

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
- Deborah Jensen, Ph.D.**
Vice President
- Donald Davis**
Secretary
- Winford Adams Jr.**
Assistant Secretary
- Justine Durant**
- Jana Gonzales**
- Kelly P. Hodges**

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

The Spring ISD Board of Trustees met at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 10 at the Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center to address items on the agenda. The meeting was a hybrid of in-person and virtual, with trustees together in person, while most other participants and members of the public joined the meeting via Zoom. President **Rhonda Newhouse** called the meeting to order and Trustee **Donald Davis** led the pledges to the flags.

Points of Pride Awards and Other 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.

Anderson Elementary School Assistant Principal Named TEPSA Region 4 President-Elect

The meeting's first Point of Pride recognition went to Anderson Elementary School Assistant Principal **LaToya Patterson**, who was recently named Region 4 President-Elect for 2020-21 by the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA).

Patterson was elected earlier this year by fellow TEPSA members. In the role, she will support the organization's goal of empowering educational leaders "to learn with and from each other," and next year she will begin a term serving as Region 4 President for 2021-22.

"TEPSA currently has relatively few assistant principals serving on its board. Ms. Patterson's election is especially impressive," said Chief of Communications and Innovation **Tiffany Dunne-Oldfield** during her remarks. "Her own achievements, together with her dedicated work in support of her professional colleagues, has set her apart."

A 2015 Spring ISD Elementary Teacher of the Year and finalist for Region 4 Teacher of the Year, Patterson herself grew up in Spring ISD schools, attending Hirsch Elementary, Twin Creeks Middle School and Spring High School. She taught in Spring ISD at Dekaney High School and in a number of capacities at Anderson Elementary School before becoming Anderson's assistant principal in 2017.

"I love hearing that students go through our system, and come back and serve as teachers and administrators," said Trustee **Winford Adams Jr.** "Congratulations, and thank you for all your work."

Anderson's principal, **Kristin Falcon**, was also on hand for the meeting and described Patterson as a trusted colleague and friend.

"She exemplifies leadership in all aspects of the word," Falcon told trustees. "But what I love most about Ms. Patterson is every decision she makes she's got what's best for kids in her heart."

Superintendent **Dr. Rodney E. Watson** and other board members echoed that sentiment, with several trustees relating stories of positive experiences witnessing Patterson's interactions with students and parents at Anderson and around the district.

"The district is proud to have her as a hometown leader here in Spring ISD, and we're excited to celebrate her this evening as she represents Region 4 educators at the state level with TEPSA," Dunne-Oldfield said. "Congratulations, Ms. Patterson!"



Anderson Elementary School Assistant Principal LaToya Patterson stands with her Point of Pride award.



Spring Early College Academy Principal Kristine Guidry stands with the Point of Pride award recognizing the school's win of the 2020 College Success Award.

Spring Early College Academy Receives 2020 College Success Award from GreatSchools.org

The second Point of Pride went to Spring Early College Academy, which recently received the 2020 College Success Award from GreatSchools.org. First launched in 2018, the College Success Award honors schools with a record of ensuring their students prepare for college, enroll in college, and succeed in their postsecondary work.

This year, Spring Early College Academy was one of 2,158 award-winning schools from 29 states that met the award criteria – schools whose graduates go on to enroll in two- or four-year college, prove they are ready for college-level coursework, and persist on to at least their second year. Early College was among just 314 winning schools in Texas this year, joining a group of schools across the state with average graduation rates of 98% or above, and with 70% or more of graduates going on to enroll in two- or four-year colleges and universities within 12 months of graduation.

"This award wasn't something that the school applied for," **Dunne-Oldfield** said, "it's just a recognition for the hard work of the teachers and administrators and how that hard work is paying off for the students."

Dunne-Oldfield explained that the GreatSchools.org website lists Spring Early College Academy as being "far above the state average in key measures of college and career readiness." The site also notes that alumni from the school require less remedial college coursework on average than students nationwide.

In accepting the award, Early College Principal **Kristine Guidry** emphasized the commitment made by students and parents when joining the program, and thanked trustees and administrators for their support.

