

Harris County Department of Education
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
February 28, 2024

**NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HARRIS COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The Harris County Board of School Trustees met in regular session on February 28, 2024, in Conference Room 502, at 6300 Irvington Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77022. Andrea Duhon, 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: Andrea Duhon, Board President, Amy Hinojosa, First Vice President, David Brown, Second Vice President, Richard Cantu, Eric Dick, and John McGee

Board Members Absent: Erica Davis

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; Joe Carreon, Director Construction; Lisa Caruthers, Senior Director CASE for Kids; Danielle Clark, Chief Communications Officer; Carie Crabb, Senior Director School-Related Therapy Services; Jeff Drury, Director Choice Partners Cooperative; Leslie Edwards-Ethridge, Director Center for Safe and Secure Schools; Chris Hoesel, Director Information Technology; Eduardo Honold, Senior Director Adult Education; Jatata Hutton, ABS West Principal; Edna Johnson, Director Purchasing; Marcia Leiva, Chief Accounting Officer; Charles Ned, Senior Director Schools; 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; Tyrone Sylvester, Executive Director Human Resources; Dr. Michelle Willaims, Executive Director Facilities

Visitors: None

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1. **Invocation - Laura Espinoza, Administrative Assistant, Construction**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance to the US flag - Kaylyn Jackson, General Office Clerk, Adult Education**
3. **Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag - Kaylyn Jackson, General Office Clerk, Adult Education**
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. **Recognition of Black History Month - Presentation by Communications, Danielle Clark, Chief Communications Officer**
A video presentation was shown by Communications for Black History Month. Trustee David Brown arrived at 1:10 p.m.
 - B. **Employee of the Month - Dr. Tyrone Sylvester, Executive Director of Human Resources**
Dr. Tyrone Sylvester introduced the February HCDE Employee of the Month, Michael Rowe, Educational Aide at ABS West and Program Specialist in CASE at Alief ISD. Communications showed a brief video regarding his role.
 - C. **Superintendent Monthly Report - James Colbert, Jr.**
Mr. Colbert recognized the two new Executive Leadership Team members: Dr. Tyrone Sylvester, Executive Director of Human Resources, and Dr. Michelle Williams, Executive Director of Facilities. Superintendent Colbert discussed events in February has been a part of February and March. On February 2, 2024, Harris County Commissioner Lesley Briones and members of her staff toured Fortis Academy. On the same day, Chief of Staff Danielle Bartz and Mr. Colbert attended the Grand Slam event honoring former Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and retired Houston Astros coach Dusty Baker. On February 8, 2024, Mr. Colbert attended and was a guest speaker at the Houston Area Association of Black School Educators (HAABSE) Teacher of the Year event. On February 9, 2024, Trustee David Brown and Trustee Dr. John McGee participated in Board Walks and toured HCDE construction sites. On February 21, 2024, Mr. Colbert was the keynote speaker at the Touchdown Club of Houston's event that recognized outstanding scholar athletes; the same day, Mr. Colbert and Ms. Bartz attended the Houston ISD State of the District luncheon. On February 22, 2024, Mr. Colbert hosted a Superintendents dinner with ten superintendents welcoming Dr. Marc Smith, the new Fort Bend ISD Superintendent. On February 23, 2024, Mr. Colbert and HCDE staff attended the Channelview ISD State of the District event. On February 27, 2024, Mr. Colbert and Chief Communications Officer Danielle Clark presented at The Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) Conference on "Secret Sauce 2.0," a presentation on convocations. On February 29, 2024, Mr. Colbert will sit on a Superintendent panel at the TSPRA Conference. Mr. Colbert announced that a Senate District 15 Candidate Forum will be held on February 29, 2024, at HCDE. On March 1, 2024, the 2024 HCDE Chili Cook-off will take place. On March 26, 2024, Mr. Colbert will conduct a Leadership Training for Education Service Center Region 5. Mr. Colbert concluded his superintendent report by acknowledging HCDE's Moody credit/bond rating of

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AAA; Mr. Colbert stated that the exceptional rating was based on the quality of HCDE, the board's governance, leadership, and the employees but mostly the services HCDE provides to the citizens of Harris County.

D. **Annual Division Update – Construction**

E. **Annual Division Update - Adult Education**

F. 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.
None.

G. **Report of Board Committees - Committee Chairs**
President Duhon stated the Feasibility Committee met prior to the board meeting.

H. **Monthly Financial Reports through 01/31/2024 - Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services**

7.2. **Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of Harris County Department of Education Maintenance Tax Notes, Series 2024;** Providing for the Payment of Said Notes; and Resolving Other Matters Incident and Related to the Issuance, Sale, Payment and Delivery of Said Notes, Including the Approval and Execution of a Paying Agent/Registrar Agreement and the Approval and Distribution of an Official Statement.

