

# **Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

## **BOARD MINUTES May 27, 2022 Meeting**

### **Call to Order**

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President called the meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to order at 10:16 a.m.

### **Introduction of Board Members and Audience**

Board Members present were:

Lee Sonnenberg, Brenda Lee, Julie Prause, Beth Jones, Dan Brown, Ernest Worthington, and Elaine Robertson.

### **Board Members Not Present**

Maghan Gautney and Mike Hanley.

### **Audience Members Present**

Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Veronica Keating, Executive Assistant; Kate Borg, Outreach Director; Cheryl Williams, HR Director; Amanda Anguiano, Employment Specialist; Zeke Zaragosa, Time and Leave Specialist; Patti Robinson, Staff Development Coordinator; Debra Sewell, Curriculum Director; Jeanne Williamson, Curriculum Administrative Assistant; Larry Williamson; Brian McDonald, School Support Services Director; Sara Merritt, STP Principal; Pam Darden, CFO; Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator; Miles Fain, Principal; Alex Arguello, Head of Community Engagement; Mark Potts, Amy Potts, Barbara Knighton, Jason Knighton, Lisa Ricketts, OT/PT; Patty Bushland; TSBVI Students; Danny Bushland; Dave Bushland; Ann Adkins; Susan Yarbrough, OT/PT; Ginger Franklin, Curriculum Administrative Assistant; and Jenny Wells, General Counsel.

### **Audience Members Present via Zoom**

Angela Wolf, Teacher; Brian Sobek, Outreach; Deanna Peterson, Deafblind Specialist; Joshua Splinter, Accounting Director; Suzanne Becker, Outreach Archivist; Eva Lavigne; Randall McAlister, APH Support; Lynne McAlister, VI Consultant; Sherry Hayes, Dorm Manager; Chrissy Cowan, Mentor Program Coordinator; Toni Ericson, Outreach Administrative Assistant; Cyrenna Villegas, Procurement Director; Kim Wright, Residential Instructor; Cecilia Robinson, VI Educational Specialist; Eric Grimmatt, CSR Director; Kathi Garza, Early Childhood; Miriam Miramontes, Administrative Coordinator; Melanie Schact, Mentor Program; Sue Kopecky, TA; and Susan Osterhaus, Education Consultant.

### **Recognition of Retiring TSBVI Staff Members**

The Board recognized retiring TSBVI staff members. Kate Borg spoke on behalf of retiree Randy McAlister. Miles Fain spoke on behalf of retiree Susan Yarbrough. Debra Sewell shared kind words on behalf of retiree Jeanne Williamson. Emily Coleman recognized retiree Debra Sewell. Cheryl Williams spoke on behalf of retiree Patti Robinson.

## **Recognition of Outstanding TSBVI Volunteers**

Emily Coleman and Lee Sonnenberg recognized Family Lynx Program volunteers Patti Bushland, Barbara Knighton, and Amy Potts for their hard work and service to Texas students and families.

## **Public Comments/Open Forum**

There was no one signed up for comment.

## **Consideration of Approval of Minutes of April 8, 2022 Board Meeting**

Dan Brown motioned to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2022 board meeting. Brenda Lee seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

## **Report from the Finance Committee**

### **a. Consideration of Approval of Investment Report**

Ms. Prause gave a report on the Investment Report. She stated that the total of investments was \$1,392,492 with a total earning of \$5,677.

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of the Investment Report, therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

### **b. Consideration of approval of receipt of gifts and donations of over \$500**

There was a donation to the Family Lynx Butterfly Garden from the Bushland family in the amount of \$1,000.

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of receipt of gifts and donation of over \$500, therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

### **c. Consideration of approval of request for expenditure of gifts and donations**

There were no requests for the expenditure of gifts and donations.

### **d. Review of budget reports**

Ms. Prause gave a review of the budget reports.

#### **➤ Operating Budget Expenditure Report**

The total budget used as of April 30, 2022 was as follows:

Classroom instruction strategy 70 percent, residential program 74 percent, Summer and Short-Term Programs 39 percent, related and support services 72 percent, technical assistance 60 percent, teacher preparation 47 percent, educational professional salary increases 0 percent, central administration 60 percent, other support services 62 percent and the total of all budgets in state treasury 66 percent.

