

Spring Independent School District

16717 Ella Blvd. • Houston, Texas 77090 • Tel. 281.891.6000



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
7:00 PM, MARCH 17, 2020
BOARD ROOM
GORDON M. ANDERSON LEADERSHIP CENTER
16717 ELLA BOULEVARD, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77090**

MINUTES

I. Call to Order (7:07 PM)

President Rhonda Newhouse called the Regular Board Meeting of the Spring Independent School District Board of Trustees to order at 7:07 PM on March 17, 2020, in the Board Room of the Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, 16717 Ella Boulevard, Houston, Texas, in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.

Members Present:

Rhonda Newhouse, President
Dr. Deborah Jensen, Vice President
Donald Davis, Secretary (arrived at 7:17 PM)
Winford Adams, Jr., Assistant Secretary
Justine Durant
Jana Gonzales
Kelly P. Hodges

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Rodney Watson, Superintendent of Schools
Ken Culbreath, Chief of Police
Lupita Hinojosa, Chief of School Leadership and Student Support Services
Khechara Bradford, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction
Mark Miranda, Chief Operations Officer
Jeremy Binkley, General Counsel
Jason Sheffer, Director of Board Services

II. Flag Pledges (7:08 PM)

The Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge was led by Board President Rhonda Newhouse.

III. Moment of Silence (7:09 PM)

President Newhouse asked the audience to join in a moment of silence.

President Newhouse requested a moment to say a few words in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and its impacts on Spring ISD and area residents, relating a story she saw posted online by a local family.

"We've all been watching the news very closely throughout this pandemic, since we're all trying to follow federal, state and local orders," Newhouse said. "Today I was scrolling through emails and news feeds, waiting on the next order. One particular email jumped out at me."

She recounted the story of a Spring ISD parent who had posted on the neighborhood site Nextdoor thanking Spring ISD for providing area students with breakfasts and lunches, available for pick-up at a number of District schools since the beginning of the closure. Unable to find basic items like milk on store shelves, the parent thanked the District for looking out for the needs of her children.

"As I kept reading the comments," Newhouse said, "on how grateful families were for the outpouring of love and support from Spring ISD, these posts filled my heart and actually brought tears. I had to just take a moment to cry, and it made me beam with pride and joy at the same time. It also made me think about the things that are most important."

While acknowledging the challenges ahead, Newhouse thanked the Superintendent and his team for putting families first and leading the way with resolve and compassion.

"Your astute attention to detail and your focus on families and our community has been remarkable," Newhouse said. "We would like to give you and your team a standing ovation for your servant leadership through such irregular times."

IV. Opening Remarks (7:15 PM)

A. Superintendent of Schools (7:15 PM)

Superintendent Dr. Rodney Watson began his remarks by thanking both the Trustees, for their ongoing communication with him throughout the developing situation related to COVID-19 and its impacts, and his leadership team for all their work to serve families and students during the closure. "This has been an unprecedented time for the country, and so I do want to say a special thank you to all the cabinet members – the ones that are here and the ones that are unable to be with us tonight. They have been working hard with their teams," Watson said. "They all have been working just tirelessly to make sure that our community is taken care of."

Dr. Watson also briefly introduced presentations scheduled later in the agenda, including Health and Safety Updates to the Board from Chief Operations Officer Mark Miranda, Chief of School Leadership and Student Support Services Dr. Lupita Hinojosa, and Chief of Curriculum and Instruction Khechara Bradford.

He concluded by once again acknowledging the Board Members for their care and concern on behalf of students and the Spring ISD community during the unfolding situation.

B. Board of Trustees (7:16 PM)

President Newhouse invited the Trustees to make remarks.

Trustee Gonzales thanked Dr. Watson and the District's administrative team, noting that strong, clear lines of communication, both internally and externally, had helped to calm the fears and anxieties of staff, students and members of the community during a difficult time. "I would just like to echo President Newhouse. You guys have done a fantastic job," Gonzales said. "I don't think we ever have to worry about the

communication. You guys are providing us everything we need, and I'm not getting phone calls from parents or employees saying 'What is going on?' They know."

