

**Harris County Department of Education  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
December 18, 2024**

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The Harris County Board of School Trustees met in regular session on December 18, 2024, in the Board Room, at 6300 Irvington Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77022. Amy Hinojosa, Board President, called the meeting to order at 1:01 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:** Amy Hinojosa, Board President; David Brown, First Vice President; Andrea Duhon; Richard Cantu; Eric Dick; and John McGee

**Board Members Absent:** Erica Davis, Second Vice President

**Board Attorney:** Sarah Langlois

**Administration:** James Colbert, Jr., County School Superintendent; Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services; Jonathan Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support; C.J. Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent for Education & Enrichment; Joyce Akins, Director Center for Grants Development; Danielle Bartz, Chief of Staff; Jessica Bermea, Executive Assistant Board to Trustees; Lisa Caruthers, Senior Director, CASE for Kids; Danielle Clark, Chief Communications Officer; Carie Crabb, Senior Director, School Based Therapy Services; Stephanie De Los Santos, Director Client Engagement; Jeff Drury, Director, Choice Partners; Leslie Edwards-Ethridge, Director, Center for Safe and Secure Schools; Chris Hoesel, Director Information Technology; Eduardo Honold, Senior Director Adult Education; Edna Johnson, Director Purchasing; Marcia Leiva, Chief Accounting Officer; Charles Ned, Senior Director Schools; Margaret Patton, Director Compliance and Curriculum Services; Venetia Peacock, Senior Director, Head Start; Yolanda Pyrtle, Director Research and Evaluation Institute; Lindsey Sanders, Director Communications and Creative Services; Andrea Seagraves, Senior Director, Center for Educator Success; Dr. Tyrone Sylvester, Executive Director, Human Resources; Trina Silva, Education Foundation Community Development Director; Dr. Michelle Willaims, Executive Director Facilities

**Visitors:** None.

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1. **Invocation** - Janice Owolabi, Specialist School Safety & Security, Center for Safe and Secure Schools
2. **Pledge of Allegiance to the US flag** - Jasmine Trier, Site Coordinator, CASE for Kids
3. **Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag** - Jasmine Trier, Site Coordinator, CASE for Kids
4. **Open Forum** - Gov't Code 551.007 - 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.

*None.*

### 5. **REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

#### A. **Employee of the Month** - Dr. Tyrone Sylvester, Executive Director of Human Resources

*Dr. Sylvester presented the December Employee of the Month, Bernice Valenzuela, Manager, School Based Therapy Services. Communications showed a brief video regarding her role and impact.*

*Trustee Eric Dick entered the board meeting at 1:07 p.m.*

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

*Superintendent Colbert reported that two HCDE retreats occurred the prior week. The first retreat was the Board of Trustees Retreat, wherein the Board reviewed the potential impacts to public education for this upcoming legislative session, updated the Board Operating Procedures, and discussed new initiatives. The Executive Leadership Team Retreat occurred a few days after the Board Retreat and consisted of reviewing every HCDE program assessing each program's progress and discussing how to continue moving each program forward. Lastly, Superintendent Colbert emphasized how proud he is to serve as the Superintendent of Harris County Department of Education and that he feels fortunate and blessed to work with people he loves and to represent an organization that he cares about.*

#### C. **Annual Division Update** – Leslie Edwards-Ethridge, Division Director, Center for Safe and Secure Schools

*Trustee Eric Dick exited the board room at 1:18 p.m. and returned at 1:25 p.m.*

#### D. **Annual Division Update** – Lisa Caruthers, Senior Division Director, CASE for Kids

#### 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.

Board President Hinojosa shared that it was her and Trustee Duhon's five-year anniversary of the first oath they took to serve on the board of Harris County Department of Education. Board President Hinojosa expressed that she loves to serve and feels

honored serving at an organization that helps people. Trustee Duhon shared that it felt amazing to support staff and administration who help people every day.

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

None.

*Trustee Duhon exited the board room at 1:55 p.m. and returned to the board room at 1:58 p.m.*

**G. Monthly Financial Reports through 11/30/2024 - Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services**

*Trustee Cantu requested that agenda item C.1 be removed from the Consensus Agenda.*

*Motion made by Trustee McGee, seconded by Trustee Dick to approve all items under the Consensus Agenda except item C.1.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve all items under the Consensus Agenda with the exception of item C.1.*

**6. ACTION ITEMS - CONSENSUS**

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

1. Disbursement Report
2. Budget Amendment Report
3. Monthly Investment Report for November 2024

**B. Consider ratification / approval of the following Board Meeting Minutes:**

1. November 20, 2024 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
2. November 20, 2024 Special Called Board Meeting Minutes

**D. Consider approval of the following Interlocal Contracts:**

1. **Consider approval of Interlocal (Revenue) Agreement for Center for Safe and Secure Schools Division with Beaumont ISD to conduct Safety Audits from 12/18/2024 through 06/30/2026, for an amount not to exceed \$63,608, servicing 29 sites in three phases.**
2. **Consider approval of the Services Interlocal Agreement (Revenue) with Cypress-Fairbanks ISD and the Center for Safe and Secure Schools Division for Intruder Audits from 02/01/2025 through 06/30/2025, for an amount not to exceed \$18,571, servicing 35 sites in one phase.**

**E. Consider approval of the following items for the HCDE Choice Partners Cooperative:**

1. **Consider approval of the Contract Award for job no. 25/006SG for Early Childhood Supplies and Related Items for the period of 12/18/2024 through 12/17/2025 with**

**the following vendors:** Butler Business Products (25/006SG-01); Discount School Supply (25/006SG-02); Gopher Sport, Gopher Performance, Moving Minds, Play with a Purpose, STEM-Supplies (25/006SG-03); Hand2mind, Inc (25/006SG-04); Learning Beyond Paper, Inc. (25/006SG-06); Nasco (25/006SG-07); Pyramid School Products (25/006SG-08); School Health Corporation (25/006SG-09); Teacher Created Materials (25/006SG-11); and Teaching Strategies, LLC (25/006SG-12).

2. **Consider approval of HCDE Interlocal agreements with:** Alice ISD, Alice, Texas; Brushy Creek MUD, Round Rock, Texas; Chris Howell Foundation, Dallas, Texas; De Witt County, Cuero, Texas; Erath County, Stephenville, Texas; Evadale ISD, Evadale, Texas; Marathon ISD, Marathon, Texas; Parker County Hospital District, Weatherford, Texas; Scottsdale Unified School District, Scottsdale, Arizona; and Unified School District No. 512 - Shawnee Mission School District, Johnson County, Kansas.

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

1. **Consider approval of Contract Award for Job No. 24/037DR-3 Advisors, Coaches, Consultants, Counselors, Speakers and Trainers for the period of 01/01/2025 through 12/31/2030 to the proposers offering the best value to HCDE and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal:** Axiom Learning, Inc; Brandy Sharber Consulting LLC; YPSOURCE LLC dba Coble Studios; Houston Career Readiness Academy; OUTREACH STRATEGISTS, LLC; The Lincoln Center for Family and Youth; and Jessica Faith Carter dba The Parent Teacher Collaborative.
2. **Consider approval of Contract Award for Job No. 25/004TD for Tidwell Head Start Site Clearing and Playground Surface Installation to EMA Sport Solutions in the amount of \$272,700 and delegate authority to HCDE Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute a construction contract.**
3. **Consider approval of Contract Award for Job No. 25/005TD for LaPorte Head Start Site Clearing and Playground Surface Installation to EMA Sport Solutions in the amount of \$308,900 and delegate authority to HCDE Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute a construction contract.**
4. **Consider approval of Contract Award for Job No. No. 25/008TD for Event Spaces and Venues for the period of 12/19/2024 through 12/18/2029 to the proposers offering the best value to HCDE and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal:** Broadway Bound Youth Musical Theatre Company/MVE; Cypress Fairbanks ISD dba Berry Center; Houston Marriot Westchase; The Kingdom Builders' Center of Houston, TX Inc; Bethel Family Baptist Church; SW Party and Events; and T&L Event Center LLC.
5. **Consider approval of Contract Award for Job No. 25/007IA for Local Food and Catering Services, for the period of 01/01/2025 through 12/31/2030 to the proposers offering the best value to HCDE and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal:** Burrito District, LLC; Cajun Smoke Creole Soul LLC; Chef MD Catering, LLC; Event Catering Houston, LLC; Houston Catering Concepts (Voss Catering Inc.); Hungry's Woodway Kitchen and Bar; La Brisa Ice Cream; and Tiffs Treats Cookies.