Motion made by Trustee Richard Cantu, seconded by Trustee John McGee to approve the resolution authorizing the issuance of Harris County Department of Education Maintenance Tax Notes, Series 2024; Providing for the Payment of Said Notes; and Resolving Other Matters Incident and Related to the Issuance, Sale, Payment and Delivery of Said Notes, Including the Approval and Execution of a Paying Agent/Registrar Agreement and the Approval and Distribution of an Official Statement.

Presentation from Lewis Wilks of U.S. Capital Advisers, bond counsel Marcus Dietz of Orrick, and Clarence Grier of RBC Capital.

Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve the resolution.

6. **ACTION ITEMS – CONSENSUS**

*President Andrea Duhon removed items D.3. and D.7. from the Consensus Agenda.
Trustee Amy Hinojosa removed item F. 1. from the Consensus Agenda.*

*Motion made by Trustee Amy Hinojosa, seconded by Trustee Richard Cantu to approve all items under the Consensus Agenda except items D.3, D.7, and F.1.
Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve all items under the Consensus Agenda except items D.3, D.7, and F.1.*

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- A. Consider ratification/approval of the following Business Services items:
1. Disbursement Report
 2. Budget Amendment Report
 3. Monthly Investment Report for January 2024
- B. Consider ratification/approval of the following Board Meeting Minutes:
1. January 17, 2024, Audit Committee Meeting Minutes
 2. January 17, 2024, Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- C. Consider acceptance of the following grant awards:
1. **Acceptance of the \$15,948.00 grant from CPAs Helping Schools Program of the TXCPA Houston Foundation to support HCDE Head Start Division's REAL SuperMENTors Read Program.**
- D. Consider ratification/approval of the following Interlocal Contracts:
1. **Ratification of the Interlocal (expenditure) agreements for FY 2024 CASE for Kids Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center(s) Cycle 12, Year 1 grant for the period 08/01/2023 - 07/31/2024 in the amount of \$478,000, with the following entities: Crosby Independent School District in the amount of \$187,200 (75 students served), Galena Park Independent School District in the amount of \$187,200 (75 students served), Spring Independent School District in the amount of \$103,600 (75 students served).**
 2. **Ratification of the Interlocal (expenditure) agreements for FY 2024 CASE for Kids Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center(s) Cycle 11, Year 3 grant for the period 08/01/2023 - 07/31/2024 in the amount of \$405,000, with the following entities: Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans in the amount of \$45,000 (92 students served), Alief Independent School District in the amount of \$90,000 (220 students served), Baker Ripley in the amount of \$45,000 (92 students served), Clear Creek Independent School District in the amount of \$45,000 (110 students served), Galena Park Independent School District in the amount of \$90,000 (220 students served), Humble Independent School District in the amount of \$90,000 (220 students served).**
 4. **Ratification of the Interlocal (revenue) agreement for Adult Education with Harris County Public Health for the ACCESS Harris program not to exceed the total amount of \$237,918 for the period of 01/31/2023 through 01/31/2025. The agreement includes a three-year renewal option.**

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- 5. Ratification of the Interlocal (revenue) contract amendment for School-Based Therapy Services in the amount of \$137,100 for FY 2024 with KIPP Texas Public Schools - Houston for the period of 08/16/2023 through 08/15/2024. The contract amount is proposed to be amended from \$135,140 to \$137,100 (an increase of \$1,960) for additional days of therapy services.**
- 6. Ratification of the Interlocal (revenue) contract for FY 2024 in the aggregate amount of \$103,125 with ABS West for the contract period of 08/28/2023 through 06/03/2024 and the following district: Aldine ISD for fifteen (15) in-county annual contracts in the amount of \$103,125 (\$6,875 each).**
- 8. Ratification of the Interlocal (revenue) agreements with School-Based Therapy Services in the aggregate amount of \$58,320 for FY 2024 Therapy Services with the following districts: Brazosport ISD in the amount of \$25,920 and Splendora ISD in the amount \$32,400 for the period of 08/16/2023 through 08/15/2024.**
- 9. Ratification of the Interlocal (revenue) contract for FY 2024 in the aggregate amount of \$28,875 with ABS East for the contract period of 10/16/2023 through 06/03/2024 and the following district: New Caney ISD for one (1) out of-county annual contract in the amount of \$28,875 (\$28,875 each).**
- 10. Ratification of the Interlocal (revenue) contract amendment for School-Based Therapy Services in the amount of \$2,572 for FY 2024 with AAMA/Sanchez Charter School for the period of 08/16/2023 through 08/15/2024. The contract amount is proposed to be amended from \$1,225 to \$2,572 (a \$1,347 increase) to add additional days of therapy services.**
- 11. Ratification of the Interlocal (revenue) contract for FY 2024 in the aggregate amount of \$11,970 with Highpoint School East for the contract period of 12/17/2023 through 06/03/2024 and the following district: Tejano Center for Community Concerns for one (1) in-county annual contract in the amount of \$11,970 (\$11,970 each).**

