

Spring Independent School District

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



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
5:00 PM, NOVEMBER 10, 2020
BOARD ROOM
GORDON M. ANDERSON LEADERSHIP CENTER
16717 ELLA BOULEVARD, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77090**

MINUTES

I. Call to Order (5:08 PM)

President Rhonda Newhouse called the Regular Meeting of the Spring Independent School District Board of Trustees to order at 5:08 PM on November 10, 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
Winford Adams, Jr., Assistant Secretary
Justine Durant
Jana Gonzales
Kelly P. Hodges

Members Absent:

Dr. Donald R. Davis, Secretary

Others Present:

Rodney Watson, Superintendent of Schools
Julie Hill, Chief of Human Resources and Human Capital Accountability
Jeremy Binkley, General Counsel
Jason Sheffer, Director of Board Services
Shundra Brown, Bailey Middle School Principal

II. Closed Session: Consider, hear, deliberate, and obtain legal advice on Board Policy DGBA Complaint of Antionette Odums, under the following sections of the Texas Government Code: (5:08 PM)

President Newhouse recessed the open session at 5:08 PM for the purpose of holding a Level III Grievance Hearing brought by Antionette Odums, in accordance with the following sections of the Texas Government Code:

- A. Section 551.071 - Consultation with Board Attorney regarding all matters as authorized by law
- B. Section 551.074 - To deliberate on the employment, evaluation, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public employee and to hear a complaint or charge against a public employee, including but not limited to the Chief Human Resources Officer
- C. Section 551.082 - To deliberate on a complaint or charge against a district employee, including but not limited to the Chief Human Resources Officer

III. Consideration, Hearing, and Possible Action on Board Policy DGBA Complaint of Antionette Odums (6:57 PM)

President Newhouse reconvened the open session at 6:57 PM. Trustee Jensen moved that the Board grant Antionette Odums' grievance in part and instruct the administration to provide a neutral reference in response to an inquiry from a potential employer, including advising the potential employer that she is eligible to apply to the District for future employment, and deny the remainder of her grievance and deny any other requested relief. Trustee Durant seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

President Newhouse recessed the Regular Meeting for a short break at 6:59 PM.

IV. Break Until 7:00 PM (7:15 PM)

President Newhouse reconvened the Regular Board Meeting of the Spring Independent School District Board of Trustees at 7:15 PM.

Members Present:

Rhonda Newhouse, President
Dr. Deborah Jensen, Vice President
Dr. Donald R. Davis, Secretary
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 (via video conference)
Julie Hill, Chief of Human Resources and Human Capital Accountability (via video conference)
Lupita Hinojosa, Chief Innovation and Equity Officer (via video conference)
Khechara Bradford, Chief Academic Officer (via video conference)
Mark Miranda, Executive Chief of District Operations
Ann Westbrooks, Chief Financial Officer (via video conference)
Tiffany Dunne-Oldfield, Chief of Innovation and Communications (via video conference)
Jeremy Binkley, General Counsel
Jason Sheffer, Director of Board Services

V. Flag Pledges (7:16 PM)

The Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge was led by Trustee Donald Davis, a retired captain of the U.S. Army.

VI. Moment of Silence (7:17 PM)

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

VII. Opening Remarks (7:17 PM)

A. Superintendent of Schools (7:17 PM)

Superintendent Dr. Rodney Watson began his brief remarks by reminding everyone about the discussion held at the November 5th 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.

Next, Dr. Watson thanked 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.

Dr. Watson then discussed how the District is continuing to offer families "more opportunities and more choice" with its specialty programs and schools. Specifically, at the November 5th 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 benefitting from a specialty offering," he said. Dr. Watson encouraged the 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.

B. Board of Trustees (7:20 PM)

President Newhouse invited the Trustees to share remarks, then gave a brief update on the launch of the District's equity audit process. "I will share with the Board that, today, Trustee Adams, Trustee Hodges and myself met with Dr. Watson and Dr. Lupita Hinojosa as they introduced us to Cambridge Education. They will be handling 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."

VIII. Recognitions (7:21 PM)

A. Points of Pride - Anderson Elementary School Assistant Principal LaToya Patterson (7:21 PM)

The meeting's first Points 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. 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 School, 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.

B. Points of Pride - Spring Early College Academy - 2020 College Success Award (7:29 PM)

The second Points 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 colleges, 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. In accepting

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

C. ABCD Award - Care Van and Care Van Lead Nurse Alejandra Leal (7:36 PM)

The Board 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 Chief Tiffany 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.

This fall, in addition to the expanded immunization fair offerings, Care Van is also providing free flu shots.

IX. Public Agenda Participation (7:43 PM)

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

X. Public Hearing for the 2020-2021 Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs) (7:43 PM)

A Public Hearing was held for the 2020-2021 Targeted Improvement Plans. The Board had already heard a detailed presentation at the Board Work Session on November 5th 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. To better understand what those interventions might look like at the campus level, the principals at Hirsch Elementary School and Claughton Middle School each described the work they're doing to improve student outcomes.

