

**Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 15, 2021**

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The Harris County Board of School Trustees met in regular session on September 15, 2021, in the Board Room, at 6300 Irvington Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77022. Danny Norris, 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:** Danny Norris, Board President; Richard Cantu, First Vice President; Andrea Duhon, Second Vice President; David Brown; Erica Davis; Eric Dick; and Amy Hinojosa

**Board Members Absent:** None

**Board Attorney:** Sarah Langlois

**Administration:** James Colbert, Jr., County School Superintendent; Jesus Amezcua, CPA, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services; Jonathan Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support; C.J. Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent for Education & Enrichment; Venetia Baldwin, Board Secretary; Danielle Bartz, Chief of Staff; Joe Carreon, Director Construction; Lisa Caruthers, Director CASE for Kids; Danielle Clark, Chief Communications Officer; Jeff Drury, Director Choice Partners Cooperative; Dave Einsel, Director Communications and Creative Services; Kendra Jackson, Director Purchasing; Victor Keys, Principal Academic Behavior School West; Charles Ned, Senior Director of Schools; Travita Godfrey, Principal Fortis Academy; Venetia Peacock, Senior Director Head Start; Stephanie Ross, Director Adult Education; Natasha Truitt, Executive Director Human Resources; Rich Vela, Executive Director Facilities; Lidia Zatopek, Director Educator Certification and Professional Advancement

**Visitors:** None

**Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 15, 2021**

1. **Invocation** - Charlotte Manning, Information Technology Services
2. **Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag** - Taneeka Henderson, Information Technology Services
3. **Pledge of Allegiance to the US flag** - Taneeka Henderson, Information Technology Services
4. **Public Hearing** for the purpose of considering the proposed Tax Rate of \$0.004990 per \$100 assessed property value for Tax Year 2021 (Fiscal Year 2021-2022). The no-new-revenue-rate (NRRR) has been calculated at \$0.004807 per \$100 assessed property value. The recommended tax rate is below the voter approval rate (VAR) of \$0.005202.

*No one from the public requested to speak during the public hearing.*

5. **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 one from the public requested to speak during the open forum portion of the meeting.*

6. **Reports and presentations**

- A. **Employee of the Month** - Natasha Truitt, Executive Director of Human Resources

*Natasha Truitt introduced the September 2021 HCDE Employee of the Month, Patches K. Mohammed, Educational Aide at Academic & Behavior School (ABS) West. HCDE Communications showed a brief video about Ms. Mohammed's role at ABS West and her community contributions.*

- B. **Superintendent Monthly Report** - James Colbert, Jr.

*Mr. Colbert gave an update regarding HCDE's response to Tropical Storm Nicholas, mentioning early dismissal on September 13, 2021 and closure of HCDE on September 14, 2021 to ensure staff safety. He gave special recognition to Payroll staff members Deanna Garcia and Yolanda Davis who worked late on the early dismissal day to ensure employees experienced no payroll interruptions.*

*Mr. Colbert announced that he and the Board would attend the 2021 Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)/Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Conference in Dallas, Texas, a conference specifically for Texas school boards, in September. He also mentioned the TASA Midwinter Conference, which is geared toward educators, leadership teams and office staff, and occurs in January. He offered special recognition to Communications for its role in organizing the virtual 2021 HCDE Convocation. He also thanked staff in the equine development program at Barrett Station. Mr. Colbert gave the Board appreciation awards from the 2021 HCDE Convocation and thanked them for helping secure FY22 raises and equity adjustments for HCDE employees.*

- C. **Annual Division Update on Technology** - Lowell Ballard, Director of Information Technology Services

**Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 15, 2021**

*Andrea Duhon exited the room at 1:37 pm.*

- D. **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.

