

**Harris County Department of Education
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
November 18, 2020**

The Harris County Board of School Trustees met in a regular board meeting on November 18, 2020 in the Board Room, at 6300 Irvington Boulevard, Houston, Texas. Eric Dick, Board President, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and declared a quorum present, that the meeting was duly called, and that notice of the meeting was posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Gov't. Code §551.041 and §551.051.

Board Members Present: Eric Dick, Board President; Danny Norris, Board Vice President; Richard Cantu; Andrea Duhon; Amy Hinojosa (via Zoom videoconference)

Board Members Absent: Mike Wolfe; Don Sumners

Board Attorney: Sarah Langlois

Administration: James Colbert, Jr., County School Superintendent; Jesus Amezcua, CPA, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services; and Jonathan Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support; CJ Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent for Education and Enrichment.

Danielle Bartz, Chief of Staff; Darlene Breaux, Director Research and Evaluation Institute; Lisa Caruthers, Director CASE for Kids; Danielle Clark, Chief Communications Officer; Jeff Drury, Director Choice Partners; Melissa Godbout, Board Secretary; Victor Keys, Principal AB West; Brenda Mullins, Director Curriculum and Compliance Services; Venita Peacock, Director Head Start; Gayla Rawlinson, Director Center for Grants Development; Natasha Truitt, Executive Director Human Resources; Rich Vela, Executive Director Facilities

Visitors: Greg Degyter

1. **Invocation** - Kristal Johnson, Center for Grants Development
2. **Pledge of Allegiance to the US flag** - Dr. Yi Ren, Research and Evaluation Institute
3. **Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag** - Dr. Yi Ren, Research and Evaluation Institute

4. **Open Forum** - Gov't Code 551.003 (5) - Public Participation. Pursuant to Policy BED (Local), a citizen who wishes to speak may do so by completing a participation request card available at the Board room at least 10 minutes prior to a regular Board meeting.

No public comments received.

5. **Reports and presentations:**

- A. **Annual Update from Research and Evaluation Institute** - Darlene Breaux, Director
- B. **Annual Update from Center for Grants Development** - Gayla Rawlinson, Director
- C. **Superintendent Monthly Report** - James Colbert, Jr.

Superintendent Colbert informed the Board that on November 6th HCDE put together a group of employees consisting of Mr. Parker, Ms. Bartz, Dr. Amezcua, himself, Mr. Cantu and 2 representatives from Precinct 2, to conduct a site visit in Georgetown, Texas for an equine therapy program called The ROCK (Ride on Center for Kids). He stated the group was able to take a tour of the very dynamic program. He stated it was a good opportunity to look at the program and see the different components and amount of work and effort put into the program. He stated that the Feasibility Committee will be meeting soon and formalizing a report before the next board meeting to decide if the program is something HCDE wants to pursue. Mr. Colbert acknowledged the Early Childhood Impact Fund of \$10,000,000 initiated by the Harris County Judge. He stated that Mr. Parker and Ms. Peacock attended an informational session along with about 156 people who are interested in those funds. He stated the Department is in the process of putting together a proposal to present to the County. He stated he hopes to earn the County's trust and show HCDE's ability to do good work for the citizens of Harris County with the funds. He stated the deadline was February 1st and HCDE anticipates being well ahead of the proposal deadline. Mr. Colbert acknowledged the HCDE mailer that has gone out throughout the County. He stated that 900,000 pamphlets will be going out to the citizens of the County to inform them of who HCDE is, what we do, the successes we've had, and how the Department has dealt with COVID-19. He stated he is looking forward to the potential impact the mailers will make and recognized the communications division for an excellent job of putting something together that HCDE can be proud of. Mr. Colbert recognized that HCDE was once again nominated as one of the top workplaces in greater Houston. He stated this was a great honor, as there were more than 3,000

companies that applied and only 130 made it to the second cut. He stated that a lot of the final ranking is based on employee surveys and acknowledged that HCDE had an 85% participation rate, compared to the average employee survey participation rate of 68%. He stated that last year HCDE finished in 24th place and this year we finished 13th. He stated there were a number of other companies recommended for the award and only 1 public employer finished higher than HCDE in its division of large companies and that he was proud of that. He stated that the surveys serve as an added benefit as a cultural and climate survey for HCDE to get a third-party perspective with very thorough and dynamic feedback. He stated the feedback has been very beneficial in the past and allows the executive leadership team to review the data and go out to the divisions and review it with them to find teachable moments to make the culture and climate even stronger than what it is. He stated that he is grateful to be a part of the organization that is well respected and has some of the finest educators he has ever worked with.

