

**Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Board General Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2025**

Call to Order

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President called the December 4, 2025 Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Board of Trustees meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Pledge

A TSBVI student led the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge for the Board and audience.

Introduction of Board Members and Audience

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President was present in person. Board members present via Zoom were Beth Jones, Dan Brown, Ernest Worthington, Brenda Lee and Belinda Rudinger.

Board members not present were Julie Prause, Hillary Rodriguez, and Maghan Gautney.

Audience members present were Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Jenny Wells, General Counsel; Alex Arguello, Community Engagement Coordinator; Miles Fain, Principal; Marlo Kibler, HR Director; Ann Du, CFO; Erica Cairns, Outreach Director; Belinda Fayard, Outreach Assistant Director; Eden Hagelman, STP Principal; Scott Brackett, IR Director; Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director; Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator and Veronica Keating, Executive Assistant.

Public Comments/Open Forum

There was no one signed up for public comment.

Consideration of Approval of Minutes of the May 19, 2025 Board Meeting and the October 1 and 2, 2025 Board Meetings

Dan Brown made a motion to approve the May 19, 2025 board meeting and the October 1 and 2, 2025 board meeting minutes. Beth Jones seconded the motion. All board members present voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Report from the Audit, Compliance and Management Review Committee

a. Report from Garza/Gonzalez and Associates

➤ **Consideration of approval of TSBVI's Fiscal Year 2026 Internal Audit Plan**

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of TSBVI's fiscal year 2026 Internal Audit Plan; therefore, a second was not required. All board members present voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Report from the Finance Committee

Lee Sonnenberg reported to the Board the information from the Finance Committee.

a. Report on Public Funds Investment Act training received by TSBVI Investment Officers

Mr. Sonnenberg reported that Ann Du and Jeanette Hawrylo completed the required Investment Act training.

b. Consideration of approval of Nolan County farm contract

The recommendation to approve the Nolan County farm contract came from the Finance Committee; therefore, a second was not required. All board members present voted unanimously to pass the motion.

c. Consideration of approval of Investment Report

They total earnings for the two-month period ending on October 31, 2025 was \$7,832. The recommendation to approve the Investment Report came from the Finance Committee; therefore, a second was not required. All board members present voted unanimously to pass the motion.

d. Consideration of approval of receipt of gifts and donations of over \$500

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of the donation from Foresight Augmented Reality LLC in the amount of \$1,200 for White Cane Day. A second was not required. All board members present voted unanimously to pass the motion.

e. Consideration of approval of request for expenditure of gifts and donations

There were no requests for expenditure of gifts and donations.

f. Review of budget reports

➤ **Operating Budget Expenditure Report**

The benchmark for the percentage of the budget used as of October 31, 2025 was 16%. The total percentages of the budget expended were: classroom instruction – 17%; residential program – 17%; summer and short-term programs – 12%; related and support services – 15%; technical assistance – 17%; teacher preparation – 1%; educational professional salary increases – 0%; central administrative – 16%; other support services – 8% with total budgets in state treasury expended at 15%.

➤ **Legacy Revenue Budget Report**

The benchmark for the Legacy Revenue for the two-month period ending October 31, 2025 was 16%. The percentage of the budget received was 24%.

➤ **Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report**

The benchmark for the Operating Budget expended as of October 31, 2025 was 16%. The total percent of the budget used was 15%.

Report from the Program Committee

a. Report from Comprehensive Program Principal

➤ **Consideration of approval of new library materials**

The recommendation for the approval of new library materials came from the Program Committee; therefore, a second was not required. All board members present voted unanimously to pass the motion.

➤ **Residential Independent Living Instruction Programs Update**

Ms. Jones reported that students are given to the opportunity to experiencing living independently through the residential independent living instruction program. Students are given

a space on campus for one to two weeks at a time. This space is their apartment for the extent of their stay. Students are responsible for getting to class on time. During this time, they are given budgeted funds for necessities. Students are responsible for purchasing their groceries, preparing their meals, doing laundry, and other independent living tasks. Students are also allowed visits from their peers. It is scheduled and cleared by the residential team. There is a check out process for moving out of their apartment like one the student would have when leasing a residence. Upon completion the students are given the opportunity to evaluate themselves and their experiences. Then, share out to the program administrators their findings.

b. Report from Curriculum Department Director

➤ **Report on Curriculum sales**

In FY2025, the Curriculum Department had total sales of \$207,762.89. The highest sales were in January 2025 with \$32,864.83. Followed by sales in June 2025 and February 2025. The second edition of Essential Tools of the Trade (ETT) had the highest percentage of sales (27.01%). The most popular products that were sold (other than the above-mentioned publication) included Essential Tools of the Trade for Teachers of Students who are Deafblind, TAPS, Calendars, and Making Evaluation Meaningful.

c. Report from Short-Term Programs Principal, Dr. Eden Hagelman

➤ **Short-Term Programs update**

Ms. Jones reported that Short-Term Programs served 94 students. There were 51 unduplicated students this year in the program. Recent programs have included a move your body class in elementary and a prep cook for the middle school students.

d. Report from Outreach Director, Erica Cairns

➤ **Outreach Program update**

Outreach hosted Southwest Orientation and Mobility Association (SWOMA) in November. It was virtual. There were 302 attendees that included professionals and university students. There is going to be a Deafblind mentor program pilot beginning in the spring that will run through March. Next year SWOMA is partnering with Southeast Orientation and Mobility Association (SOMA) to be a joint conference and will be in person. It will take place in New Orleans. Outreach was working on issuing student's devices and equipment to include the Monarch a multiline braille device, HDMI monitor, Bluetooth keyboard and rolling backpack to store devices. They would be issued to students in January. Ms. Jones stated it was wonderful the School was able to offer this to students.