6. **Consider approval of Contract Award for Job No. 25/001EJ for Instructional and Reading Materials for the period of 12/18/2024 through 12/17/2029 to the proposers offering the best value to HCDE and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal:** A to Z Books, LLC; Sparking Creativity; Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Inc; Beable Education, Inc; GL Group, Inc., dba Booksource; CBM LLC dba Cherry Lake Publishing; Tiffany R. Crout dba Imagiread; IXL Learning, Inc; KAMICO Instructional Media, Inc; Lakeshore Learning Materials, LLC Lakeshore Parent, LLC; McGraw Hill LLC; n2y, LLC; Pearson Education INC; Pioneer Valley Educational Press; PITSCO Education; Positive Promotions; Renaissance Learning, Inc; Rosetta Stone Ltd; Gateway Education Holdings, LLC dba Savvas Learning Company LLC; Scholastic Inc; The Discovery Source; The Reading Warehouse Inc; Wieser Educational, Inc; and Zaner-Bloser, Inc.

7. ACTION ITEMS - NON-CONSENSUS

**C.1. Consider ratification of STOP (Federal) Grant from the Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Assistance in the amount of \$930,947 for the period of 10/01/2024 through 09/30/2027.**

*Motion made by Trustee Cantu, seconded by Trustee McGee to ratify the STOP (Federal) Grant from the Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Assistance in the amount of \$930,947 for the period of 10/01/2024 through 09/30/2027.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to ratify.*

1. **Consider approval of Services Agreement (Expenditure) for Information Technology Services and CDW-G (Job No. 21/031KN-13) for the period of 02/01/2025 through 01/31/2026 in the amount of \$275,925 to renew the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) and Azure Cloud Commitment Prepayment.**

*Motion made by Trustee Cantu, seconded by Trustee Dick to approve the Services Agreement (Expenditure) for Information Technology Services and CDW-G (Job No. 21/031KN-13) in the amount of \$275, 925 to renew the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) and Azure Cloud Commitment Prepayment*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve.*

2. **Consider ratification of Change Order #1 to the AIA Contract with Geofill Construction, Inc. (Job No. 23/0111A) to extend Substantial Completion date to 11/19/2024 for the Construction of a New Head Start Center located at 767 Coolwood Dr Houston, TX 77013 and delegate authority to the Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute the change order.**

*Motion made by Trustee Cantu, seconded by Trustee Dick to ratify Change Order #1 to the AIA Contract with Geofill Construction, Inc. (Job No. 23/0111A) to extend substantial Completion date to 11/19/2024 for the Construction of a New Head Start Center located at 767 Coolwod Dr. Houston, TX 77013 and delegate authority to the Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize and execute the change order.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to ratify.*

3. **Consider approval of Change Order #2 with Geofill Material Technologies dba Geofill Construction (Job No. 23/0111A) to increase scope of work to install a Natural Gas Standby Generator and Gate Operators in the amount of \$1,313,687 and delegate authority to the Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize and execute the change order.**

*Motion made by Trustee McGee, seconded by Trustee Cantu to approve the Change Order #2 with Geofill Material Technologies dba Geofill Construction (Job No. 23/0111A) to increase scope of work to install a Natural Gas Standby Generator and Gate Operators in the amount of \$1,313,687 and delegate authority to the Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize and execute the change order.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve.*

4. **Consider approval of the project delivery method of job order contracting and the Job Order Contract with Dependable Comfort Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc. (Job No. 24/047TC-13) for HVAC Equipment and Installation for the Records Management Division HVAC Project in an amount not to exceed \$399,838 and delegate authority to HCDE Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute the job order contract (2024 Maintenance Notes).**

*Motion made by Trustee Cantu, seconded by Trustee Dick to approve the project delivery method of job order contracting and the Job Order Contract with Dependable Comfort Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc. (Job No. 24/047TC-13) for HVAC Equipment and Installation for the Records Management Division HVAC Project in an amount not to exceed \$399,838 and delegate authority to HCDE Superintendent or his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute the job order contract (2024 Maintenance Notes).*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve.*

5. **Consider approval of Services Agreement (Expenditure) with EqualLevel/Euna Solutions (TIPS Contract #230105) for the period of 01/13/2025 through 01/12/2026 in the amount of \$97,050 for the purchase of software and installation services for the new purchasing platform for HCDE Procurement Services and Choice Partners Divisions.**

*Motion made by Trustee Cantu, seconded by Trustee Dick to approve the Services Agreement (Expenditure) with EqualLevel/Euna Solutions (TIPS Contract #230105) for the period of 01/13/2025 through 01/12/2026 in the amount of \$97,050 for the purchase of software and installation services for the new purchasing platform for HCDE Procurement Services and Choice Partners Divisions.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve.*

6. **Consider ratification of Memorandum of Understanding between HCDE and the Education Foundation of Harris County for the Partners in Education Project, providing \$200,000 for grants, scholarships, and sponsorship activities; the Tools for Teachers Program for the purchase of supplies for teachers; and other Foundation activities for the Term of September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025.**

*Motion made by Trustee Duhon, seconded by Trustee Cantu to ratify the Memorandum of Understanding between HCDE and the Education Foundation of Harris County for the Partners in Education Project, providing \$200,000 for grants, scholarships, and sponsorship activities; the Tools for Teachers Program for the purchase of supplies for teachers; and other Foundation activities for the Term of*

September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2025.