D. Report of the Board Feasibility Subcommittee - Richard Cantu

Richard Cantu stated the Board Feasibility Committee will be bringing forth a presentation regarding the possibility of HCDE partnering with Harris County Precinct 2 to develop an equine therapy program and center. He stated Commissioner Adrian Garcia is offering to provide the land and HCDE will be working out the details. He stated that the site visit to The ROCK was an eye opener as far as the possibilities and positive nature of equine therapy, not only for students at HCDE but also veterans in the community. He stated that he believes this is a great opportunity to partner with Harris County.

E. Other reports from Board members concerning attendance or participation in a board or HCDE-related conference, event, activity, or committee; accolades for an HCDE staff member or other deserving person.

Richard Cantu congratulated trustee elects David Brown and Erica Davis and stated that he was looking forward to them joining the board. He thanked Trustees Don Sumners and Mike Wolfe for their service on the board, and although there will be a bit of a void as far as experience, the passion of the board will make up for that going forward. He recognized Thelma Cantu, who served as an election judge on election day and thanked the HCDE staff for providing the support and accommodations to host the election day post at the HCDE Administration building. He recognized Ms. Carson and the facilities team for an outstanding job.

Andrea Duhon left the meeting at 1:54 p.m.

- F. **Presentation of 2021 Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) Award of Merit for Purchasing Operations** - Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services.

Andrea Duhon returned at 1:56 pm

- G. **Presentation of 2020 Annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award** - Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services.

- H. **Presentation on the Meritorious Budget Award ("MBA")** for excellence in the preparation and issuance of HCDE's Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Annual Budget Document.

- I. **Presentation on the Certificate of Excellence Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).**

- J. **Monthly Financial Reports through 10/31/2020** - Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services

Motion made by Danny Norris, seconded by Richard Cantu to approve all items on the consent agenda.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve all items on the consent agenda.

6. **ACTION ITEMS - CONSENSUS**

- A. Consider approval of the following Business Services items:

1. October Disbursement Report
2. Monthly Budget Amendment Report
3. Monthly Investment Report for October 2020

- B. Consider approval of the following Board Meeting Minutes:

1. 10-21-2020 Regular Board Meeting
2. 10-22-2020 Special Called Board Meeting

3. 10-30-2020 Special Called Board Meeting
- C. Consider ratification/approval of the following Interlocal Contract:
1. **Consider ratification of Interlocal (expenditure) contract for FY 2021 CASE for Kids Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center(s) Cycle 9**, Year 5 grant, in the aggregate amount of \$156,800 with the following entity: Clear Creek Independent School District in the amount of \$156,800 (82 students served).
- D. Consider approval of the following items for the HCDE Choice Partners Cooperative:
1. **Consider approval of a Contract Renewal option for job no. 18/011KC for Fleet Fuel Monitoring and Related Items with the following vendors:** MVC Technology LLC dba Fleet IQ (#18/011KC-01), Fleetcard, Inc. dba Impac Fleet (#18/011KC-02), and WEX Bank dba Wright Express FSC (#18/011KC-03) for the period 11/29/2020 through 11/28/2021.
 2. **Consider approval of a Contract Renewal option for job no. 18/015KC for Office Furniture and Related Items with the following vendors:** Carroll's Discount Office Furniture (#18/015KC-01); Stylex, Inc. (#18/015KC-05), and Velocity Office Products, LLC dba Velocity Business Products (#18/015KC-06) for the period 01/24/2021 through 01/23/2022.
 3. **Consider approval of a Contract Renewal option for job no. 20/014MR for Motor & Aviation Fuel, Alternative Fuels, Lubricants & Related Items with the following vendors:** R&C Distributors, LLC dba Blender Direct (#20/014MR-01); Liberty Equipment Sales, Inc. (#20/014MR-02); Petroleum Traders Corporation (#20/014MR-03), and Jaguar Fueling Services, LLC (20/014MR-04) for the period 01/15/2021 through 01/14/2022.
 4. **Consider approval to rescind Contract Award for 20/045KN-02 to Tech Data Corporation dba DLT Solutions, LLC.**, effective September 16, 2020 due to the vendor not accepting the standard terms and conditions.
 5. **Consider approval of HCDE Interlocal Agreements with:** Godley ISD, Godley, Texas; Bancroft, Cherry Hill, New Jersey; Muncie Community Schools, Muncie, Indiana; Sunnyslenn Children's Home, San Benito, Texas, and City of Port Arthur Type 4 Economic Development Corporation, Port Arthur, Texas.

