Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
BOARD MINUTES
for November 17, 2023 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 10:15 a.m.

Introduction of Board Members and Audience
Board members present were: Dan Brown, Elaine Robertson, Beth Jones, Brenda Lee, Julie Prause, Ernest Worthington, and Maghan Gautney.

Audience members preset were: Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director; Kate Borg, Outreach Director; Cheryl Williams, HR Director; Sara Merritt, Short-Term Programs Principal; Scott Brackett, IR Director; Ann Du, CFO; Miles Fain, Comprehensive Programs Principal; Eric Grimmett, CSR Director; Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator; Stacy Correa, Safety and Security Program Supervisor; Jenny Wells, General Counsel; and Veronica Keating, Executive Assistant.

Public Comments/Open Forum
There was no one signed up for public comments.

Consideration of Approval of Minutes of the September 21 and 22, 2023 Board Meetings
Mr. Sonnenberg stated that the words *visually impaired* should be added after "Texas School for the Blind" in the first paragraph of the September 21, 2023 board meeting minutes.

Dan Brown motioned to approve the September 21 and 22, 2023 board meeting minutes as amended. Julie Prause seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended and the motion passed.

Report from the Finance Committee

a. **Consideration of approval of board policies:**
   DEC (TSBVI) Compensation and Benefits: Leaves and Absences
   DECA (TSBVI) Leaves and Absences: Family Medical Leave and Pool

Julie Prause asked Jenny Wells to explain the changes to policies DEC and DECA. Ms. Wells stated there were revisions to DEC that incorporated recent legislation, TASB recommendations, and to better reflect current law. Revisions to policy DECA were made to incorporate recent legislation.

The Committee recommended to approve the amendments as presented; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the recommendation and the motion passed.

b. **Consideration of approval of renewal of Nolan County farm contract**

Ms. Prause stated that the Committee recommended the renewal of the Nolan County farm contract; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the contract and the motion passed.

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

Ms. Prause reported the total investments for one month ending September 30, 2023 were $1,363,176 and the earnings for the period were $2,713.

The Committee recommended the approval of the investment report as reported; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the report and the motion passed.

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

The Committee recommended approval of donations received for the one month ending September 30, 2023 in the amount of $118,000, therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the donations and the motion passed.

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

No action was taken on the item.

f. **Review of budget reports**

Ms. Prause gave a review of the budget reports.

- **Operating Budget Expenditure Report**

The percentage of the budgets used as of September 30, 2023 were: classroom instruction – eight percent, residential program – nine percent, summer and short-term programs – six percent, related and support services – seven percent, technical assistance (Outreach) – seven percent, teacher preparation (Outreach) – one percent, educational professional salary increases – zero percent, central administrative – eight percent, and other support services – three percent. The total expended across all budgets was seven percent.

- **Legacy Revenue Budget Report**

The benchmark for the Legacy revenue budget report for 1 month ending September 30, 2023 was eight percent. The total percent of the budget received was zero percent.

- **Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report**

The benchmark for the percentage of the budget used as of September 30, 2023 was eight percent. The total expended was one percent.

Report from the Program Committee

a. **Report from Comprehensive Program Principal**
   - **Residential and Recreation Program update**

Brenda Lee reported on an update that the Program Committee received from students on programs in the residential and recreation departments.

b. **Report from Curriculum Department Director**
   - **Consideration of adoption of curriculum relating to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, and dating violence**

The Committee recommended approval of adoption of two curricula relating to the prevention of child abuse, family violence and dating violence – *Expect Respect* and *UnHushed*; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the two curricula and the motion passed.

- **Report on Curriculum sales**

Ms. Lee reported that the Curriculum Department beat their record for sales last year. A large percentage of the sales was specifically from the sales of the *Essential Tools of the Trade for Teachers of Students Who are Deafblind* curriculum.

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

- **Short-Term Programs update**

The Summer Program had a target of 240 students and it was dependent on the number of staff available. The application process for the Summer 2024 Program will open from January 8, 2024 through February 14, 2024. Short-Term Programs during the regular school year has added 16 individualized sessions. Ms. Lee added that, in the Committee, it was mentioned that it may appear as if student numbers have gone down. Sara Merritt added that this was to extend the length of time students were in programs and will help students retain what they learned at the School.

d. **Report from Outreach Director**

- **Statewide Mentoring Program**

The Mentor Program started in 2002. Currently there are 65 mentor/protégé matches and this number is down; however, there is not a shortage of mentors.

- **Outreach Program update**

Ms. Lee stated that the Outreach program added an Instructional Resource Library tab to TSBVI's website. There were 400 participants at the Southwest Orientation and Mobility Association (SWOMA) Conference that was virtual. Next year it will be in person and in Round Rock, Texas.

