

**TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**September 22, 2023**

**Call to Order**

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President called the meeting of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Board of Trustees meeting to order at 10:17 a.m. on September 22, 2023.

**Introduction of Board Members and Audience**

Board members present were Lee Sonnenberg, Elaine Robertson, Beth Jones, Julie Prause, Brenda Lee, and Ernest Worthington

Dan Brown and Maghan Gautney were present via Zoom.

Audience members present were Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Alex Arguello, Community Engagement; Miles Fain, Principal; Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator; Eden Hagelman, Assistant Principal; Antronette Little, Behavior Specialist; Christina Cortes, Teacher; Danny Casey, interpreter; Paula Wilson, Teacher; Elena Suarez, Teacher; Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director; Val Ramirez, Teacher; Elina Mullen, Teacher; Cheryl Williams, HR Director; Kate Borg, Outreach Director; Janet Bean, Assessment and ESL Coordinator; Scott Brackett, IR Director; G'Nell Price, Assistant Principal; Sara Merritt, Principal; Ann Du, CFO; Gretchen Bettes, Teacher; Eric Grimmatt, CSR Director; Jenny Wells, General Counsel; Veronica Keating, Executive Assistant; and TSBVI students and parents.

**Recognition of Students for Outstanding Performance on Statewide Assessments**

Lee Sonnenberg and Miles Fain presented awards to students for outstanding performance on statewide assessments in the 2022-2023 school year.

**Recognition of Retiring TSBVI Staff Members**

G'Nell Price recognized retiring TSBVI teacher Elina Mullen. Ms. Mullen shared her gratitude for her experience with the School. Mr. Sonnenberg presented Ms. Mullen with a plaque from the Board in honor of her 33 years of service.

**Report from Family Lynx Program**

Barbara Knighton updated the Board on the activities of the TSBVI Family Lynx Program. The Board shared their appreciation for the organization's work.

**Public Comments/Open Forum**

No one signed up to comment.

**Consideration of Approval of Minutes of August 4, 2023 Board Meeting**

Elaine Robertson motioned to approve the minutes from the August 4, 2023 board meeting. Julie Prause seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes and the motion passed.

## **Report from the Audit, Compliance and Management Review Committee**

### **a. Report from Garza/Gonzalez and Associates**

#### **Consideration of approval of TSBVI's 2023 Internal Audit Annual Report including the Audit of Records Management and prior year recommendations**

Ms. Robertson provided a brief overview of the report from the auditors. There was only one finding with a recommendation made related to the Audit of Records Management. The Audit Committee recommended the approval of the Internal Audit Annual Report and Audit of Records Management; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the report and the motion passed.

## **Report from the Finance Committee**

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

Julie Prause reported that both TSBVI Investment Officers Ann Du and Christina Hoke completed their required Public Funds Investment Act training in the past year.

### **b. Consideration of adoption of a resolution to appoint TSBVI's alternate Investment Officer**

Ms. Prause stated that the Finance Committee recommended the approval of adoption of a resolution to appoint Christina Hoke as TSBVI's alternate Investment Officer; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the resolution and the motion passed.

### **c. Consideration of approval of Investment Report**

Ms. Prause reported that the Finance Committee recommended approval of the investment report as presented in the Board's packet; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the investment report and the motion passed.

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

There were no gifts or donations valued at over \$500 received since the last board meeting report.

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

Ms. Prause reported on a donation of \$500 or less received by the School. The recommendation to approve the request for expenditure of a donation from Delta Kappa Gamma in the amount of \$9,744 for a revamp of all sports uniforms came from the Finance Committee; therefore, a second was not required. The board voted unanimously to approve gifts or donations and the motion passed.

### **f. Review of budget reports**

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

The percentage of the budgets used as of August 31, 2023 were: class room instruction - 100 percent, residential program - 91 percent, summer and short-term programs - 99 percent, related and support services - 101 percent, technical assistance - 97 percent, teacher preparation - 60 percent, central administration - 92 percent, other support services - 108 percent and the total expended across all budgets was 96 percent.