E. Consider approval of the following items for Internal Purchasing:

1. **Consider approval of Contract Renewal option for job no. 17/015KJ for Architectural Design Services with the following vendor:** Swart Architects, Inc. for the period of 01/19/2021 through 01/18/2022.

2. **Consider approval of Contract Award for job no. 21/007IA for Professional Development Services for the Teaching and Learning Center with the following vendors:** A Yancy Life (Yancy Life Transition Center); AC Language School (Chavez & Associates); ACT, Inc.; Astrid Emily Francis; Athena Scholastic, LLC; BE GLAD LLC (Be GLAD LLC); Benchmark Education Company; Catapult Learning West, LLC; CDW Government LLC.; Collaborate With Christina; Conscious Education Consulting, LLC.; Corwin Press, Inc.; Dan St. Romain Educational Consulting, LLC; Danny Steele (Daniel J. Steele); EDU Specialist, LLC; Education Solutions Now, LLC; Emdin Support Services LLC; EZ Kids Creativity Shell; FACTS Education Solutions, LLC; Footsteps2Brilliance, Inc.; For the Culture Literacy Development; Frontiers Integrated (Llewellyn Carter); Gilberto D. Soto; GPR Ventures, LLC; Happy Chapters, LLC; Honor Moorman Consulting; Houston A+ Challenge; IdentiFIE Special Education, LLC; Ink International, Inc.; JJ's I'm Me Foundation; KH Literacy Education LLC; Lakeshore Equipment Company dba Lakeshore Learning Materials; Leaps and Bounds Tutorials; Melody House Inc.; New Teacher Center; Nichelle Pinkney dba The Urban Scholar; Niroga Institute; Nylinka School Solutions; PositiveKids Today dba Culture Cre8ion, LLC; Principal Kafele Consulting, LLC; Resources Inspiring Success and Empowering; Scholastic Inc.; Storytellin' Time; Susan Everett; TechStudio LLC; The Educator's School Safety Network; Thinking Maps, Inc.; and Writers in the Schools for the period of 12/1/2020 through 11/30/2021.

3. **Consider approval of a Contract Renewal option for job no. 17/017LB for Head Start Substitute Teachers and Teacher Assistants with the following vendor:** Zenith Learning, for the period 01/19/2021 through 01/18/2022.

4. **Consider approval of Contract Award option for job no. 21/004IA for CASE for Kids Youth Services for Afterschool and Summer with the following vendors:** 4.0 GPA LLC; A Yancy Life Transition Center; Above and Beyond Learning Inc.; Abundance Educational Consulting, LLC; AC Language School (Chavez & Associates, Inc.); After School To Achieve; The Artist Boat, Inc.; Bayou City Fencing Academy, Inc.; Be A Champion, Inc.; Culture of Health-Advancing Together (CHAT);

Children Come Click Education & Technology Center (CCC); Children's Museum Houston; Collaborate with Christina; Committee for Children; Dance Another World; DK High Steppers; EdTech Games, LLC; Exalted Arts Corporation; Expressions Productions; For The Children Consulting; Girls Inc. of Greater Houston; Girls on the Run Greater Houston; GPR Ventures, LLC; Houston: reVision; iMPACT 360; J Dorthen Martin, Speaker, Life Coach, Image Consultant; JJ's I'm Me Foundation; KEW Learning Academy; Konnecting the Dots Developmental Institute; Little Birdies Mobile Golf Academy; M.E.N. (Mentoring, Edcating & Nurturing) Incorporated; Mad Science of Houston; Math-A-Matics Tutoring, LLC; Niroga Institute; PowerUp Fitness, LLC; Recipe for Success Foundation; Resources Inspiring Success and Empowering; Ripple Effects, Inc.; Science of Sport; South Region Driving School, LLC; The Village Education Solutions; World Youth Foundations, Inc.; Writers in the Schools; YMCA of Greater Houston; Young Audiences, Inc. of Houston; Young Rembrandts; and Youth Enrichments for the period 12/01/2020 through 11/30/2021.

5. **Consider approval of Contract Renewal option for job no. 17/043KJ for Adolescent Recovery Support & Counseling Services for HCDE's Fortis Academy with the following vendor: The Turning Point, Inc.** and approval of contract for a program cost of \$206,440 for the period of 12/01/2020 through 11/30/2021.