Members of the public did not register to speak on this item.

Trustee Adams moved that the Board of Trustees approve the Spring Independent School District 2020-2021 Targeted Improvement Plans, as presented by the administration. Trustee Durant seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

XI. Chief Financial Officer (7:47 PM)

A. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2020 and the Independent Auditor's Report (7:47 PM)

Chief Ann Westbrooks 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 with the District's auditing firm of Whitley Penn presenting its report on the independent audit that began last spring. Ms. Celina Cereceres, a CPA and Public Sector Audit Partner with Whitley Penn, said the District earned an unmodified opinion, which

represents a clean audit report. Ms. Cereceres walked through the auditing process and the testing of internal controls. She said no compliance issues were found.

Chief Ann 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.

Trustee Jensen moved that the Board of Trustees approve the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2020 and the Independent Auditor's Report. Trustee Hodges seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

XII. Board Governance (8:33 PM)

A. Legislative Agenda (8:34 PM)

The Board Governance Committee discussed the TASB Legislative Agenda Priorities and 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 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 operators, 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 commit 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.

Trustee Durant moved that the Board of Trustees approve the five TASB Legislative Agenda Priorities recommended by the Governance Committee of COVID-19 Pandemic, Charter Schools, Diversity and Cultural Awareness, Governance, and Public School Finance for the 2020-2021 school year. Trustee Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

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.

Trustee Durant moved that the Board of Trustees support the Governance Committee recommendation for an expansion of S.B. No. 2283 from the 2019 Legislative Session and bring that recommendation forward to our legislators in the 2020-21 school year. Trustee Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

B. COVID-19 Update (8:58 PM)

Chief Ken Culbreath provided an overview of the work the District is doing to help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in its schools and facilities. Chief 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 the 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 partnered with an outside medical vendor (AXIOM) to assist with our check into 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 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, masks, and hand sanitizer for both students and staff. Each building established building entry protocols for temperature checks, social distancing along with campus visitor restrictions. The team also created a Zip Code Tracker to track COVID cases by Spring ISD zip codes, including the top 10 zip codes where Spring ISD employees reside.
- STEP 4: Response - The District has established a COVID Taskforce that consists of approximately 25 members from Human Resources, Emergency Management, and Operations & Health Services. The Emergency Management team has a 24-hour contact

tracing team. The COVID Taskforce has an AM and PM COVID case/protocol review process to ensure we close any identified gaps. The District's Communication Department supports the Taskforce with drafting and publishing every positive COVID case within Spring ISD with a general notification and the updating of the COVID Tracker.

- STEP5: 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 TEA 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 staff and students to return to learn and work.

XIII. Consent Agenda (9:13)

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

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

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

1. October 1, 2020 Special Called Session
2. October 8, 2020 Board Work Session
3. October 13, 2020 Regular Meeting

B. Westfield High School Ninth Grade Center, Change Order #1

The Board will consider approving the Westfield High School Ninth Grade Change Order #1 in the amount of \$500,000.

C. 2020-21 First Budget Review

The Board will consider approving the 2020-21 First Budget Review.

D. Taxpayer Refunds

The Board will consider ratifying taxpayer refunds.

XV. Closed Session (9:15 PM)

President Newhouse recessed the open session at 9:15 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

1. The Board will obtain legal advice regarding Board Policies BDB(LOCAL) and CW(LOCAL)

B. Under Section 551.072 - For the purpose of discussing the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property

C. 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, and final orders for employees on term and probationary contracts previously proposed for termination and/or nonrenewal

D. Under Section 551.076 - To consider the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation,

of security personnel or devices

1. Safety and Security Bid Package, I, 8th Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP)

The Board will consider approving the Safety and Security Package I, 8th Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) in the amount of \$540,155.

XVI. Action on Closed Session Items (10:41 PM)

President Newhouse reconvened the open session at 10:41 PM.

Trustee Gonzales moved the the Board render a final order to terminate the contract of Jarvis Harry as presented in Closed Session and to authorize the Superintendent to provide notice of the Board's action to the impacted employee pursuant to Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. Trustee Durant seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Adams moved that the Board declare the probationary contract of Jonathan Tucker to be void pursuant to Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code and approve the termination of his employment with Spring ISD for inappropriate communications with a student, effective immediately. Trustee Adams further moved that the Board authorize the Superintendent of Schools or designee to notify this employee of the action taken by the Board. Trustee Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Jensen moved that the Board approve the Safety and Security Package I, 8th Guaranteed Maximum Price in the amount of \$540,155. Trustee Durant seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

XVII. Adjournment (10:46 PM)

On a motion by Trustee Durant, seconded by Trustee Gonzales, the Board unanimously adjourned the meeting at 10:46 PM.


Board President


Board Secretary