

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](http://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](http://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. Thursday, Nov. 14 at Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, 16717 Ella Blvd.**

The Spring ISD Board of Trustees met at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 17 at Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center to address items on the agenda. President Dr. **Deborah Jensen** called the meeting to order. Westfield High School Navy JROTC Cadets **Naisa Johnson, Walker Blakely, Faith Jones, Carlos Muniz** and **Kolby Grant** presented the colors and led the pledges of allegiance.

## Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. **Rodney Watson** began his remarks by welcoming the families of students who were at the meeting to be recognized. "We are excited about all the families that are here to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month," he said.

He continued with a rundown of the busy day that he and others at the meeting had spent, which included the Harris County Department of Education groundbreaking for Fortis Academy, Harris County's first public recovery high school. "We are excited about the opportunity to work with Harris County to support our students who are actually going through recovery issues," Watson said. "In addition to that, several of us went over to the Lake Houston Chamber of Commerce luncheon where we were able to celebrate 18 teachers of the year. It was really nice to see our teachers recognized for the hard work they are doing."

He concluded his remarks with a report on the increased number of students who have been identified as homeless and qualify for services through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. "We are currently at about 596 students with 288 of those students directly affected by Hurricane Harvey and by Hurricane Irma," Watson said. "We are going to continue to reach out and support our families and our students to make sure that we are meeting their needs."



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.



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

**Chris Bell** reported on highlights of the recent TASA/TASB Convention, which he and other board members attended Oct. 6-8. While at the convention, the Texas Caucus of Black School Board Members presented the district with two boxes of books and cash for purchasing more books for district schools. "I was out this weekend buying books with my wife," Bell said, while holding up a couple of examples.

He went on to talk about a handout that he and Dr. Jensen received at one of the convention sessions that graphically shows the ever-increasing burden on America's public schools over decades. Bell said the pamphlet provoked a conversation about how the needs of schools and students have changed in a hundred years.

**Deborah Jensen** added, "I think one of the trends is they went from 1910 – teaching reading, writing and arithmetic – to now we're training children for a future in the workforce, higher education and a variety of lifestyle needs as they grow up. And also it is not just K-12 anymore. She concluded that Spring ISD is up to the challenge.

**Rhonda Newhouse** spoke about an example of how the district is meeting some of those challenges at the campus level. "Last night Trustee Durant and I had an opportunity to attend Clark Primary School's Homework and Hotdog Night," she said. Sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, the event gave parents an opportunity to discuss with teachers and administrators how parents can support and assist children with their homework. "It was a very successful night. They had a very large crowd, and I was impressed with the questions parents were asking the teachers and administrators about what they can do and how to go about doing it," Newhouse said. "So I would like to challenge our parents who are here tonight: Don't hesitate to contact your schools and talk with your teachers or administrators on helping your child with homework. Please take time and work with your children doing homework at night."

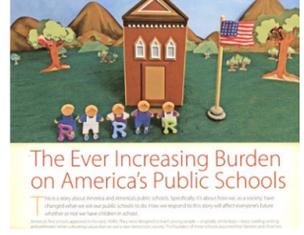
**Justine Durant** added that 10 Westfield High School students were at the event helping primary students with their homework. "I was really excited to see our high school students get involved," Durant said.

Durant then announced another event that is being sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, a forum at 6 p.m. Nov. 2 at Spring High School teaching theater, that will feature five board members representing surrounding school districts: Aldine, Humble, Klein, Cypress Fairbanks and Spring. "We will have a panel discussion about the literacy crisis in our community, how each district is addressing that crisis and how you as parents can get engaged and help support our literacy," she said.

Durant also spoke about the experience board members shared at the recent convention. "We learn a lot of things that we bring back to our district and a lot of times we are actually leading the charge because we have great things happening that we can share with our other partners in the state of Texas."

**Donald Davis** attended a session at the conference on cyber bullying that he said provided good information, which he forwarded to fellow board members. "It's something we have to deal with ... putting this into policy." He went on to say that he sees this as an opportunity to take care of students and serve the children, which is a primary goal of the district.

**Deborah Jensen** concluded the trustees' remarks with an announcement about the district's Fraud Hotline, which is being publicized districtwide. She assured the audience that reports to the hotline are never ignored. Whether they are anonymous or not, all reports of fraudulence will be investigated. She emphasized that, although it is not possible to respond to individuals who make anonymous reports, even anonymous reports are taken seriously and will be investigated.