#### **➤ Legacy Revenue Budget Report**

The total Legacy revenues percentage received as of April 30, 2022 was 49 percent.

#### **➤ Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report**

The total Legacy operating expenditure report percentage of budget used as of April 30, 2022 was 32 percent.

**e. Update on website design progress**

Ms. Prause stated the School's new website would be complete in the summer.

## **Report from the Program Committee**

Ms. Lee gave a report from the Program Committee.

**a. Consideration of approval of board policies:**

**FFG (TSBVI) Student Welfare: Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation, and Improper Child Care Incidents**

The Committee reviewed policy FFG (TSBVI) Student Welfare: Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation, and Improper Child Care Incidents and no changes were recommended.

**b. Report from Comprehensive Programs Principal**

➤ **School Health Advisory Council's (SHAC) activities and recommendations**

Ms. Lee stated Debra Sewell and Patti Bushland would be resigning from the SHAC. She added there was a great report in Committee in regard to the School's addressment of the physical and mental health of students.

➤ **Comprehensive Programs update**

Ms. Lee reported that there were still positions that needed to be filled in the Comprehensive Program department. The School is working to fill those positions.

**c. Report from Short-Term Programs Principal**

➤ **Short-Term Programs update**

Short-Term Programs has been offering remote learning with 119 students attending for the year. The program held 310 classes. The teachers and students have learned to navigate the changes via remote learning efficiently.

➤ **Summer 2022 program update**

Ms. Lee said summer enrichment programs had invited 264 students to participate and 240 students had confirmed.

Mr. Brown inquired if students having their local TVI present during the programs could be something that the STP could continue to offer. Ms. Merritt responded specifically referencing technology, that when a student's TVI participates, the student and teacher both get experience, therefore, they will continue an online model.

**d. Report from Outreach Director**

➤ **Outreach program update**

The Outreach program had 7000 attendees for workshops that they offered.

## **Report from Personnel Committee**

**a. Recommendation for new internal auditor**

Ms. Robertson stated that there is not a pool at this time for an internal auditor. She stated that they might consider finding a recruiter. In the meantime, they would continue to contract with an outside auditing firm.

**b. Consideration of hiring an internal auditor and next steps**

There was no action taken.

**Board Selection of New Internal Auditor**

There was no action taken.

**Consideration of Approval of New Contract Staff**

Ms. Coleman listed the additions to contract staff listed for approval in the Board’s agenda packet: Valeria Ramirez, Teacher; Amanda Fazila, Behavioral Specialist, Saffron Burnet, Teacher; and Emily Leaper, Lead Teacher.

Katherine Heitman would be moving from Comprehensive Programs to Short-Term Programs, Katherine Barnes moving from O&M instructor to O&M supervisor, and Angela Wolfe moving from Short-Term Programs to Curriculum Director. Ms. Coleman said there were three staff who have since resigned, retired, and/or were moving to substitute position. They were Lisa Ricketts, Carolyn Heath, and Laurel Taylor.

Elaine Robertson motioned to approve new contract staff as presented. Julie Prause seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously, and the motion passed.

**Consideration of Approval of the Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2023-2027**

Ms. Coleman stated it has been interesting to see how this project comes together.

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the Agency Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2023-2027. Dan Brown seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

**Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Improvement Plan**

Ms. Coleman stated the Board had already voted on approval of the Annual Improvement Plan so she gave a brief review of the plan.

**Report from the Superintendent**

**a. Campus activities**

Ms. Coleman listed the Schools activities.

**Comprehensive Programs**

April 12	Beeping Easter Egg Hunt for Elementary students
April 12	Career Café: Comedian Leon Purley performance
April 21–24	SCASB Track and Field and Performing Arts - Mississippi
April 28 - 12:30 p.m.	Lion King Jr. – Spring play
April 29, 30 – 7:00 p.m.	Lion King Jr. – Spring play
May 2–13	Magical Experiences Arts Company performance
May 7	Student Prom – Westin Domain
May 18	Safe Alliance – “Where’s Your Line” performance

May 18	Fiesta Celebration
May 19	Graduate luncheon
May 20 – 9:45 a.m.	Big Show student performance – in person and streaming
May 24 – 1:30 p.m.	EXIT awards
May 26 – 1:00 p.m.	TSBVI Graduation