Trustee Gonzales also voiced her appreciation for the difficult balance at this time between personal and professional needs, and acknowledged Dr. Watson and his team for their commitment. "I know it's a tough job right now. You're here, and you're trying to deal with your own families at home, and we certainly appreciate that," Gonzales said. "It's a scary time, but you guys are doing a great job. Please take care of yourselves, and keep up the good work."

Trustee Jensen focused her remarks on the behind-the-scenes work undertaken by the District's curriculum team to get ready to begin offering remote learning opportunities for students. "I would like to highlight what an incredibly wonderful job Curriculum and Instruction is doing," Jensen said. "We have never tried to do this kind of homeschooling and remote instruction before."

Trustee Jensen also praised Spring ISD teachers, many of whom she said had wasted no time in reaching out to their students' families, as well as posting helpful content to social media sites like Twitter to support families after the closures were announced. These are teachers who really care about students, are experts in what they teach, and they are daring and trying to find new ways to reach their students," Jensen said. "I commend your department and our teachers in Spring ISD."

V. Presentations (7:19 PM)

A. Health Services Update (7:19 PM)

The Board was presented information regarding a Health Services Update. Trustees received a briefing from Chief Operations Officer Mark Miranda, Chief of School Leadership and Student Support Services Dr. Lupita Hinojosa, and Chief of Curriculum and Instruction Khechara Bradford related to the District's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on District operations and community members.

Chief Miranda briefed Board Members on the status of the District's facilities, and gave an overview of the District's drive-through breakfast and lunch program, which began offering free to-go meals for area children at 11 District locations on Monday, March 16.

Chief Hinojosa briefed the Trustees on how the District was addressing the social and emotional needs of students and families, as well as how District nursing staff are monitoring health concerns and preparing to combat COVID-19 cases in the District. Chief Bradford related work underway to allow District teachers to begin facilitating and supporting home-based learning over the weeks to come, including plans to support high school seniors nearing graduation and special needs students who may need additional support.

"It's forcing us to think differently, and to use people in different ways," said Dr. Watson. "We're constantly reminding each other that this is a different time and a different situation, and that calls for us to really think outside of the box."

The home-learning framework, termed Empowered Learning At-Home, will be rolled out in stages so as not to overwhelm families already wrestling with a variety of disruptions resulting from the spread of COVID-19. The behind-the-scenes planning has involved

District leaders, principals and campus administrators, content-area specialists and teachers, all of whom Chief Bradford said have been crucial to the work's success.

VI. Agenda Participation (8:17 PM)

Members of the public did not register to speak to the Board.

VII. Chief of Staff (8:19 PM)

A. Chacho's Restaurant Request for Variance (8:19 PM)

The Board considered whether to oppose Chacho's request for variance to offer alcoholic beverages for sale at 2025 FM 1960 West, near Major Elementary School. At the Board's request, an online survey was sent out to all Major Elementary School families asking for their input on the variance. Of those who responded, approximately 60 percent were in favor, 5 percent had no strong opinion, and approximately 35 percent were opposed.

In weighing its decision not to oppose the variance request, the Board considered a variety of factors, including the potential benefit to the community of not having the building remain vacant.

Trustee Adams moved that the Board of Trustees approve the letter that Spring ISD does not oppose Chacho's request for variance to offer alcoholic beverages for sale at 2025 FM 1960 West, near Major Elementary School. Trustee Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Resolution Regarding Emergency Procedures Due to COVID-19 (8:25 PM)

The Board approved a special resolution on emergency procedures to help the District address impacts resulting from the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution covered several areas, including employee pay for the work days missed as a result of the temporary closing of Spring ISD campuses and facilities in the interest of public safety. The resolution further reflects Texas Governor Greg Abbott's move to temporarily suspend certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, allowing Texas school boards to meet via live online teleconferences during the period when large public gatherings are not allowed. It also allows the Superintendent and District leaders some latitude for emergency procurement procedures, when such procedures are necessary to protect students, provide required instruction, or ensure the safety of facilities once students are allowed to return to their campuses.

Trustee Jensen moved that the Board of Trustees approve the proposed resolution regarding emergency procedures due to COVID-19. Trustee Gonzales seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Consent Agenda (9:15 PM)

The Board approved the Consent Agenda items that were discussed in detail at the March 5, 2020 Board Work Session.