Winners of the 2017 Spring ISD Hispanic Heritage Languages other than English (LOTE) Art and Essay Contest join the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Watson in the horseshoe for a congratulatory picture.

Languages other than English students are honored for their winning art and essay entries.

## Spotlight

### Hispanic Heritage Month Art and Essay Contest Winners Recognized

The spotlight was on National Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrated nationally Sept. 15-Oct. 15, and on the 19 students who placed first, second or third in the 2017 Spring ISD Hispanic Heritage Languages other than English (LOTE) Art and Essay Contest.

"Tonight we are spotlighting our National Hispanic Heritage Month – celebrating the history, culture and contributions of Latino Americans. Hispanics have had a profound and positive influence on our country through their strong commitment to family, faith, hard work and service," said Dr. **Lupita Hinojosa**, chief of school leadership and student support services.

Those sentiments were obvious in the students' essays, as the winners addressed this year's theme of "Shaping the Bright Future of America."

**Lettie Houck**, manager of LOTE programs, said the students represent both native and non-native speakers from the district's middle schools and high schools. "We are very proud of these children. It was very hard for the multilingual department to choose, because we had some wonderful entries come in," said Houck.

First-place winners – **Cody Chou, Areli Zuniga** and **Juan Guerra** — presented their essays to the Board in both English and Spanish.

Guerra's essay opened with the day he left his home in Mexico for a new life in America. "It was the longest hug I've ever received, when I said goodbye to my grandmother. That is the day that I will never forget since it changed my life forever. It was the day I emigrated from Mexico to America. After giving me her blessing, her tears burst forth without ceasing. Her words are still present in my mind: "Study a lot, my son, and always remember your roots." [See full essay.](#)

#### Essay Winners:

Spanish for Spanish Speakers – **Areli Zuniga**, first, Wells Middle School; **Sheila Vazquez**, second, Westfield High School; and **Emily Castillo**, third, Claughton Middle School.

Spanish 1 – **Cody Chou**, first, Spring Early College Academy; and **Anthony Pabon**, third, Twin Creeks Middle School.

Spanish 2 – **Axl Erazo**, first, Twin Creeks Middle School; **Wilmer Romero**, second, Carl Wunsche Sr. High School; and **Ariel Williams**, third, Spring Early College Academy.

Spanish 3 – **Alexa Coto-Mejia**, first, Spring High School; **Jasmine Castro**, second, Carl Wunsche Sr. High School; and **Kaylan Forest**, third, Spring High School.

Spanish 4 – **Juan Guerra**, first, Carl Wunsche Sr. High School; and **Juan Pereira**, second, Spring Early College Academy.

Spanish 5 – **Jose Herrera**, first, Carl Wunsche Sr. High School.

#### Art Contest Winners, all levels:

**Jocelyne Castillo**, first, Carl Wunsche Sr. High School; **Reese Dees**, second, Spring Early College Academy; **Jordyn Pharris**, third, Spring Early College Academy; and **Jorge Herrera**, honorable mention, Carl Wunsche Sr. High School.

## Public Hearing

### Board Approves Targeted Elements for Dekaney and Clark Intermediate

During a public hearing, Dr. **Lupita Hinojosa**, chief of school leadership and student support services, presented the targeted elements of the campus improvement plans for Dekaney High School and Clark Intermediate School. Both campuses have been rated Improvement Required and the targeted elements, which address areas of low performance, will be implemented and monitored throughout the year. They were approved by the Board.

## Action Items

### Board Approves Tax Rate of \$1.51

The Board of Trustees approved a 2017 total tax rate of \$1.51 per \$100 valuation. Annually, the district proposes a tax rate when the next year's general operating and debt service budgets are approved in the spring, but the tax rate is not approved until fall, after the Harris County Appraisal District provides the certified property appraisal rolls.

The 2017-18 general operating budget will be supported by a Maintenance and Operations tax rate of \$1.04, which represents no change from the previous year's M&O tax rate. The debt service budget will be supported by an Interest and Sinking Fund tax rate of \$0.47, a four-cent increase over last year due to increased debt obligations associated with the 2016 bond referendum that authorized \$330 million in bonds, of which \$225 million have been issued.

#### In other action the Board approved:

- 2017 Appraisal Roll Certification;
- Grant funds for \$1.9 million from the Harris County Department of Education, Region IV and 21st Century Community Learning for Project SAFE (Spring After-school and Family Engagement); and
- 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, disabling condition, age, color, religion, national origin, military status, or any other legally protected status in making decisions regarding staff members or students.