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

Ms. Prause reported that the Legacy Budget revenue percent of budget received was 127 percent.

➤ **Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report**

The total percentage of budget used for the Legacy Budget operating expenditures was 81 percent.

Lee Sonnenberg asked Emily Coleman to provide an update on the AC issues on campus. Ms. Coleman answered that units across campus were failing and the School requested that TFC (Texas Facilities Commission) replace units in the next two years.

**Report from the Program Committee**

a. **Report from Comprehensive Program Principal, Miles Fain**

➤ **Statewide Assessment results**

Brenda Lee reported on the student statewide assessment results from 2022-2023.

➤ **Report on English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Analysis**

Ms. Lee reported on the ESL program analysis from 2022-2023.

➤ **Plan to promote academic excellence**

Ms. Lee summarized the Plan to Promote Academic Excellence document and stated that Principal Miles Fain has been working closely with Education Service Center Region 13.

➤ **Comprehensive Programs update**

Ms. Lee shared an update on the activities of the TSBVI Comprehensive Programs.

b. **Report from Curriculum Director**

➤ **TSBVI Student Progress Measure results**

Ms. Lee reported on information presented regarding TSBVI's student progress measure results from 2022-2023. These three performance measures are tied to TSBVI's accreditation standards set with the Texas Education Agency and the School exceeded all three standards.

➤ **Consideration of approval of use of the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading program**

The Program Committee recommended approval of use of the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading program for phonics instruction; therefore a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the reading program and the motion passed.

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

➤ **Short-Term Program update**

Ms. Lee reported that there were 215 students attending the summer 2023 programs. There were 359 spots to fill and 276 spots offered to students. The program hoped to serve 240 students.

d. **Report from Outreach Director**

➤ **Outreach Program update**

Ms. Lee said that Outreach Director Kate Borg reported that there were 68 requests for services since August. Coffee Hours sessions were well attended.

## **Consideration of Approval of TSBVI Organizational Chart**

There were no changes to the organization of the School. Elaine Robertson motioned to approve the organization chart as presented. Brenda Lee seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

## **Final Update on Completion of Action Plans in the 2022-2023 Annual Improvement Plan**

Ms. Coleman stated that the action plan status document provided to the Board is the final update on completion of action plans from the 2022-2023 Annual Improvement Plan. She provided a brief summary of some of the action plans.

### **Report from the Superintendent**

#### **a. Campus activities**

Ms. Coleman reported on campus activities since the August board meeting as well as future planned activities.

#### **b. Superintendent activities**

Ms. Coleman reported on her activities since the last board meeting.

## **Consideration of and Possible Action Regarding the Requirements of House Bill 3 and Consideration of Superintendent's Formative Evaluation**

Mr. Sonnenberg announced that the Board would recess the open session and convene in a closed meeting to discuss the following item listed under agenda item #14 – 'Consideration of and Possible Action Regarding the Requirements of House Bill 3' in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.076 – Deliberation Regarding Security Devices or Security Audits as well as item #15 – 'Consideration of Superintendent's Formative Evaluation' in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.074 – Personnel Matters."

He stated that 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. It was 12:06 p.m.

At 12:27 p.m., the Board convened in open session. No further action was taken on either of the two agenda items.

## **Discussion of Future Board Meeting Topics and Training Dates**

The Board inquired about their training requirements. Susan Houghtling said she would send them individual needs reports.

## **Announcements**

Mr. Sonnenberg announced his daughter was formally engaged. Mr. Worthington reported that a TSBVI alumni had passed away. Ms. Jones stated her father wrote a book. Ms. Gautney said that her son was starting his first season of baseball.

## **Adjournment**

Ms. Prause motioned to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Ms. Jones seconded the motioned. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

## **End of document**