

SPRINGBOARD

A Publication of the Spring ISD Board of Trustees

Vol. 27 No. 4 / November 2017

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, Dec. 12 at Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, 16717 Ella Blvd.



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.

The Spring ISD Board of Trustees met at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 14 at Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center to address items on the agenda. President Dr. **Deborah Jensen** called the meeting to order. Dekaney High School Navy JROTC Cadets **Carl Koulavongsa, Arionna Knox, Cameron Smith, Taisha Stewart** and **Tanisha Stewart** presented the colors and led the pledges of allegiance.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. **Rodney Watson** began his remarks by acknowledging the halfway point since the launch of the district's strategic plan, EVERY CHILD 2020, in May 2015. While much work has been accomplished, he said there is still more to be done and he and his team are taking a deep dive into all the actions and outcomes to date in order to develop a more detailed assessment.

He also praised the progress so far this year on improving student attendance, a key priority of the trustees. In particular, he noted Cooper Elementary, which so far has the highest attendance rate of all campuses in the district this year. As part of the district's attendance initiative, he also noted the full-time bus drivers and attendants who received a \$300 bonus for not missing any days in the period between August and October. Those who didn't qualify this time have another chance during the next calendar period. Bus drivers and attendants are critical to making sure students get to school on time and ready to learn, he said.

Watson also discussed progress in the district's bond program. All of the new laptops and Chromebooks have been rolled out and delivered into the hands of teachers and students, who are now using them in the district's classrooms.



Rodney E. Watson

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



Chris Bell



Rhonda Newhouse



Justine Durant



Donald Davis



Rhonda L. Faust



Jana Gonzales

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

Trustee **Justine Durant** thanked the Family and Community Engagement department for its support of a public forum on Nov. 2 at Spring High School to address the literacy crisis facing the nation and area school districts. In attendance at the public forum were more than 50 people and trustees from five area school districts, including Spring, Aldine, Cy-Fair, Humble and Klein. "I was really pleased with all the support we received," Durant said. She noted that the event was hosted by the Omicron Tau Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. The group is planning to host another event in March. Board President Jensen applauded the regional cooperation.

Trustee **Chris Bell** reminded the audience of another literacy event coming up on Dec. 8, the district's Winter Wonderland Celebration for students in elementary and middle school. Students who attend receive a book and participate in literacy-related activities. The event will be held at Dekaney High School from 5:30 to 8 p.m. He also thanked the Cub Scouts in the audience for attending the meeting.

In addition, Bell thanked Rep. **Sheila Jackson Lee** for her support of the Ponderosa Elementary community during the school's Fall Fest. He also noted Rep. **Ted Poe's** decision to not seek re-election in 2018 and thanked him for his service.

Trustee **Jana Gonzalez** praised the recent coverage of Veterans Day on the district's website and Twitter feed. She was pleased to see all of the activities at the campuses in recognition of the contributions made by veterans.

Trustee **Donald Davis** noted that all three of the district's comprehensive high schools are in the football playoffs and will have games this weekend to see which teams advance. "I guess I can officially say 'Go Spring!'" he said.

Trustee **Rhonda Newhouse** recognized all three high school marching bands, which she praised for their recent performances.

Board President Jensen concluded the trustee remarks by talking about her visit to Anderson Elementary School, where she saw the Leader in Me program at work. She said she was especially impressed at how the students were tracking attendance, as those skills tie into both math and leadership skills.

Presentation:

Celina Miller, the concurring partner with the public accounting firm of Whitley Penn, presented the results of the FY 2017 Financial Statement Audit and Federal Single Audit. She began by explaining the firm's process for conducting the audit, including on-site visits to review internal controls. Miller reported that the district received the highest level of assurance that can be given on a set of financial statements. Specifically, the audit found no material weaknesses, no significant deficiencies and no instances of noncompliance. In addition, the audit found that the district's unassigned fund balance was in line with the state target of 60 days.

Chief Financial Officer **Ann Westbrook** presented the district's 2016-17 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) to the Board for review and approval. The 146-page document is the district's report of financial operations for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017. As Westbrook explained, the CAFR is prepared not only for the Board of Trustees, but also taxpayers, grantor agencies, employees, the Texas Education Agency, and anyone else who would like to see details regarding the district's financial management, including the external auditor's report. Westbrook gave trustees a walk-through of the document, explaining the different sections and offering a rundown of revenue, expenditures, and the district's fund balance, as well as debt service obligations. She also reviewed some historical data with the trustees including teacher pay, which has increased about 25 percent since 2008 as part of the district's commitment to ensuring Spring ISD stays competitive.

After hearing both presentations, the trustees voted 6-0 to accept both the CAFR and the auditor's report. [The CAFR is available for review here.](#)

Action Items

Trustees Approve Board Governance Manual

The trustees approved a manual of established procedures, marking the first time the Board has codified all of its policies and operating protocols into one document. The work was done by the Board Governance Committee, chaired by Trustee **Justine Durant**.

Board Approves 2017-18 District Targeted Improvement Plan

The Board of Trustees approved a comprehensive targeted improvement plan for the district following a public hearing that drew no speakers.

Dr. **Lupita Hinojosa**, chief of school leadership and student support services, said the plan is required by the Texas Education Agency after the district scored low in two areas, specifically students in the CTE program that also are identified as Special Education and/or Limited English Proficient; and Special Education students in grades 3-8 who failed to meet the state's passing standard in reading.

Hinojosa said the improvement plan is very detailed, with the goal of moving the district from the lowest score to the highest score. She said the plan relies on strategies that include extensive data monitoring every quarter, with the goal of providing targeted assistance to those students who are struggling.

Trustees requested that administration provide periodic updates on how the district is doing in meeting its quarterly goals.

In other action the Board approved:

- A change to the 2017-18 Compensation Plan by reinstating the Pool Operator stipend;
- First review of the 2017-18 Budget;
- Taxpayer refunds;
- A resolution that 4-H will be considered as an extracurricular activity and that the Board recognizes the Extension agents as adjunct staff; and
- The First Amendment to the agreement with UTeach Engineering at the University of Texas, Austin.