## School Year Short-Term Programs

Ongoing	Individualized Instruction and Distance Learning: Graphing Calculator, Google Classroom, iOS/Voiceover, JAWS, Abacus
April 12	High School Focus on Low Vision Series #3 (grades 9-12)
April 21–24	City Travel Plus “Students, COMS, and Families learning and Exploring Together” (grades 7-12)
May 6–7	High School Independence Weekend #3: Prom (grades 10-12)
May 10	High School Focus on Low Vision Series #4 (grades 9-12)
May 13–14	Elementary Independence Weekend #2: Outdoor Exploration (grades 3-5)

## Summer 2022 Programs

June 12–July 8	SWEAT (Summer Work Experience in Austin Texas)
June 12–July 8	WALIC (Working and Living in the Community)
June 12–17	Secondary Enrichment – Week One
June 19–24	Secondary Enrichment – Week Two
June 26–July 1	Secondary Enrichment – Week Three
July 3–8	Secondary Enrichment – Week Four
June 12–17	Elementary Summer Enrichment – Week One
June 19–24	Secondary Experience – Week Two
June 26–July 1	Secondary Experience – Week Three
July 3–8	Secondary Experience – Week Four

## Outreach Programs

- Workshops and Conferences

April 24–26	April Mentor Center
May 6	2022 Low Vision Conference: Spotlight on Early Childhood
Monthly	Family-to-Family Communities: Connecting Families of Individuals with Deaf-Blindness via Distance Technology

- Coffee Hours

April 11	Utilizing CViConnect to Provide Access for Learners with CVI
April 18	The Basics of Persuasion
April 25	O&M VISSIT: An Innovative Tool for Determining Recommendations for Type and Amount of O&M Service
May 2	Taking Lessons from the Pandemic: Chart a Course Forward in Educating Students with Visual Impairments
May 5	Supporting Language Across Modalities: Strategies for the Home
May 9	Making Evaluation Meaningful (by Marnee Loftin)
May 16	CVI Scotland: Optimizing Support for Children with CVI Part 3

May 23

Trauma-Informed Instruction for Students with Sensory Impairments

## **Webinars**

April 21

Active Learning Case Studies: Student Centered Planning

The Board expressed their gratitude to the School's programs staff for their resilience, flexibility, and creativity during the last two years of COVID. The staff kept up with student needs and ensured they reached their goals. Mr. Sonnenberg stated their work benefits students across the whole state. They congratulated the graduating class as well.

### **b. Superintendent's activities**

Emily Coleman gave a report regarding her past activities or those she would be participating in. She attended the South Central Association of Schools for the Blind (SCASB) event held at the Mississippi School for the Blind along with TSBVI staff and participating students. The School's student ambassador gave Ms. Coleman a tour of the school and she enjoyed her time there. She added over the summer she would attend the National Braille Challenge, National Federation of the Blind National Convention, 2022 AER International Conference: Gateway to Community, present at the Washington State School for the Blind, as well as work on the School's Legislative Appropriations Request with Ms. Darden.

## **Discussion of Future Board Meeting Topics**

The Board discussed topics they would like to address in future board meetings. Ms. Coleman stated there would be a training on the School's budget at the August board meeting. There will be a team building session in August. Ms. Robertson requested in the budget training to have an overview of salary matching for classified staff based on the AISD salary model. The Board would like to be informed because they would like to help combat salary issues for TSBVI staff. Ms. Coleman stated the School is trying to be creative and make a plan for salary increases. Ms. Williams stated that she would explain some of the ideas they have for staff salary increases. The Board stated they would like to take small tours each board meeting so that members can see what is happening on campus. Ms. Robertson stated she liked the idea so that they can connect with the TSBVI community.

## **Announcements**

Ms. Jones' son was accepted with a scholarship to space camp in September. Her son's engineering teacher gave out beads for various achievements in class. She gave a prize to the student with the most beads at the end of the year and her son came home with a prize for earning the most beads.

## **Adjournment**

Ms. Lee motioned to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Robertson seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously and the motion passed to adjourn the meeting at 11:42 a.m.