*Mr. Cantu acknowledged the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month and mentioned that Hispanic residents make up 43% of Houston's population and 44% of Harris County's population. He noted Hispanic trailblazers in education, Dr. Viola Garcia, current President of the National School Boards Association, and Tina Reyes, a former Board member of the Houston Independent School District and the first Houston Hispanic School Board trustee.*

*Andrea Duhon returned at 1:40 pm.*

*Erica Davis thanked Richard Cantu and Amy Hinojosa for their Board Service, in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month.*

*Danny Norris announced that Julia Andrews, Director of HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools, was recently sworn in as President of the Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators (HAABSE).*

- E. **Report of Board Committees - Committee Chairs**

*There were no reports.*

- F. **Monthly Financial Reports through 08/31/2021 - Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services**

- G. **Presentation of 2021 Annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award - Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services.**

*Dr. Amezcua announced that HCDE is a winner of the 2021 Annual Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award and the only organization to receive the award in the State of Texas. The award is given to public and non-profit agencies that demonstrate a commitment to procurement excellence and embrace innovation, professionalism, productivity, leadership, and e-Procurement.*

*Amy Hinojosa requested to move Agenda Item 7.C.3. to the non-consensus agenda.*

*Motion made by David Brown, seconded by Andrea Duhon, to approve all items under the consensus agenda with the exception of Agenda Item 7.C.3.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve all items under the consensus agenda, with the exception of Agenda Item 7.C.3.*

7. **ACTION ITEMS – CONSENSUS**

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

1. Disbursement Report
2. Budget Amendment Report

**Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 15, 2021**

3. Monthly Investment Report for August 2021
- B. Consider ratification/approval of the following Board Meeting Minutes:
1. 08/13/2021 Governmental Relations Committee Meeting
  2. 08/18/2021 Board Meeting
- C. Consider ratification/approval of the following grant awards:
1. **Approval to submit a budget revision grant request application in the amount of \$23,167.60 to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Head Start (OHS) to purchase SPOT vision instruments and supplies to conduct required hearing screening for infants and toddlers; Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships award notice 06HP000311.**
  2. **Acceptance of funds from the Dallas College Foundation (DCF) and the Center for Transforming Alternative Preparation Pathways (STAPP) for the Educator Certification and Advancement (ECA) division for a three-year CTAPP Transformation Fellowship Project in the amount of \$150,000 (\$50,000 per year) for the period of 08/01/2021 through 07/30/2024.**
- D. Consider ratification/approval of the following Interlocal Contracts:
1. **Approval of Interlocal (revenue) contracts for FY 2022 for Therapy Services in the aggregate amount of \$5,422,851 with School-Based Therapy Services with the following districts: Houston ISD (1501 students served in FY20) in the amount of \$2,375,575; KIPP Texas Public Schools - Houston (30 students served in FY20) in the amount of \$52,426; Cypress-Fairbanks ISD (1593 students served in FY20) in the amount of \$2,823,116; Barbers Hill ISD (58 students served in FY20) in the amount of \$98,952; and Dayton ISD (44 students served in FY20) in the amount of \$72,782.**
  2. **Approval of Interlocal (revenue) contracts for FY 2022 in the aggregate amount of \$396,874 with Academic and Behavior School East with the following districts: Pasadena ISD for ten (10) in-county annual contracts in the amount of \$206,050 (\$20,605 each); Texas City ISD for eight (8) out-of-county annual contracts in the amount of \$190,824 (\$23,853 each); for the contract period of 08/23/2021 through 06/03/2022.**
  3. **Approval of Interlocal (revenue) contracts for FY 2022 in the aggregate amount of \$95,412 with Academic and Behavior School West with the following district(s): Brenham ISD for four (4) out-of-county annual contracts in the amount of \$95,412 (\$23,853 each) for the contract period of 08/23/2021 through 06/03/2022.**
- E. Consider ratification/approval of the following items for the HCDE Choice Partners Cooperative:
1. **Approval of HCDE Interlocal Agreements with: Vision for Living Community Outreach, Houston, Texas; Trinity Episcopal Church, Houston, Texas; Communities in Schools of the South Plains, Inc., Lubbock, Texas; Guadalupe County, Seguin, Texas; Boyd ISD, Boyd, Texas; Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan-Signature Only., and Greece Central**

**Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 15, 2021**

School District, Rochester, New York - Signature Only.

