TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 8, 2025

The scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI), was held in the Board Meeting Room, Building 600, located at 1100 West 45th Street, Austin, Texas on August 8, 2025.

Call to Order
Lee Sonnenberg, Board President called the Texas School for the Blind Board of Trustees meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 8:31 a.m. on August 8, 2025.

Introduction of Board Members and Audience
Other Board members present were Brenda Lee, Belinda Rudinger, and Ernest Worthington.

Board members present via Zoom were Julie Prause, Dan Brown, Maghan Gautney, and Beth Jones.

Hillary Rodriguez was not present.

Audience members present were Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Jenny Wells, General Counsel; Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director; Belinda Fayard, Outreach Assistant Director; Erica Cairns, Outreach Director; Elizabeth Dube, Teacher; Marlo Kibler, HR Director; Eden Hagelman, STP Principal; Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator; Jeannette Hawrylo, Accounts Payable; Ann Du, CFO; and Cyrenna Villegas, Procurement Director.

Present via Zoom were Miles Fain, Principal; Scott Brackett, IR Director; David Hook, Outreach; and Heather Munro, Stephen F. Austin Assistant Professor.

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

Training Session on Updates to Texas Education Code from the Last Legislative Session
Jenny Wells, TSBVI General Counsel, provided an overview of the 89th Regular legislative session. Ms. Wells provided a high-level overview of the school funding bills, including Educational Savings Act, and a number of bills that directly affect public education. She discussed in greater detail House Bill 2, Senate Bill 12 (parental rights), Senate Bill 13 (library materials), House Bill 1481 (cell phone ban), House Bill 33 (school safety), House Bill 121 (additional school safety), Senate Bill 571 and House Bill 4623 (reporting requirements and liability related to educator misconduct), and bills related to religion in schools (Senate Bill 10, Senate Bill 11, Senate Bill 965). She also briefly discussed several bills that are specific to Boards and open meetings, including House Bill 1522 and Senate Bill 413, as well as a new law related to prohibited personal services by administrators (House Bill 3372).

Mr. Sonnenberg stated that the meeting would recess and reconvene at 10:15 a.m.

Call to Order

Mr. Sonnenberg called the Texas School for the Blind Board of Trustees meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

Public Comments/Open Forum
Valerie Alvarez, All Blind Children of Texas (ABCT) Vice President, was given five minutes to speak. She stated that ABCT was initiated by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Ms. Alvarez gave an overview of the program and how it serves Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs), Orientation and Mobility (O&M) professionals and paraprofessionals in the area of the blindness. She explained that the program serves youth across Texas with financial assistance for experiences they may otherwise not have. She added that the group is funded by donations and that a fundraiser is planned for October 17, 2025 at Blue Lacy Restaurant in Austin, TX. She thanked the Board for their time. The Board expressed their gratitude for the services that All Blind Children of Texas offers to the community.

Report on Stephen F. Austin State University Teacher Preparation Program
Heather Munro, Ph.D., Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) Assistant Professor, provided an overview of SFASU's teacher preparation program. In 2024 there were 80 TVI students at the graduate level, 18 COMS at the graduate level and 8 more at the undergraduate level. In 2024 there were 21 graduates.

Consideration of Approval of Minutes of May 30, 2025 Board Meeting and June 16, 2025 Board Meeting
Brenda Lee made a motion to approve the May 30, 2025 and June 16, 2025 board meeting minutes. Belinda Rudinger seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval of Investment Report
Ann Du stated that the total earnings for the ten-month period ending June 30, 2025 totaled $41,025. Ms. Lee motioned to approve the Investment Report. Ernest Worthington seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval of Receipt of Gifts and Donations of Over $500
Ms. Rudinger motioned to approve the receipt of gifts and donation of over $500. Ms. Prause seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval of Request for Expenditure of Gifts and Donations
Ms. Coleman requested $10,000 to expend for low vision equipment. Dan Brown motioned to approve the request. Maghan Gautney second the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Review of Budget Reports

Operating Budget Expenditure Report
Ann Du explained that the benchmark for the percentage of the Operating Budget expended as of June 30, 2025 was 83%. The total percentages of the budget expended were: classroom instruction – 82%; residential program – 84%; summer and short-term programs – 56%; total related and support services - 79%; technical assistance – 74%; teacher preparation - 63%,

educational professional salary increases – 0%; central administrative – 78%; other support services – 81%; with the total budgets in state treasury expended at 78%.

