

**Spring Independent School District  
Board of Trustees Special Called Session Minutes**

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at 7:00 PM

**1. Call to Order (7:04 PM)**

President Justine Durant called the Special Called Session of the Spring Independent School District Board of Trustees to order at 7:04 PM on March 29, 2023, 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:**

Justine Durant, President  
Winford Adams, Jr., Vice President  
Kelly P. Hodges, Secretary  
Rhonda Newhouse, Assistant Secretary  
Dr. Deborah Jensen  
Carmen Correa  
Natasha McDaniel

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:**

Lupita Hinojosa, Superintendent of Schools  
Mark Miranda, Chief Operations Officer  
Kregg Cuellar, Chief of Academics  
Shane Stubhart, Chief of Communications  
Ann Westbrooks, Chief Financial Officer  
Matthew Pariseau, Chief of Innovation  
Miguel Perez, Chief of Schools  
Jeremy Binkley, General Counsel  
Jason Sheffer, Director of Board Services

**2. Agenda Participation (7:05 PM)**

Kendra Nunez addressed the Board regarding teacher overpayments.

Tabitha Lett addressed the Board regarding teacher overpayments.

Pavlo Chubinskiy addressed the Board regarding overpayment deductions.

**3. Closed Session (7:14 PM)**

President Durant recessed the open session at 7:14 PM for the purpose of entering into closed session pursuant to the following provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act:

- 3.1 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.
  
- 3.2 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.  
The Board will deliberate regarding internal audits involving employee complaints or misconduct, as well as the employment, evaluation, or duties of a public officer or employee.  
The Board will deliberate regarding the duties of specific personnel relating to the operation of the district's employee payroll system and employee stipends.

President Durant reconvened the open session at 8:22 PM.

**4. Report concerning stipends available to employees in the 2022-2023 school year, criteria for awarding those stipends, and current status of the stipend program. (8:22 PM)**

Superintendent Dr. Lupita Hinojosa and Chief Financial Officer Ann Westbrook presented an update regarding the Teacher Effectiveness, Retention and Recruitment Incentive program, including a timeline of events, identified gaps, and a corrective action plan.

As explained by Chief Westbrook, a payroll sorting error impacted 110 Spring ISD employees. As a result of the error, some teachers who qualified to receive a \$2,000-\$5,000 stipend through the Teacher Effectiveness, Retention and Recruitment Incentive were overpaid by either \$1,500 or \$3,000. In all, 110 teachers were either overpaid or underpaid.

In order to correct the payment error, teachers who were overpaid will be required to pay back the surplus. As Chief Westbrook explained to the trustees, by state law the district is legally required to recover any funds that are incorrectly paid out. “The district cannot gift public funds, and as stewards of taxpayer dollars, we’re operating with public funds. We have to recoup any funds that were incorrectly paid to employees,” Westbrook said.

In order to help minimize any negative impact on teachers' finances, the repayments will extend through December 2023, allowing payments to be spread over 19 separate pay periods.

In reviewing the details and discussing the corrective action plan, Superintendent Dr. Lupita Hinojosa apologized for the error and for the inconvenience caused to district teachers. “I’m sorry to our teachers that we made a mistake,” Dr. Hinojosa said. “As humans, as employees, whether we’re in the central office or out in the schools we are doing our very best to ensure that every teacher that deserves their incentive is getting it.”

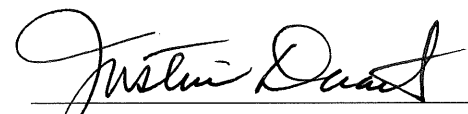
Chief Westbrook explained that teachers who cannot afford to pay back the stipend by December have the opportunity to reach out to the payroll department to discuss options, including potentially extending payments out over a longer period or filing for a 0% interest loan through the district’s SAFE loan program.


**5. Actions on Closed Session Items (9:04 PM)**

The Board took no action.

**6. Adjournment (9:05 PM)**

On a motion by Trustee Hodges, seconded by Trustee McDaniel, the Board unanimously adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.

  
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Justine Durant, President

  
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Rhonda Newhouse, Assistant Secretary

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