**F. Consider ratification/approval of the following items for Internal Purchasing:**

1. **Approval to increase the allowable maximum contract amount under CH Local FY 2021 for Butler Business Products, (job #s, 18/060JN-03, 20/002KD-02, 15/039KC-02, 20/004KD-01, 20/005KD-02, 18/075KD-04, 19/033MJ-04, 20/008KD-01, 16/011MP-02, 16/057KC-04, 19/025KD-01, original amount \$380,000), requesting new total amount of \$442,000 (increase of \$62,000), Humble ISD, (Interlocal contract, original amount of \$160,000), requesting new total amount of \$172,000 (increase of \$12,000), and SOA Fin 1st, (job no. 20/019KJ, original amount of \$80,000), requesting new total amount of \$99,300 (increase of \$19,300).**
2. **Approval of Contract Award for job no. 21/056YR-02 Short Term Vocational Training Programs for Harris County Department of Education Adult Education Division with the following proposer(s): Academy of World Education, LLC; Brandon E. Martin dba BEM Solutions, LLC; and Business101 Consultants & Trainers, LLC for the period of 09/15/2021 through 09/14/2026, subject to annual appropriations of funding.**

**G. Consider ratification/approval of the following Revenue Agreements:**

1. **Approval of Certification Contribution Agreement (revenue) between the HCDE CASE for Kids Division and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board for the period of 10/01/2021 through 09/30/2022. HCDE will certify \$1,500,000 in after-school program expenditures to receive matching funds from the Gulf Coast Workforce Board for CASE Quality Improvement programming in the amount of \$1,753,386.**
2. **Approval of Service Agreement (revenue) with United Way of Greater Houston for CASE for KIDS to provide quality support and training services on Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) for the Out 2 Learn Network of after-school programs in Harris County for the period of 09/16/2021 through 9/15/2022 in an amount of \$97,000.**

**8. ACTION ITEMS - NON-CONSENSUS**

**7.C.3. Approval of the First Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding between HCDE and the Education Foundation of Harris County relating to HCDE's Partners in Education Project and Tools for Teachers Program to approve an additional 1,013 \$100 credit for Harris County ISD teachers to use to purchase classroom supplies and delegate authority to the Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute said amendment.**

*Motion made by Andrea Duhon, seconded by Richard Cantu, for approval of the First Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding between HCDE and the Education Foundation of Harris County relating to HCDE's Partners in Education Project and Tools for Teachers Program to approve an additional 1,013 \$100 credit for Harris County ISD teachers to use to purchase classroom supplies and delegate authority to the Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute said amendment.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

**Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 15, 2021**

- A. **Consider a proposed Tax Rate of \$0.004990 per \$100 assessed property value for Tax Year 2021 (Fiscal Year 2021-2022).** The NNRR (no-new-revenue rate) has been calculated at \$0.004807 per \$100 assessed property value. The recommended tax rate is below the VAR (voter approval rate) of \$0.005202. If approved, the proposed tax rate will not require additional public hearings and notices.

*Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by David Brown, to approve a proposed Tax Rate of \$0.004990 per \$100 assessed property value for Tax Year 2021 (Fiscal Year 2021-2022).*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

- B. **Approval of HCDE's contract for delinquent tax collection with Linebarger, Goggan, Blair and Sampson, LLP:** The term of the contract shall commence upon the execution of all parties and remain in effect through 06/30/2022 and may renew with mutual agreement of the parties for a one (1) year term, for a maximum period of one (1) renewal period.

*Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by Amy Hinojosa, to approve HCDE's contract for delinquent tax collection with Linebarger, Goggan, Blair and Sampson, LLP. The term of the contract shall commence upon the execution of all parties and remain in effect through 06/30/2022 and may renew with mutual agreement of the parties for a one (1) year term, for a maximum period of one (1) renewal period.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

- C. **Adopt resolution regarding conveyance of sidewalk easement at ABS East** to the City of Houston, Texas. (This legal action is necessary to obtain building permit to proceed with the construction of the PFC Project).

*Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by Andrea Duhon, to adopt resolution regarding conveyance of sidewalk easement at ABS East to the City of Houston, Texas. (This legal action is necessary to obtain building permit to proceed with the construction of the PFC Project).*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

- D. **Adopt resolution regarding conveyance of sanitary sewer easement at ABS East** to the Church of God (adjacent property owner tied to existing sewer line). (This legal action is necessary to obtain building permit to proceed with the construction of the PFC Project).

*Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by David Brown, to adopt resolution regarding conveyance of sanitary sewer easement at ABS East to the Church of God (adjacent property owner tied to existing sewer line). (This legal action is necessary to obtain building permit to proceed with the construction of the PFC Project).*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

- E. **Ratification of Service Agreement with The Council on Recovery under job no. 21/066DR to provide Adolescent Recovery Support & Counseling Services** for the period of 09/01/2021 through 08/30/2022 in the amount not to exceed \$240,000.

*Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by David Brown, to ratify Service Agreement with The Council on Recovery under job no. 21/066DR to provide Adolescent Recovery Support & Counseling Services for the period of 09/01/2021 through 08/30/2022 in the amount not to*

**Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 15, 2021**

*exceed \$240,000.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

- F. **Approval of the AIA B105 Contract with Johnston LLC (RFQ #20/043IA) to provide engineering and architectural services for the Conference Center Upgrades for the period of 09/15/2021 to 02/04/2022 in an amount not to exceed \$54,500.**

*Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by Amy Hinojosa, to approve the AIA B105 Contract with Johnston LLC (RFQ #20/043IA) to provide engineering and architectural services for the Conference Center Upgrades for the period of 09/15/2021 to 02/04/2022 in an amount not to exceed \$54,500.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

- G. **Approval of a Contract Award for job no. 21/0671A for Property and Casualty Insurance with the following vendor: McGriff, Seibels & Williams of Texas, Inc. in an estimated amount of \$597,380.64 for the period of 10/01/2021 through 09/30/2022.**

*Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by Amy Hinojosa, to approve a Contract Award for job no. 21/0671A for Property and Casualty Insurance with the following vendor: McGriff, Seibels & Williams of Texas, Inc. in an estimated amount of \$597,380.64 for the period of 10/01/2021 through 09/30/2022.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

- H. **Consideration and possible action regarding the disposal of the house located on 629 King Street property**

*Motion made by Andrea Duhon, seconded by Erica Davis, to find that it is in the best interest of HCDE to demolish the house located at 629 King Street.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to find that it is in the best interest of HCDE to demolish the house located at 629 King Street.*

- I. **Approval to reschedule regular December board meeting to December 8, 2021.**

*Motion made by David Brown, seconded by Amy Hinojosa, to approve to reschedule regular December board meeting to December 8, 2021.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to approve.*

*The Board entered Executive Session at 2:34 p.m.*

9. **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; 551.074

*The Board entered into Open Session at 3:52 p.m.*

- A. **Deliberate** the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline and/or dismissal of HCDE employees.

Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
September 15, 2021

B. **Deliberate** the purchase, exchange, sale and/or value of real property(ies) and obtain legal advice regarding the same.

10. **RECONVENE** for possible action on items discussed in executive session

11. **Discussion and possible action regarding future agenda items**

*Andrea Duhon requested a future agenda item to discuss HCDE staff using COVID-19 leave days if their children test positive for COVID-19.*

12. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

A. **Personnel**

B. **Employee Count**

C. **Submission of proposal request to the Bureau of Justice Assistance of \$585,982** over three years to support the Center for Safe and Secure Schools comprehensive STOP (Student, Teacher and Officers Prevention) School Violence program.

D. **The CASE for Kids Division announced the County Connections Youth Summer Initiative 2021 awards to not-for-profit organizations funded by Harris County.** Precint2gether, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, was awarded \$20,000 to provide summer programming at eight sites in Harris County Commissioner Precinct Two from 06/14/2021 to 08/15/2021.

13. **ADJOURN** - Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

*Motion made by David Brown, seconded by Andrea Duhon, to adjourn.*

*Motion passes with 7-0 voting to adjourn the meeting.*

*The meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.*

  
James Colbert, Jr.  
County School Superintendent

  
Danny Norris  
Board President

  
Richard Cantu  
Board Vice President