Trustee Gonzales moved that the Board of Trustees approve and adopt all of the items listed on the Consent Agenda. Trustee Durant seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

A. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Following Meetings:

1. February 6, 2020 Work Session
2. February 11, 2020 Regular Meeting

- B. Second Reading of Proposed Revisions to Board Policy BE(LOCAL) – BOARD MEETINGS
Chief Julie Hill will present the second reading of proposed revisions to Board Policy BE(LOCAL).
 - C. First Reading of TASB Proposed Revisions to Board Policy BED(LOCAL) – BOARD MEETINGS – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
Chief Julie Hill will present the first reading of proposed revisions to Board Policy BED(LOCAL).
 - D. First Reading of TASB Proposed Revisions to Board Policy FL(LOCAL) – STUDENT RECORDS
Chief Julie Hill will present the first reading of proposed revisions to Board Policy FL(LOCAL).
 - E. Acceptance of Grant Funds – Good Reason Houston
The Board will consider accepting the awarded grant funds of \$13,000 to host a Pre-K enrollment event at Westfield High School on April 4, 2020.
 - F. Cooperative Agreement Between Prairie View A&M University and Spring Independent School District to Provide Training and Support for First-Year Teachers
The Board will consider approving the Cooperative Agreement between Prairie View A&M University and Spring Independent School District.
 - G. Taxpayer Refunds
The Board will consider ratifying taxpayer refunds.
 - H. Request for Proposal (RFP) # 20-007 – Retail Electric Supply Services
The Board will consider awarding the contract for Retail Electric Supply Services to the provider recommended by the administration.
 - I. Request for Qualifications (RFQ) # 20-010 – Annual Financial Audit Services
The Board will consider approving the qualification and ability to contract for Annual Financial Audit Services to the provider recommended by the administration.
- IX. **Public Participation (9:16 PM)**
Members of the public did not register to speak to the Board.
- X. **Closed Session (9:17 PM)**
President Newhouse recessed the open session at 9:17 PM for the purpose of entering into closed session pursuant to the following provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act:
- A. Under Section 551.071 - For the purpose of a private consultation with the Board's attorney on any or all subjects or matters authorized, including any item posted on this agenda
 - B. Under Section 551.074 - For the purpose of considering the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee or to hear complaints or charges against a public officer or employee
 - 1. The Board will deliberate regarding the Superintendent's evaluation and goals
 - 2. The Board will deliberate on employees nominated for special recognition
 - 3. The Board will deliberate on a recommendation for the termination and finding of no good cause for an employee's abandonment of contract
 - 4. The Board will deliberate on the issuance of school district teaching permits for noncore career and technology courses

5. The Board will deliberate on employee resignations, recommendations to withdraw prior actions taken, recommendations to void employee contracts, recommendations for the proposed termination of employees on probationary and/or term contracts, recommendations for the proposed nonrenewal of employees on term contracts, recommendations for termination at the end of the year for employees on probationary contracts, and final orders for employees on term and probationary contracts previously proposed for termination and/or nonrenewal

- C. Under Section 551.076 - To consider the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel or devices

XI. Action on Closed Session Items (9:50 PM)

President Newhouse reconvened the open session at 9:50 PM

- A.. Trustee Jensen moved that the Board approve the Superintendent's recommendation to terminate the contract of Roberto Cavazos upon finding that the employee failed to perform his contract without good cause, and authorize the Superintendent or designee to notify the employee of the proposed termination pursuant to Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. Trustee Jensen further moved that the Board authorize the Superintendent or designee to notify the State Board for Educator Certification that the employee failed to perform the contract without good cause, and of the action taken by the Board. Trustee Adams seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

XII. Adjournment (9:53 PM)

On a motion by Trustee Durant, seconded by Trustee Hodges, the Board unanimously adjourned the meeting at 9:53 PM.

Rhonda
Newhouse

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Rhonda Newhouse
Date: 2020.04.20
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Rhonda R. Newhouse, President

Donald Davis

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Davis
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Donald Davis, Secretary