6. **Consider approval to add additional job number under CH Local FY 2021** for the following vendor: Kaplan Early Learning Company - job no.17/046MR. The vendor was previously approved under CH Local at the August 19, 2020 Board meeting; the only modification requested is to add an additional job number for this vendor.

F. Consider approval of the following Revenue Agreements:

1. **Consider ratification of Interlocal (revenue) contracts for FY 2021 in the aggregate amount of \$500,913 with Academic and Behavior School East** with the following districts: Dickinson ISD for five (5) out of-county annual contracts in the amount of \$119,265 (\$23,853 each); Santa Fe ISD for three (3) out of-county annual contracts in the amount of \$71,559 (\$23,853 each); and Texas City ISD for thirteen (13) out of-county annual contracts in the amount of \$310,089 for the contract period of 08/24/2020 through 06/03/2021.

2. **Consider ratification of Interlocal (revenue) contracts for FY 2021 in the aggregate amount of \$419,610 with Academic and Behavior School West** with the following districts: Conroe ISD for fifteen (15) out of-county annual

contracts in the amount of \$357,795 (\$23,853 each); and Cypress Fairbanks ISD for three (3) in-county annual contracts in the amount of \$61,815 (\$20,605 each) for the contract period of 08/24/2020 through 06/03/2021.

3. **Consider ratification of a grant totaling \$1,500,000 from the Texas Education Agency for CASE for Kids' Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center(s)** Cycle 10, Year 3 grant for the period 08/01/2020 through 07/31/2021; CASE for Kids anticipates serving 975 students with these grant funds.
4. **Consider ratification of Interlocal (revenue) contract for FY2020 in the aggregate amount of \$16,749 with Academic and Behavior School West with the following district:** Conroe ISD for three (3) out-of-county extended (summer) school year contracts in the amount of \$16,749 (\$5,583 each) for the contract period of 6/9/2020 through 7/16/2020.

7. **ACTION ITEMS - NON-CONSENSUS**

A. **Consider second reading and final approval of the following revised local policies:**

- a. BDAA (Local)
- b. BDF (Local)

Motion made by Danny Norris, seconded by Andrea Duhon to approve revised policies BDAA (Local) and BDF (Local) as recommended by the policy committee.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

B. **Consider first reading of the following revised local policies:**

- a. BF (Local)
- b. DED (Local)
- c. DMD (Local)
- d. FD (Local)
- e. FFG (Local)
- f. FFG (Exhibit)
- g. FNG (Local)
- h. GF (Local)

No action taken

- C. **Consider selection of the architect for the Coolwood Head Start project, based on demonstrated competence and qualifications, pursuant to RFQ #20/043IA**, and authorize the Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute the contract for a fair and reasonable price. The recommended architect for this project is English + Associates Architects, Inc. This project will be funded through a projected submission of a Head Start Grant to the US Dept of Health and Human Services.

Motion made by Danny Norris, seconded by Andrea Duhon to approve English + Associates Architects, Inc. as the architect for the Coolwood Head Start project, based on demonstrated competence and qualifications, pursuant to RFQ #20/043IA, and to authorize the Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute the contract for a fair and reasonable price.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

- D. **Consider approval to submit a Construction Application for Disaster Relief funds to replace the Coolwood Head Start facility** in the amount not to exceed \$9,500,000 to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Head Start (OHS). This application will include a request to waive the non-federal share match.

Motion made by Andrea Duhon, seconded by Danny Norris to approve to submit a Construction Application for Disaster Relief funds to replace the Coolwood Head Start facility in the amount not to exceed \$9,500,000 to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Head Start (OHS). This application will include a request to waive the non-federal share match.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

- E. **Discussion of potential proposal concerning payment of teacher supplies** (agenda item requested by President Dick).

Discussion only. No action taken.

The board entered into Closed Session at 2:30 p.m.

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** Under the Texas Government Code pursuant to any and all purposes permitted by Sections 551.001-551.084, including, but not limited to: 551.071; 551.072; 551.074

- A. Deliberation regarding purchase, exchange, or value of real property
- B. Deliberate possible action to terminate ABS East teacher's Chapter 21 probationary contract, for good cause as determined by the Board; obtain legal advice regarding same.
- C. **EMPLOYMENT:**
Senior Director – Schools
- D. Deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline and/or dismissal of HCDE employees, including, without limitation, the evaluation of the superintendent.

The board entered into Open Session at 3:21 p.m.