"It represents a collective effort of everyone involved," Guidry said, going on to highlight "the board's continued support of this program, and just the belief in work that's been put into growing us into, now, our 10th year of existence."

Dr. Watson congratulated Guidry for her committed leadership of the Early College program, commenting on how below the state was among the school's students. Trustee **Dr. Deborah Jensen**, meanwhile, remarked on the positive, collegial environment among the school's students, faculty and staff that effectively encourages student growth.

"I get an inside view because my granddaughter is a student at that school, and I will tell you that you continue to have that wonderful supportive culture among the students," Jensen said. "And it goes between different grade levels that the students reach out to other students to help them. Congratulations on a wonderful, wonderful institution that you are leading." [Read more.](#)

Trustees Recognize Care Van for Longstanding Service to District Families

The trustees also presented an Above and Beyond the Call of Duty (ABCD) award to community partner Care Van, a nonprofit organization that comes annually to the district to provide free immunizations and other basic healthcare services to area families.

"They have long been friends to Spring ISD and supporters of our district family," said **Dunne-Oldfield** during her remarks. "This year, especially, we are grateful for their efforts to keep students healthy and ready to learn."

She also introduced and thanked Care Van Lead Nurse **Alejandra Leal**, who is retiring this year after more than a decade-and-a-half helping run the 501(c)(3) organization and serving families across Texas. Leal attended the meeting via Zoom, where she was also praised by the district's director of parent engagement, **Tranita Carroll**, who has worked with Leal for several years to plan Care Van visits and help get the word out to local families about the organization's services and offerings.

"She draws a huge crowd at our annual Back to School Expo, where she was always the last person to leave because she wanted to make sure every child received their immunizations," Carroll said. "She also travels to multiple campuses throughout the year to catch any student who didn't participate in the Expo. She has truly made children's health her ministry."

With the 2020 Back to School Expo cancelled due to COVID-19, Carroll said that Leal and Care Van went beyond expectations to ensure the health and well-being of students.

"We had a difficult time finding an agency who was willing to provide the face-to-face interaction needed to immunize students," Carroll told trustees. "Mrs. Leal, once again, answered the call and provided not one, but three immunization fairs for our students."

This fall, in addition to the expanded immunization fair offerings, Care Van is also providing free flu shots, an addition Carroll said makes an especially big impact amidst this year's coronavirus pandemic.

"We have been incredibly blessed to serve thousands of students each year," Carroll said. "I am thankful to be able to recognize Nurse Leal and the Texas Care Van program this evening for all that they've done for our students and for our families."

Leal said she had enjoyed working with students and families in Spring ISD ever since she was first invited by the district's director of nursing and health services, **Jeanne Parker**.

"It's been an honor just to work with the children and make sure they're immunized and ready for school," Leal said. "It's nothing about me, it's all about the children, and that's who we work for. We work very hard to keep them in school, and make sure they're healthy and safe."



Care Van Lead Nurse Alejandra Leal stands in front of the Care Van with the ABCD award recognizing her organization's commitment to the health of area students.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent **Dr. Rodney E. Watson** began his brief remarks by reminding everyone about the discussion held at the Nov. 5 board work session on the 2020-21 Targeted Improvement Plans, which provide an action plan for campuses to improve performance.

He noted that the plans are an extension of the work done by the schools on their Campus Improvement Plans, which were presented to the board in October. "I hope it was clear from both the October Campus Improvement Plans and this month's Targeted Improvement Plans that despite the ongoing pandemic, we're going to be steadfast in our efforts to increase student achievement," Watson said.

He went on to thank all the campus leaders and their teachers for their heroic efforts this school year to keep the focus on student engagement and progress, no matter the challenges.

Watson then discussed how the school district is continuing to offer families "more opportunities and more choice" with its specialty programs and schools. Specifically, at the Nov. 5 board work session, the trustees approved the application for Springwoods Village Middle School to become an International Baccalaureate (IB) school and approved grant funds for a new early college program at Dekaney High School.

"The significance of both of these actions can't be understated as they reflect the ongoing commitment we have to expand opportunities and choice for all of our families," Watson said.

He noted that both schools are offering unique programming for their neighborhood students, so students don't need to travel across the district. "With these programs, students can attend a neighborhood school and have access to all of the great athletic and PVA programs that are typical of a secondary campus, while at the same time benefiting from a specialty offering," he said.

He encouraged trustees and anyone watching the meeting to help spread the word, particularly about the **Dekaney P-TECH program**, which is now accepting applications from prospective students. "We hope that we see a lot of interest because this program will be second-to-none as it prepares students for college and careers in computer programming and related areas like video gaming and coding," he said.



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 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** invited the trustees to make remarks, then gave a brief update on the launch of the district's equity audit process.

"I will share with the board that, today, **Winford Adams, Kelly Hodges** and myself met with **Dr. Watson** and **Dr. Lupita Hinojosa** as they introduced us to Cambridge Education. They will be heading an audit – an equity audit – for our district," Newhouse said. "I would like to thank Dr. Lupita Hinojosa for taking charge of this journey that we're about to go on in learning about our district, and we appreciate everyone's support and honesty and transparency in going through this equity audit."

Public Hearings

District Holds a Public Hearing on 2020-21 Targeted Improvement Plans

The trustees voted to approve the 2020-21 Targeted Improvement Plans for 21 campuses after holding a public hearing on Tuesday.

The Board had already heard a detailed presentation at the Board Work Session on Nov. 5 regarding the plans, which were developed in response to state and federal accountability ratings. Because of the pandemic, STAAR exams were canceled across Texas last spring. As a result, campuses were given the same accountability ratings they had last year, based on 2018-19 data.

At the work session, trustees received an overview of state and federal accountability requirements as well as the timeline to respond with appropriate interventions. At the campus level, the principals at Hirsch Elementary and Cloughton Middle School each described the work they're doing to improve student outcomes.

Action Items

Board Approves Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Chief Financial Officer **Ann Westbrook** presented the district's 2019-20 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) to the Board for review, which also includes the independent auditor's report, for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2020.

The CAFR is prepared annually 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.

The presentation began on Tuesday with the district's auditing firm of Whitley Penn presenting its report on the independent audit that began last spring. **Celina Cereceres**, a CPA and Public Audit Partner with Whitley Penn, said the district earned an unmodified opinion, which represents a clean audit report.

Cereceres walked through the auditing process and the testing of internal controls. She said no compliance issues were found. "Kudos to your management," Cereceres said.

Westbrook then introduced the rest of the CAFR, which represents the actual expenditures for the 2019-20 school year. She reviewed the different sections of the document, including a rundown of revenue, expenditures and the district's fund balance, as well as debt service obligations. The document also includes historical data associated with the top 10 taxpayers and trends over the past 10 years.

"What it will show you is that there's almost no two years that are alike," Westbrook said about the trend data, noting that something is always happening that has an impact on the district's finances, whether a hurricane, an economic downturn or a pandemic. "You see the story of what's taken place over the last decade."

After Westbrook concluded her presentation, the Board voted unanimously to approve both the CAFR and the Independent Auditor's Report.

Board Hears Update on Legislative Agenda and Approves Priorities

The trustees agreed on a set of priorities for the upcoming legislative session as proposed by the Board's Governance Committee. The priorities represent five of the recommendations put forward by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), which each year releases its updated legislative agenda.

"It's been stressed that it's better to have three to five goals so that you're not trying to scatter your efforts and resources," said Trustee **Dr. Deborah Jensen**. "So that's why we don't automatically just take all of TASB's priorities as our own."

Trustee Jensen then presented the priorities endorsed by the Governance Committee. They include:

COVID-19 Pandemic - TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to continue working with local school districts to identify and address student needs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and other disasters, such as access to technology and broadband/utility services, mental health resources, meals, social services, personal protective equipment, additional support for economically disadvantaged children, and remediation for students, while maintaining local control. The state should also suspend accountability ratings during disasters that severely impact school operations, such as the current pandemic; enact a temporary moratorium on the expansion or creation of new charter schools; not supplant state education funding with federal funds provided for disaster recovery; and fund schools based on student enrollment to ensure adequate instructional continuity.

Charter Schools - TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to prohibit the expansion of charter schools, to reduce the impact charter schools have on the state budget and on local public schools, and to increase the transparency of charter schools and their operations, especially with regard to enrollment and expulsion practices, business operations, and expenditures. The state should require charters to have publicly elected board members who are accountable to the communities they serve.

