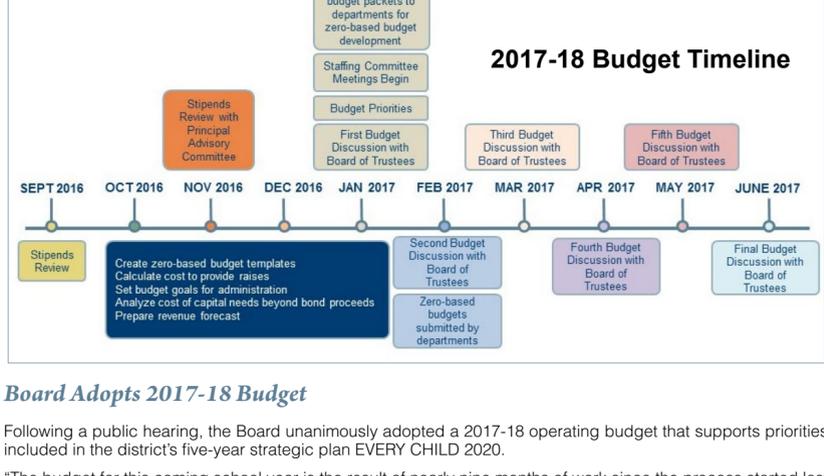
Deborah Jensen concluded the board's remarks with an overview of how the board governs and the standards to which they adhere. "We are now getting over \$200 million of our bond money to start some major, major projects across our district - badly needed projects. I would like to remind you that all the trustees file a financial disclosure every year that is public information. So that you can see if anybody has any contact with businesses or relatives in businesses to maintain the highest ethics in our dealing with money," Jensen said.

She went on to emphasize that the role of a board member is unusual and does not include being an advocate for a personal agenda, a political party, a single group or ideology. She also talked about the board's obligation to provide oversight, which includes reading many volumes of reports and news stories among other information sources. In addition, she mentioned other ways that the district is ensuring ethical best practices, including an internal auditor and a fraud hotline.

"We trustees welcome letters and contacts from our community - students, parents, employees, taxpayers - we really welcome those communications because sometimes that's the only way we start to learn about some issue in our community," Jensen said.

She concluded by further defining the board's role as one of oversight that does not cross over into micromanagement, nor does it serve as a rubber stamp. "We want to work with the employees of Spring ISD and respect their expertise, and work very hard to be ethical and functional," Jensen said.

Public Hearings



Board Adopts 2017-18 Budget

Following a public hearing, the Board unanimously adopted a 2017-18 operating budget that supports priorities included in the district's five-year strategic plan EVERY CHILD 2020.

"The budget for this coming school year is the result of nearly nine months of work since the process started last September with a comprehensive stipend review as part of the district's strategic compensation work," said **Dr. Rodney E. Watson**, superintendent of schools. "The board's commitment to staff is greatly appreciated and will help Spring ISD continue to compete with neighboring school districts to recruit and retain the best talent."

The budget includes a two percent cost-of-living raise for staff, increases the starting teacher salary to \$52,275, provides stipends for gifted and talented teachers and sustains an increase to the hourly rate of bus drivers that was approved and went into effect in February. In addition, the budget provides for:

- Expansion of full-day prekindergarten to include two more elementary schools, Smith and Anderson, for a total of seven campuses;
- Sixty new bus drivers;
- Bus driver attendance and recruitment incentives;
- Three new advanced academic staff positions that will be used to develop, design and enhance curriculum and instruction for gifted and talented students;
- Additional work hours, for half-day prekindergarten staff, that meet mandated state requirements;
- Two new technology positions assigned to the eSchool student data management system; and
- A new Performing and Visual Arts Assistant Director.

The ongoing expansion to full-day prekindergarten and the addition of 60 bus drivers are direct results of 2016 bond initiatives. The additional drivers are needed to drive the 60 new buses approved by voters to replace aging vehicles and expand bus service to a 1-mile radius.

"It is important for our community to know the district's strong commitment to our full-day Pre-K expansion," said **Ann Westbrook**, chief financial officer. "Although we are only adding two campuses to the full-day schedule this year, the cost of sustaining full-day Pre-K at the original five campuses is now fully funded by our district's M&O budget."

The district was able to launch the full-day Pre-K program in 2016-17 at Clark Primary, Heritage, Link, Lewis and Thompson elementary schools with funding from the House Bill 4 High-Quality Grant appropriated in the 84th legislative session, which is no longer available.

"I am pleased that we were able to absorb the operating costs associated with the bond projects through our zero-based, priority-focused budgeting process," Watson said.

The \$389 million operating budget, which includes \$307,130,929 in the general fund, \$55,299,484 in the debt service fund and \$26,879,475 in the child nutrition fund, will be supported by a proposed tax rate of \$1.51.