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

- 1. Approval of the Contract Award for job no. 24/021SG for Health and Wellness Screening and Related Services for the period of 02/28/2024 through 02/27/2025 with the following vendors: NLUC PLLC dba Next Level Urgent Care (24/021SG-01); Wellness Coaches USA, LLC dba Ramp Health (24/021SG-02); Tele-Help, Inc. dba TeleHelp 24/7 (24/021SG-03); WellSpark Health, Inc. (24/021SG-04).**
- 2. Approval of the Contract Award for job no. 24/019TC for Medium and Heavy-Duty Trucks, Chassis, Trailers, and Related Items and Services for the period of 02/28/2024 through 02/27/2025 with the following vendor: Bruckner Truck Sales, Inc. (24/019TC-01).**
- 3. Approval of the Contract Award for job no. 24/017MR for Janitorial Cleaning Services and Related Items for the period of 2/28/2024 through 02/27/2025 with the following vendors: 1 Stone Solutions, LLC (24/017MR-01); Ambassador Services, LLC (24/017MR-02); Caring Commercial Cleaning, Inc. (24/017MR-03); DRC Fort Worth, LLC (24/017MR-04); The King's Clean (24/017MR-05); McLemore Building Maintenance (24/017MR-06), and Metroclean Commercial Building Services, Inc. (24/017MR-07).**
- 4. Approval of the Contract Award for job no. 24/012MF for Educational/Instructional Software and Related Items for the period 02/28/2024 through 02/27/2025 with the following vendors: 901356 Ontario Limited dba Black Board International (24/012MF-01); Accelerate Learning Inc. (24/012MF-02); Active Internet Technologies dba Finalsite (24/012MF-03); Footsteps2Brilliance, Inc. (24/012MF-05); Kaduceus Holdings, Inc. (24/012MF-06); OneSeventeen Media, Inc. (24/012MF-08); Rally Education, LLC dba RALLY! Education (24/012MF-09); Sandviks HOP, Inc. dba Hooked on Phonics 24/012MF-10); The Computing Technology Industry Association, Inc. (24/102MF-12) and UTJ Holdco, Inc. dba Teaching Strategies, LLC (24/012MF-13).**
- 5. Approval of HCDE Interlocal Agreements with: Angelo State University, San Angelo, Texas; Bexar County Appraisal District, San Antonio, Texas; City of Troup, Troup, Texas; Cleveland Metro School District, Cleveland, Ohio; Coupland ISD, Coupland, Texas; Grace Presbyterian Church of Houston, Houston, Texas; Lower Columbia College, Longview, Washington; Penncrest School District, Saegertown, Pennsylvania, and Pierce College, Lakewood, Washington.**

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

- 2. Approval of Contract Award for job no. 240001992 for E-Rate Services for Harris County Department of Education, for the period of 07/01/2024 through 06/30/2027, in the total amount of \$54,000 (2Gbps Internet Access \$1,500 per month) to the proposer offering the best value to HCDE and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal. Category 1: Leased Lit Fiber - Internet Access
Internet access and Data Transmission Service: *Comcast Business***

- 3. Approval of Contract Award for RFP #23/034IA-3 Advisors, Coaches, Consultants, Counselors, Speakers, and Trainers, for the period of 03/01/2024 through 02/28/2029 to the proposers offering the best value to HCDE Divisions and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal: Brittany Endlich; Communispond, Inc.; Corwin Press, a SAGE Company; DiscoverU; Epic Special Education Staffing (3Chords Inc. and TherapyTravelers, LLC); Integrated Health Solutions; Laura R. Jeanes; People Inspired Strategies (Natasha Truitt); Revelations in Education; Sandra Pearson; Shepherd Government Services Group (SGSG, LLC); SOA Fin1st; Teaching Strategies, LLC; The Process Manager (Meliton Moya, Ph.D.); and VV Sopher LLC.**

G. Consider ratification/approval of the following Expenditure Agreements:

- 1. Ratification of the Service Agreement (expenditure) with CASE and After School To Achieve (Job No. 21/004IA), for the term of 09/11/2023 through 05/31/2024, in the amount of \$110,000 to provide after-school program activities and projects.**

6.D. 3. Ratification of the Interlocal (expenditure) agreements for FY 2024 CASE for Kids Partnership grant, for the period 10/01/2023 - 07/31/2024 in the amount of \$297,831, with the following entities: Alief Independent School District in the amount of \$172,179 (800 students served), Pasadena Independent School District in the amount of \$30,000 (40 students served), Academy of Accelerated Learning (Charter) in the amount of \$95,652 (150 students served).