Diversity and Cultural Awareness - TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to support diversity and cultural awareness initiatives throughout districts through staff and student education and restorative teaching and disciplinary practices that treat all students with equality. We also call on the Legislature and State Board of Education to evaluate the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for accurate and complete education as it pertains to all cultures that have contributed to the rich history of Texas and the United States.

Governance - TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to recognize and preserve the right of public school boards to associate and collaborate with each other and to communicate the needs of their students and schools, both directly and through representative organizations, with lawmakers.

Public School Finance - TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to aggressively move to maintain the promises and dedication of funding made in the new school finance system implemented under House Bill 3 (86th Session) and to equitably share the cost of education with local school districts. Further, the state should implement a funding structure that recognizes the flexibility needed by and the additional costs incurred by school districts amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board also endorsed a priority not on TASB's list, namely a bill (S.B. No. 2283) that would make a person ineligible to be elected or appointed to a school board if they have been convicted of a felony, pled guilty to a felony, entered into a plea bargain for a felony charge, or received deferred adjudication for a felony.

To learn more about TASB's Legislative Priorities, please [click here](#).

Board Hears Update on COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols in Spring ISD

The trustees on Tuesday were provided an overview of the work the district is doing to help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in its schools and facilities. Spring ISD Police Chief **Ken Culbreath** provided details about the district's processes and operational plans using the industry standards for emergency management planning: Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery. Below is a summary of that presentation:

Spring ISD COVID-19 Process Overview

STEP 1: Prevention

The district established **Stop The Spread Safety Walks** where Emergency Management partners with campus leaders to ensure they have the necessary resources and systems in place. The district has established safety protocols, along with purchasing and installing **social distancing markers** in buildings, meeting rooms, and on school buses. Spring ISD has also purchased and installed **plexiglass shields** in strategic locations throughout the District to protect staff and students.

STEP 2: Mitigation

The district worked with outside medical vendor **AXIOM** to assist with the check-in-to-work process for staff. There are designated **isolation rooms** in every building in the event there is an infected individual. The district's Operations Team has established **cleaning protocols** to ensure all high-touch points and possible contaminated areas are properly sanitized. At the same time, a cross-functional team constructed a comprehensive plan that was submitted to Harris County Public Health.

STEP 3: Preparedness

The district has acquired thousands of **PPE items** such as face shields, cloth mask and hand sanitizer for use by both students and staff. Each building has established **building entry protocols** for temperature checks and social distancing along with **campus visitor restrictions**. The team also created a **Zip Code Tracker** to track COVID cases by Spring ISD zip codes, the top 10 zip codes where Spring ISD resides.

STEP 4: Response

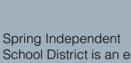
The district has established a **COVID Taskforce** that consists of approximately 25 members from Human Resources, Emergency Management, Operations & Health Services. The Emergency Management team has a 24-hour **contact tracing** team. The COVID Taskforce has an **AM & PM COVID case/protocol review** process to ensure a timely response. The district's Communication Department supports the Taskforce with drafting and distributing communications regarding every positive COVID-19 case within Spring ISD, with a general notification and regular updates of the **COVID Tracker**.

STEP 5: Recovery

The district has established a second partnership with an outside medical vendor for free COVID testing for employees. The team is also in conversation with the Texas Education Agency for free COVID testing for students. The district has created a **disinfection protocol** that aligns with CDC best practices. In addition, there is a **Return to Campus or Work Team** to aid affected staff and students in their safe return to schools and other Spring ISD facilities.

In Other Action the Board Approved:

- The minutes from the Oct. 1, 2020 special called session, Oct. 8, 2020 work session and the Oct. 13, 2020 regular meeting;
- The Westfield High School Ninth Grade Change Order #1 in the amount of \$500,000;
- The Safety and Security Package I, 8th Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) in the amount of \$540,155;
- The 2020-21 First Budget Review;
- Taxpayer refunds.



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, color, disabling condition, age, sex, religion, national origin, military status, or any other legally protected status in making decisions regarding staff members or students.