The operating budget is estimated to require a Maintenance and Operations (M&O) tax rate of \$1.04, which is the same as last year, while the Interest and Sinking (I&S) tax rate of \$0.47 will be used to pay the debt service requirements on outstanding bonds. The projected I&S tax rate reflects a four-cent increase over last year due to the recent sale of bonds approved in the 2016 bond election. A combination of the M&O and I&S tax rates brings the district's total to \$1.51 per \$100 valuation.

The tax rate is based on preliminary certified assessments of property values within the district. Board action on the tax rate will be taken in the fall after the district receives certified tax rolls from the Harris County Appraisal District.

Summary copies of the budget are available upon request and online at www.springisd.org.

Board Approves Optional Flexible School Day Program

A public hearing was held regarding the 2017-18 Optional Flexible School Day Program that offers flexible scheduling for students who may have obligations that put them at risk of dropping out of school. The board unanimously approved the program for continuation. **Dr. Lupita Hinojosa**, chief of school leadership and student support services, said that over 200 students were enrolled this past year. Altogether, the students earned 366 credits.

Board Approves Several Districtwide Waivers for the 2017-18 School Year

A public hearing was held regarding a number of 2017-18 Districtwide School Waivers. Following the public hearing, the board approved the seven waivers that will provide the flexibility needed for the district to continue to meet state statutes and policies. The waivers are for:

- An Early Release Day on May 31, 2018, the last day of school for students;
- An Remote Instruction for homebound students;
- Dual Credit for students attending classes on college campuses during the school year;
- Modified schedule for high school students who are not being tested during the state assessment period;
- An adjusted timeline for providing accelerated instruction to fifth - and eighth - grade students who fail the third administration of STAAR;
- Limiting the number of foreign exchange students per high school to five;
- Home instruction for teen mothers.

Presentation:

Board Hears Report on 2017 School Quality Survey Results

Chief Communications Officer **Tiffany Dunne-Oldfield** presented the results of the 2017 School Quality Survey that was launched in April and drew responses from more than 8,700 parents, employees and students who shared their opinions of Spring ISD schools.

"This is our second year of this survey, which measures stakeholder perceptions of school and district quality. A strong measurement tool, the data obtained through this survey helps us gauge our progress as we work to strengthen our schools as outlined in the district's five year strategic plan, EVERY CHILD 2020," said Dunne-Oldfield, chief communications officer. "Using independent research and communications firm K12 Insight to administer the survey, ensures confidentiality and encourages participation."

Here are some of the highlights from the survey findings:

- 73% of participating parents rated their child's school as excellent or good - a 9 percentage-point increase from last year's survey.
- 67% of staff members and 46% of students in grades 6-12 rated their school as excellent or good.
- 80% of participating parents said their child's school is safe, up from 68% last year.
- 91% of parents said students and staff members treat one another with respect, up from 60% last year.
- 74% of staff and 77% of students said there is an adult in school to whom students can go for help with a school problem.
- All three participant groups identified communication about school-sponsored events and activities as a strength of district schools.

"While we are proud of these results and the year over year improvements that were seen in several areas, we know we still have work to do," said **Dr. Rodney E. Watson**, superintendent of schools. "We're committed to using the community input provided through this survey to continue our good work and make additional progress where it is needed."

District and school leaders will use the survey findings in school improvement planning for next school year.

[See Survey Results.](#)

Action Items

- 2017-18 Spring ISD Budget for Student Success initiative Accelerated Instruction;
- 2016-17 Third Budget Review;
- Request for Qualifications for Architectural Professional Services;
- Request for Qualifications for Construction Related Professional Services;
- Internal Audit Annual Summary Report;
- Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2017-18;
- Second Reading of Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Local Update 107 - Proposed Revisions Affecting Local Policies CDC, CJ, DC, DEE, DFAA, DFBA, FE, FAJ;
- Second reading of Proposed Policy Revisions to DMD local;
- List of investment brokers/dealers;
- Taxpayer refunds;
- Certification of Anticipated Expenditure Rate for Spring ISD;
- Financial Update - Actual Collections;
- Request for Proposal for interpreting services;
- 2017-18 Instructional Allotment and TEKS Certification Renewal;
- 2017-18 Staffing Guidelines;
- 2017-18 Compensation Plan;
- Application for Low Attendance Day Waiver for the 2016-17 school year;
- Multi-Year (2017-2020) Edgenuity Contract;
- Harris County Community Youth Services Contract;
- Harris County Department of Education Academic and Behavior School Contract;
- 2017-18 MOU with the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP);
- Acceptance of Grant Funds in Support of Districtwide and School-Specific Programs;
- Renewal of Project Lead the Way Dual Credit MOU with University of Texas Tyler; and
- 2017-18 Spring Independent School District Student Code of Conduct.



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.