Legacy Revenue Budget Report
Ms. Du reported that the benchmark for the Legacy Budget for the eight-month period ending on June 30, 2025 was 83%. The total percent of revenues received was 110% of the projection.

Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report
The benchmark for expenditures in the Legacy Operating Budget to be used as of June 30, 2025 was 83%. The total percentage of the budget expended was 73%.

Consideration of Superintendent's Salary for 2025-2026
Mr. Sonnenberg stated that the Board would recess the open session and convene in a closed meeting to discuss agenda item #13 – 'Consideration of Superintendent's Salary for 2025-2026 in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.074 – Personnel Matters. 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 10:49 a.m.

Mr. Sonnenberg convened the board meeting back in open session at 11:09 a.m.

Ms. Lee made a motion to increase the Superintendent's salary to $184,125.67 with the option to revisit the salary if Austin Independent School District (AISD) makes revisions to administrative salaries. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval of Operating Budget and Personnel Budget for 2025-2026
Julie Prause motioned to approve the Operating, Personnel and Legacy budgets for 2025-2026 as presented to the Board. Belinda Rudinger seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval to Transfer Funds between Budget Codes
Brenda Lee motioned to authorize the Superintendent to transfer funds up to 20% from one appropriation item to another for the purpose of consolidating any budget savings in departmental operating budgets, including those savings from lapsed salaries, to first cover any budget deficits that may occur in other departmental budgets or program cost accounts and then to utilize any additional savings to cover any emergencies or any unplanned expenditures that may occur during the fiscal year, as well as, authorize the transfer of funds between the various projects within the Legacy funds without limitation. Belinda Rudinger seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval of Board Policies:
EFB - Instructional Resources: Library Media Programs
Dan Brown motioned to approve amendments to board policy EFB - Instructional Resources: Library Media Programs. Brenda Lee seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Report on Changes to the TSBVI Student Code of Conduct

Ms. Coleman stated that, during this year's legislative session, there were changes made in law that will impact TSBVI's Student Code of Conduct. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is required to develop a model notice that must be shared with parents regarding legal changes that will impact districts' Student Code of Conduct. The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) will also develop and post a model Student Code of Conduct for schools and boards to consider.

She added that Board Policy FO states: "The Board shall adopt a Student Code of Conduct (SCOC) for TSBVI with the advice of the Instructional Planning Council (IPC)." A draft revised SCOC will be presented to the IPC for feedback at its first meeting in September. Following that, the SCOC would be presented to the Board for approval at their next meeting in October.

Consideration of Approval of New Innovative Course
Angela Wolf stated that the Texas Administrative Code 19TAC Chapter 74.27 allows school districts to offer innovative courses in addition to those offered in the required curriculum. These courses must be approved by the district's Board of Trustees and can only be offered for state elective credit. Ms. Wolf asked that the Board approve the School offering College Transition as an innovative course beginning in the 2025-2026 school year.

Students enrolled in this course can earn one elective credit. The course is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful, active learners in high school and college. Students examine research-based learning strategies (proven to lead to academic success) such as goal setting, notetaking, active reading, test-taking strategies, and research methods. Students will also research financial scholarships and grant opportunities, complete applications, and explore technical schools, colleges, and universities.

Brenda Lee motioned to approve the new innovative course. Belinda Rudinger seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval of New Contract Staff
Dan Brown motioned to approve the list of contract staff provided to the Board including the additions of Belinda Fayard moving from lead teacher to assistant director of Outreach and Courtney Foreman's contract as Statewide Mentor Coordinator. Julie Prause seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval of Superintendent's Campus Housing Agreement
Mr. Sonnenberg asked for consideration of approving the Superintendent's Housing Agreement as presented to the Board. According to Board Policy BJBA, the Board may require the Superintendent to reside on the School campus if it is determined to be necessary to carry out the job responsibilities of the position. At the April 4, 2019 meeting of the Board, it was the decision of the Board that Superintendent Emily Coleman would be required to reside on the TSBVI campus.

Policy BJBA also states: "If the Superintendent is required or another employee is allowed to reside at the school, the Board of Trustees shall enter into a housing agreement with the Superintendent or other employee setting forth the rights and responsibilities concerning the occupancy of the residence. The Board shall ensure that maintenance and upkeep of the

Superintendent's Residence is in accordance with the housing agreement and with the provisions of the General Appropriations Act".