Report on Achievement of 2024-2025 Objectives from the Agency Strategic Plan and the Annual Improvement Plan

Susan Houghtling reported the 2024-2025 Objectives from the Agency Strategic Plan and the Annual Improvement Plan which are tied to the school's legislative funding.

Consideration of Approval of TSBVI's Vision, Mission and Philosophy Statements and Long- Range Goals

Ms. Coleman stated that there were no changes to the Vision, Mission and Philosophy statements. Ms. Lee motioned to approve TSBVI's Vision Mission and Philosophy Statements and Long-Range Goals. Ms. Rudinger seconded the motion. All members present voted to unanimously to pass the motion.

Report on Maintenance, Annual Inspection, and Recommendations for Maintenance and Repair of the Campus Residence

Ms. Coleman stated TSBVI has not had to pay for any maintenance or repairs to the campus residence. Texas Facilities Commission has paid for maintenance to the residence.

Annual Report on Employee Complaints about Discrimination or Harassment

There were no reports.

Report from the Superintendent

a. Campus activities

Ms. Coleman reported that White Cane Day was on October 15, 2025. It was well attended and a big success. Family Day was on November 15, 2025. Ms. Coleman accredited Mr. Fain and his team for how well it went. She added that the U.S. Associations of Blind Athletes (USABA) National High School Goal Ball Championships was being hosted at TSBVI on December 5, 2025 through December 7, 2025. The South-Central Association of Schools for the Blind (SCASB) is being held at the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired on January 22, 2026, through January 25, 2026.

b. Superintendent's activities

Ms. Coleman reported that she attended the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind (COSB) leadership institute. She is still serving as the president elect. She attended the annual American Printing House for the Blind (APH) meeting. Lee Sonnenberg, Board President and Erica Cairns, Outreach Director were also in attendance. At the meeting Ms. Coleman had conversations about the benefits of the school becoming a member of the organization Vision Serve. The School joined the organization and was offered a discounted membership for the next year. Ms. Coleman stated that she attended the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) convention in Houston and spoke about TSBVI. She said they would hold their next national convention in Austin starting July 3, 2026, through July 8, 2026. She stated that TSBVI will be receiving donated equipment worth \$75,000 to build a soccer field on campus. She added that her dissertation proposal for her doctoral program was accepted, and she will move forward in the program.

c. Activities of the TSBVI Safety and Security Committee

Ms. Coleman shared information from the fall Safety and Security Committee meeting. She invited the Board to join future meetings via Zoom.

Discussion of the Superintendent's Annual Performance Appraisal Process in February

Ms. Kibler stated the process for which the Superintendent's performance appraisal will take place in February.

Personnel Update

Mr. Sonnenberg stated that the Board would recess the open session and convene in a closed meeting to discuss the following item listed under agenda item #15 – 'Personnel Update' in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.071 – Consultation with School Attorney and Section 551.0821 – Personally Identifiable Information About a Public School Student."

No voting would take place in the closed meeting. Any action the Board wished to take as a result of discussions in closed meeting would take place after the Board reconvened in the open meeting. Mr. Sonnenberg stated it was 5:20 p.m.

Mr. Sonnenberg announced it was 5:29 p.m. and the Board convened in open session.

No action was taken on agenda item personnel update.

Report of Completion of Board Member Training Requirements for the Past Year

At the last board meeting each year, the Board President or presiding officer is required to announce, and the minutes to reflect, the name of each board member who has completed or exceeded required training and who is deficient in meeting the requirements.

The following board members met, exceeded or were deficient in meeting the training requirements:

Met training requirements:

Dan Brown; and
Julie Prause

Exceeded training requirements:

Beth Jones;.
Brenda Lee;
Hillary Rodriguez;
Lee Sonnenberg; and
Ernest Worthington.

Deficient in training requirements:

Maghan Gautney – team building

Belinda Rudinger took her oath of office in May and has more time to complete her training requirements.

Discussion of Scheduling Board Training for the Next Year Based on the Framework for School Board Development

The Board stated they would like to learn more about ProTactile and how the school uses it. They also stated they would like to explore the expanded makers space and how students use the space.

Discussion of Future Board Meeting Dates and Topics

The Board discussed board meeting dates and decided to keep the scheduled spring board meetings as they stand.

Announcements

Ms. Jones stated that her son participated in the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky in November. He won for the Grand Champion Bull and Grand Champion Heifer.

Adjournment

Brenda Lee motioned to adjourn the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired December 4, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting. Belinda Rudinger seconded the motion. All board members present voted unanimously to pass the motion. It was 5:44 p.m.

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President

Date

Dan Brown, Board Secretary

Date

Veronica Keating, Recording Secretary

Date