Motion passes with 6-0 voting to ratify.

The Board entered Executive Session at 2:16 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; 551.074
- A. **Deliberate** the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline and/or dismissal of HCDE employees, including, but not limited to, Superintendent's evaluation.
- B. **Deliberate** the appointment, employment, evaluation, resassignment, duties, discipline and/or dismissal of HCDE officers, including, but not limited to, HCDE Trustee Position 4, Precinct 3, and obtain legal advice regarding the same.
- C. **Deliberate** the purchase, exchange, sale and/or value of real propert(ies) and obtain legal advice regarding the same.

The Board reconvened at 3:28 p.m.

9. **RECONVENE** for possible action on items discussed in executive session
10. **Consider adoption of Resolution of Censure relating to HCDE Trustee Position 4, Precinct 3.**

*Motion made by Trustee Cantu, seconded by Trustee McGee that the Board of Trustees not adopt a Resolution of Censure relating to HCDE Trustee Position 4, Precinct 3, and that the HCDE Board of Trustees finds that although the Board believes Trustee Eric Dick may have violated its Code of Ethics in Policy BBF (Local), the Board finds that not adopting a resolution of censure best protects the Department and its resources, and is in the best interests of HCDE and the thousands of students it serves.*

*Trustee Dick acknowledged that his actions may have led to negative publicity of HCDE and reputational harm, embarrassment for the Department and its Board of Trustees, and expenditure of HCDE's resources. Trustee Dick stated he agrees to make a \$40,000 contribution to the Education Foundation of Harris County Department of Education to be used for CASE Debates programs for future lawyers no later than February 28, 2025.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting not to adopt Resolution of Censure relating to HCDE Trustee Position 4, Precinct 3 and to find that although the Board believes Trustee Eric Dick may have violated its Code of Ethics in Policy BBF (Local), the Board finds that not adopting a resolution of censure best protects the Department and its resources, and is in the best interests of HCDE and the thousands of students it serves.*

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

*None.*

12. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. **Submission of grant proposal to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the amount of \$19,998,951** to support Procurement Services and Construction Divisions' Community Leadership in Environmental Action and Resilience (CLEANER) Project. Requested funds would install upgraded HVAC units in partner districts to increase energy-efficiency, provide workforce development training in occupations that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide community education on environmental issues.
2. **Submission of grant proposal to the John M. O'Quinn Foundation, via the Education Foundation of Harris County, in the amount of \$50,000** to support CASE for Kids' Badging Occupations in After School Time (BOAST) Initiative. Requested funds will support a professional development project for 250 out-of-school time professionals in the Greater Houston/Harris County area.
3. **Submission of grant proposal to Constellation, via the Education Foundation of Harris County, in the amount of \$25,000** to support CASE for Kids' All-Earth Ecobot Challenge. The project will serve 350 students in grades 4-8 to help them develop skills in STEM subjects, problem-solving and teamwork.
4. **Submission of grant proposal to Nordstrom Cares, via the Education Foundation of Harris County, in the amount of \$20,000** to support CASE for Kids' LevelUp Houston Afterschool Is Cool Youth College & Career Expo. Requested funds will support a college and career readiness event for 250 middle and high school students in the Greater Houston/Harris County Area.
5. **Submission of grant proposal to the Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, via the Education Foundation of Harris County, in the amount of \$20,000** to support CASE for Kids' LevelUp Houston Afterschool Is Cool Youth College & Career Expo. Requested funds will support the college and career readiness event for 250 middle and high school students in the Greater Houston/Harris County area.
6. **Submission of grant proposal to Bank of Texas/Bank of Oklahoma Financial, via the Education Foundation of Harris County, in the amount \$5,000** to support Area I Head Start's REAL SuperMENTors Read program, which focuses on literacy skills. Requested funds will serve 121 students in the 2024-2025 school year.

A. **Human Resources**

1. Personnel
2. Employee Count

13. **ADJOURN** - Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

*Motion made by Trustee Duhon, seconded by Trustee McGee to adjourn the meeting.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to adjourn.*

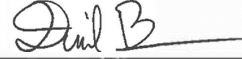
*Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.*





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Amy Flores Hinojosa  
Board President



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David Brown  
First Vice President