Julie Prause motioned to approve the Superintendent's campus housing agreement for the period of September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2027. Beth Jones seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Report on Contracting with External Audit Firm
Ms. Coleman stated that a request for proposals was submitted in May for contracting with an external audit firm and an evaluation team was formed to review the proposals. The Procurement Department received four proposals and all but one was responsive and eligible for evaluation. The Evaluation Team, using a collaborative team score approach, completed the review and scoring of each eligible proposal. Evaluation categories included Quality of Proposed Services, Requirements and Qualifications, Experience with Performing Services, Technological Capabilities and Price.

The highest final score was given to Garza/Gonzalez & Associates who were informed on July 10, 2025 that TSBVI accepted their proposal for services. The contract will be issued for an initial one-year period with a service date range of September 1, 2025- August 31, 2026 and four one-year options to renew as outlined in the original solicitation approved by the State Auditor's Office. Ms. Coleman stated that TSBVI was pleased to continue contracting with the external audit firm, Garza/Gonzalez and Associates.

Report from the Superintendent
a. Campus activities
Ms. Coleman stated that summer programs went well. Comprehensive Programs is gearing up for the regular school year. New teachers were on campus starting July 28, 2025 and all staff will return on August 11. Student registration day will be on August 17 and the first day of classes begin on August 18. In the Outreach Programs, Coffee Hour sessions continued in the summer and they also held the Braille and Tactile Graphics Boot Camp.

b. Superintendent's activities
Ms. Coleman stated that the School hired the new HR Director, Marlo Kibler. Ms. Coleman reported that she had attended the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind (COSB) summer board meeting at the Maryland School for the Blind. There were vacant seats and she was the president-elect. She will attend the next COSB meeting in October. Region 13 Education Service Center visited the School to film a promotional video for their Superintendent Certificate Program. The School has a new Legislative Budget Board Analyst and a group from that office visited the School. Ms. Coleman added that she completed her summer semester courses with Texas Tech University. She reported that she has been in touch with Austin FC regarding her idea for a soccer field at TSBVI.

Review of August District Safety and Security Committee Meeting
Ms. Coleman updated the Board regarding the last School Safety and Security Committee meeting. She stated the Committee discussed legislative impacts affecting safety. Brian Swegle, Operations Director, will initiate a traffic study through the City of Austin so that it can be determined whether the School should have posted speed limits during student drop-off and pick-up hours. She stated that TSBVI Security will be implementing a new bus pickup and

drop-off route to make operations at the front of the main building less congested and safer for pedestrians.

Discussion of Conducting the Superintendent's Formative Evaluation at the October Board Meeting
Mr. Sonnenberg stated that, at the October meeting, the Board will review the status of performance goals set at the Superintendent's January 2025 evaluation. The Board will conduct Ms. Coleman's next formal evaluation in January 2026.

Personnel Update
This agenda item was not discussed.

Consideration of Approval of TASB Delegate and Alternate
Dan motioned that the Board not designate a TASB delegate and alternate this year. Brenda Lee seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Approval of Board Meeting and Training Dates
Ms. Coleman stated that the School has not received guidance from TEA or TASB regarding legislative changes to when board meetings are held. She recommended that the October meetings be moved to October 1 and 2, 2025. Committee meetings would be held from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on October 1 and the full Board meeting from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Ms. Coleman recommended that, on October 2, 2025, a strategic planning and team building session for the Board be held from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. She recommended that, on December 4, 2025, Committee meetings be scheduled from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the full Board meeting from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. On December 5, 2025 the Board would be invited to attend the USABA National High School Goal Ball Championships at TSBVI. Ms. Coleman stated that, potentially, future board meetings would be held on Thursday as opposed to Friday.

Julie Prause motioned to change the board meeting dates for the rest of the 2025 year. Ernest Worthington seconded the motion. All board members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Discussion of Future Board Meeting Topics
The Board discussed a future board meeting topic of the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA). Julie Prause stated that she would like information regarding quota materials that teachers are able to check out through the American Printing House for the Blind and what they keep and discard. She added she would like general knowledge as to how the program works.

Announcements
Brenda Lee said her region has a braille reading student who rode a bull and played football. Those two activities were on his bucket list.

Adjournment
Brenda Lee motioned to adjourn the August 8, 2025 meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Texas School for the Blind. Julie Prause seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. It was 12:13 p.m.