Motion made by Trustee David Brown, seconded by Trustee Amy Hinojosa to ratify the interlocal (expenditure) agreements for FY 2024 CASE for Kids Partnership grant, for the period of 10/1/2023 – 07/31/2024 in the amount of \$297,831 with the following entities: Alief Independent School District in the amount of \$172,179 (800 students served), Pasadena Independent School District in the amount of \$30,000 (40 students served), Academy of Accelerated Learning (Charter) in the amount of \$95,652 (150 students served).

Motion passes with 6-0 voting to ratify.

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6..F.1. Approval of Contract Award RFP #23/047DR-2, Software Services, for the period 03/01/2024 through 02/28/2029 to the proposers offering the best value to HCDE Divisions and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal:Ed Tech Soft, Inc.; Inplay; Mender; MobyMax Education, LLC; MyVrspot, LLC; Ori Learning; PaymentWorks, Inc.; ProUnitas, Inc.; Qualtrics, LLC; ThinkCERCA.com Inc.; World Book, Inc.

Motion made by Trustee Amy Hinojosa, seconded by Trustee David Brown to approve Contract Award RFP #23/047DR-2, Software Services, for the period 03/01/2024 through 02/28/2029 to the proposers offering the best value to HCDE Divisions and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal: Ed Tech Soft, Inc.; Inplay; Mender; MobyMax Education, LLC; MyVrspot, LLC; Ori Learning; PaymentWorks, Inc.; ProUnitas, Inc.; Qualtrics, LLC; ThinkCERCA.com Inc.; World Book, Inc.

Motion passes with 5-0-1 voting to approve, with Trustee Amy Hinojosa abstaining.

7.

ACTION ITEMS - NON-CONSENSUS

1. **Consider adoption of resolution concerning emergency administrative leave with pay for HCDE staff in accordance with Policy DEA (Local) associated with severe winter weather on January 16, 2024.**

Motion made by Trustee David Brown, seconded by Trustee Amy Hinojosa to adopt the resolution concerning emergency administrative leave with pay for HCDE staff in accordance with Policy DEA (Local) associate with severe winter weather on January 16, 2024.

Motion passes with 6-0 voting to adopt.

3. **Approval of audit services engagement with Whitley Penn (job no. 21/028YR) for fiscal year ending 08/31/2024, for an estimated amount of \$57,400. Per Texas Education Agency requirements, an annual independent audit must be conducted.**

Motion made by Trustee John McGee, seconded by Trustee Amy Hinojosa to approve the audit service engagement with Whitley Penn (job no. 21/028YR) for fiscal year ending 08/31/2024, for an estimated amount of \$57,400.

Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve

4. **Consideration and possible vote (election) to appoint a director to the Harris County Department of Education Public Facilities Corporation.**

Motion made by Trustee Eric Dick, seconded by Trustee Richard Cantu to appoint Joe Carreon, Director of Construction, to the Harris County Department of Education Public Facilities Corporation Board of Directors for a three-year term.

Motion passes with 6-0 voting to appoint.

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The Board entered Executive Session at 2:41 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 employee.
 - B. **Deliberate** the purchase, exchange, sale and/or value of real propert(ies) and obtain legal advice regarding the same.

The Board re-entered Open Session at 3:23 p.m.

9. **RECONVENE** for possible action on items discussed in executive session
10. **Discussion and possible action regarding future agenda items**
None.
11. **INFORMATION ITEMS**
 1. **Submission of grant proposal to the Texas Workforce Commission in the amount of \$5,262,277 for the Adult Education division** to provide Adult Education and Literacy programs, as well as workforce training. Requested funds will serve a total of 3,734 adults in Harris and Liberty Counties.
 2. **Submission of a grant proposal to the Texas Workforce Commission in the amount of \$997,791** to implement Adult Education's Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education activities. Requested funds will serve 750 adults.
 3. **Submission of five grant applications totaling a combined \$15,948 to the CPAs Helping Schools Program of the TXCPA Houston Foundation** to support HCDE Head Start Division's REAL SuperMENTors Read Program. The grants will benefit 443 students and their families at Channelview, Compton, Dogan, Fonwood, and Sheffield campuses.
 4. **Submission of grant proposal to Henderson Foundation in the amount of \$6,100 via the Education Foundation of Harris County** to support CASE for Kids' All-Earth Ecobot Challenge. Requested funds will support a robotics competition for 350 students in 4th-8th grades.
 - A. **Human Resources**
 1. Personnel
 2. Employee Count

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12. **ADJOURN** - Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

*Motion made by Trustee David Brown, seconded by Trustee Amy Hinojosa to adjourn.
Motion passes with 6-0 voting to adjourn.
Meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.*



Andrea Duhon
Board President



Amy Hinojosa
Board First Vice President