Report on Achievement of 2022-2023 Objectives from the Agency Strategic Plan and the Annual Improvement Plan

Susan Houghtling stated that the School collaborates with staff of the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) to develop measurable objectives of progress that are submitted every two years in the Agency Strategic Plan and Legislative Appropriations Request. TSBVI also has three performance criteria by which the Texas Education Agency (TEA) determines the School's accreditation status. Additional measurable objectives are found in the School's Annual Improvement Plan. Ms. Houghtling gave a report regarding the School's achievements on its 37 performance objectives. All nine of the LBB objectives were met or exceeded as well as the three TEA accreditation standards. Most of the remaining objectives are tied to achievement of action plans in the Annual Improvement Plan. The majority of them were met or exceeded with a few falling below the performance objectives and nine being partially achieved. Work on those that were not met continue in the current school year. Lastly, Ms. Houghtling shared a few of the many positive comments received in surveys from parents and local school district personnel.

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

Emily Coleman stated that a few slight changes are recommended to the School's vision, and mission statements and long-range goals in order to improve terminology by removing the words " visually impaired" and adding "low vision".

Ms. Lee motioned to approve TSBVI's Vision, Mission and Philosophy Statements and Long-Range Goals. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the language as presented and the motion passed.

Report on 2023 TSBVI Safety and Security Audit
Update on Personnel Matters and Legal Obligations
Mr. Sonnenberg stated that the Board would recess the open session and convene in a closed meeting to discuss agenda item #9 – 'Report on 2023 TSBVI Safety and Security Audit' in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.076 – Deliberation Regarding Security Devices or Security Audits and agenda item #10 – 'Update on Personnel Matters and Legal Obligations' in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.074 – Personnel Matters and Section 551.071 – Consultation with School Attorney.

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 convened in the open meeting. It was 11:04 a.m.

At 12:20 p.m., Mr. Sonnenberg stated the Board would convene in open session.

There was no further action taken on either of the two agenda items.

Consideration of Approval of Superintendent's Campus Housing Agreement
Mr. Brown motioned to approve the Superintendent's campus housing agreement through August 31, 2025. Elaine Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the agreement and the motion passed.

Report on Maintenance, Annual Inspection, and Recommendations for Maintenance and Repair of the Campus Residence
Ms. Coleman reported that Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) is finalizing projects on the campus residence with the goal of completing them by year's end. They are also going to assess replacing three air conditioning units and associated ductwork and make any additional repairs to other associated components. In addition to those, they will also assess repairing and painting the residence perimeter fence and paint the exterior of the house including doors and trim.

Designation of Business Closure Days Related to Public Information Requests
House Bill 3033 requires the Board to designate up to ten non-business days in the calendar year when the School is closed beyond those that fall on weekends or state or federal holidays for responding to Public Information Requests. TSBVI administrative staff recommended six days in November and December 2023 and four more in the months of January and March 2024.

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the designation of business closure days related to public information requests as presented. Mr. Worthington seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the dates presented and the motion passed.

Annual Report on Employee Complaints about Discrimination or Harassment
Cheryl Williams reported that there were three employee complaints about discrimination or harassment in the past year.

Report from the Superintendent

a. **Campus activities**

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

b. **Superintendent activities**

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

c. **Activities of the TSBVI Safety and Security Committee**

Ms. Coleman reported on the Committee's activities at their November 16, 2023 meeting.

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

Ms. Williams stated she will send the Board an evaluation template in mid-December. The Board would then send it back to her with ratings for each category with a deadline in mid-January. Next, she will compile the data and present it to the Board for a final decision before the evaluation scheduled for the February board meeting.

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

Mr. Sonnenberg read a report on each board member's completion of training requirements during the past year. He stated that completing the annual required continuing education is a basic obligation and expectation of any sitting board member under State Board of Education rule. Mr. Sonnenberg reported that all board members were up to date or exceeded their training requirements.

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

Ms. Prause recommended training she received on the Civilian Response to an Active Shooter. Ms. Gautney suggested the Stop the Bleed training.

Discussion of Future Board Meeting Topics

Board members stated they would like an update on the issue discussed in closed session – Update on Personnel Matters and Legal Obligations and on the Steven F. Austin University and Texas Tech University programs.

Announcements

The Board shared good news about themselves or family members.

Adjournment

Ms. Prause motioned to approve the adjournment of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Board of Trustees meeting. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve adjournment and the motion passed at 12:56 PM.

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Lee Sonnenberg, Board President Date

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Dan Brown, Board Secretary Date

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Veronica Keating, Recording Secretary Date