- 9. **RECONVENE** for possible action on items discussed in executive session
 - A. Consider and Approve Purchase of Approximately 0.449 Acres of Real Property and Improvements Known as the Coolwood Head Start Center for Future Campus and/or Other Department Facilities and Delegate Authority to Superintendent Related to the Purchase.

Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by Andrea Duhon to approve the purchase of approximately 0.449 acres, more or less, of real property and improvements currently known as the Coolwood Head Start Center for a future campus and/or other Department facilities for a purchase price not to exceed \$207,000.00 plus closing costs and delegate authority to the Superintendent or his designee to contract for due diligence professional services and negotiate, execute, amend, and/or terminate any agreements and closing documents related to the purchase, as discussed in closed session.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve the purchase of approximately 0.449 acres, more or less, of real property and improvements currently known as the Coolwood Head Start Center for a future campus and/or other Department facilities for a purchase price not to exceed \$207,000.00 plus closing costs and delegate authority to the Superintendent or his designee to contract for due diligence professional services and negotiate, execute, amend, and/or terminate any agreements and closing documents related to the purchase, as discussed in closed session.

- B. Consider action to terminate ABS East teacher's Chapter 21 probationary contract, for good cause as determined by the Board.

Motion made by Danny Norris, seconded by Richard Cantu to terminate Ramona Kolacz's Chapter 21 probationary employment contract, for good cause as determined by the Board, and to authorize the Superintendent or his designee to inform Ms. Kolaca of this action as required by applicable law and policy.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to terminate Ramona Kolacz's Chapter 21 probationary employment contract, for good cause as determined by the Board, and to authorize the Superintendent or his designee to inform Ms. Kolacz of this action as required by applicable law and policy.

C. EMPLOYMENT:

Senior Director – Schools

Motion made by Danny Norris, seconded by Richard Cantu to approve employment for the following position:

Senior Director - Schools

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

10. Discussion and possible action regarding future agenda items

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Human Resources Information Items

B. Employee Count

C. Schools Division Enrollment Report for October 2020

E. Revenue contracts less than \$50,000 (Cumulative total \$219,397)

- Between School-Based Therapy Services and Greater Gulf Coast Cooperative, Physical and Music therapy, \$23,940
- Between School-Based Therapy Services and Conroe ISD, Music Therapy, \$4,788
- Between School-Based Therapy Services and Waller ISD, Music and Occupational Therapy, \$16,388
- Between Teaching Learning Center and Varnett Public School, "Just in Time Coaching", \$4,500
- Between Teaching Learning Center and Sheldon ISD, "Culturally Responsive Teaching", \$1,800

- Between Teaching Learning Center and New Caney ISD, "Improving Instruction/Coaching Teachers in Content", \$7,500
- Between School Division and Liberty ISD, Student contract, \$47,706
- Between School Division and Galveston ISD, Student contract, \$23,859
- Between School Division and KIPP Texas Public School, Student contract, \$41,210
- Between School Division and New Caney ISD, Student contract, \$47,706

F. **Expenditure Interlocal contracts less than \$50,000**

- Between School Division and Region 4, "Class Observations", \$7,150
- Between CASE and Spring Branch ISD, "CASE for Kids Debates", \$8,000
- Between CASE and YES Public Schools - Bryan Oaks, CASE for Kids Debates, \$4,000
- Between CASE and Sheldon ISD, CASE for Kids Debates, \$4,000
- Between CASE and YES Public Schools-Southeast, CASE for Kids Debates, \$4,000
- Between CASE and Goose Creek ISD, CASE for Kids Debates, \$8,000

G. **Non-monetary contracts for FY 2021**

- Between School-Based Therapy Services and University of Texas at Tyler - Education Experiences
- Between Schools Division and Houston Humane Society - Vocational practice skills (MOU)
- Between Head Start and La Porte ISD - Comprehensive services for 3 and 4 year olds (MOU)
- Adult Education and Houston Methodist Research Institute - Location for Educational & Vocational Training

- I. **Submission of grant application to State Farm via the Education Foundation of Harris County in the amount of \$40,568 to support the Center for Safe and Secure Schools Connection Matters: Equity & Advocacy Program, which includes: 1) Restorative Discipline Train-the-Trainer; 2) Youth Leadership Training and 3) a School Equity Symposium. Funds will serve up to 175 adults and 375 students.**

12. **ADJOURN** - Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 16, 2020, Board Room, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas, 77022, at 1:00 p.m.

Motion made by Danny Norris, seconded by Richard Cantu to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary