TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 7, 2024

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

Introduction of Board Members and Audience
Board members present were:
Lee Sonnenberg, Board President; Julie Prause, Board Member; Dan Brown, Board Member; Beth Jones, Board Member; Hillary Rodriguez, Board Member; Ernest Worthington, Board Member; and Elaine Robertson, Board Member.

Audience members present were:
Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Alex Arguello, Community Engagement Coordinator; Miles Fain, Principal; Ann Du, CFO; Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator; Michelle Molnar, Teacher; Victoria Garate, Teacher; Bella Andrino, TA; Dori Senatori, Day Student Coordinator; Eden Hagelman, Principal; Nate Dunaway, TA; Clarice Fuentes, Administrative Assistant; Colin Higginbotham, Media Team; Jenny Wells, General Counsel; Erica Cairns, Outreach Director; Scott Brackett, IR Director; Schuronda Cruel, RI; TSBVI Students and Families.

Present via Zoom was:
Barbara Knighton and Lowell Bartholomee.

Recognition of Students for Outstanding Performance on Statewide Assessments
Mr. Sonnenberg recognized students for their outstanding performance on the statewide assessment tests.

Report from Family Lynx Program
Ms. Knighton reported the events happening on campus through the Family Lynx program. She stated that on registration day Family Lynx gave yearbooks to new families. Families shared having them to reference helped to see what their student looks forward to. It also gave families the opportunity to see staff and the different programs. The program would have a booth set up at White Cane Day. The group plans to meet in the spring and will discuss transition into adulthood. She shared that she would be stepping down from her leadership role in the Family Lynx Program next school year. Amy Featherston Potts would take on the leadership role. Ms. Knighton still plans to participate as a family representative. Ms. Knighton thanked the School and the Board for their support.

The Board expressed their gratitude and thanked Ms. Knighton for her hard work and dedication over the years.

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

Consideration of Approval of Minutes of August 8 & 9, 2024 Board Meetings
Ms. Prause motioned to approve the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired August 8 & 9,2024 board meeting minutes. Ms. Robertson seconded the motion and the Board 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 2024 Internal Audit Annual Report including the Audit of Residential Services and prior year recommendations**

Mr. Worthington reported the prior year recommendations and the audit of residential services. The auditing firm found that all previous years recommendations had been remedied. The auditing firm recommended the addition of checks and balances in regards to night staff and drills.

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of TSBVI's 2024 Internal Audit Annual Report including the audit of residential services and prior year recommendation. The Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Report from the Finance Committee

a. **Consideration of approval of Investment Report**

Mr. Worthington reported the total investments ending on August 31, 2024 was $1,330,370.

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of the investment report; therefore a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to pass the Investment report.

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

Mr. Worthington reported the Committee recommended the approval of receipt of gifts and donations of over $500; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

c. **Consideration of approval of request for expenditure of gifts and donation**

There were no requests for expenditure of gifts and donations.

d. **Review of budget reports**
   - Operating Budget Expenditure Report

Mr. Worthington stated the total benchmark for the percentage of budget used as of August 31, 2024 was 100 percent. The percentages of each budget strategy actually expended as of August 31, 2024 were: total classroom instruction – 97%, residential program – 90%, summer and short-term programs – 100%, related and support services – 95%, technical assistance – 79%, central administration – 98%, total other support services strategy 100% and the total for all in state treasury 95%.

   - **Legacy Revenue Budget Report**

The benchmark for revenues ending August 31, 2024 was 100%. The total legacy revenue was $1,158,102.

- **Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report**

The benchmark for the budget used as of August 31, 2024 was 100%. The total for the budget used was 81%.

Report from the Program Committee

a. **Report from Comprehensive Program Principal**
   - **Statewide Assessment results**

Ms. Jones reported the STAAR performances by TSBVI students in grade 3-8.

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

Ms. Jones reported the numbers to which the School's student population were English as a second language learners and the ratio of ESL certified teachers. In preparation for challenges due to student language barriers and limited prior education, the School created a new position. Ms. Ana Villarreal would be the new ESL Coordinator/Teacher.

- **Plan to promote academic excellence**

The plan to promote academic excellence and improve student performance on the STAAR consisted of two sections. The first was activity planning. Secondly, plan for student performance improvement. Ms. Jones shared the activities, statuses and responsible party.

- **Consideration of Membership to the School Health Advisory Council**

Mr. Fain stated that there was a great parent response. He stated that the School was seeking approval for parent/guardian representatives; Jennifer Schneider, Tamara Benford, Kilari Pavini, Elsie Medina and Brittany Nowakowski. The recommendations came from the Committee; therefore, a second was not required. All board members voted unanimously to pass the motion.

- **Comprehensive Programs update**

Mr. Fain gave an overview of information regarding student programs.

b. **Report from Curriculum Director**
   - **TSBVI Student Progress Measure results**

Ms. Jones stated that the School received notice from TEA last school year indicating they had approved the proposed performance measures for the 2023-2024 school year. The proposed criteria included:

1. 85% of students for whom TSBVI Performance Indicator Evaluations are administered will score 2.0 or higher (indicating at least moderate progress) in every Core and Expanded Core Curricular area in which they are receiving programming as determined by the ARD committee.

2. 76% of Graduated Students from the Past Five Years will either be identified as Currently Employed, enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training, or Engaged in Productive Activities.

3. The percentage of students at TSBVI passing the statewide assessment will meet or exceed the percentage of the passing rate of students in special education in Texas.

The School passed two of the three criteria.

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

Ms. Jones listed the student programs taking place through Short-Term Program.

d. **Report from Outreach Director**
   - **Outreach Program update**

Ms. Jones listed the programs taking place through the Outreach program.

e. **Consideration of approval of board policies:**
   DMBA (TSBVI) Special Programs Training: Training Related to Visual Impairment
   EHAA Basic Instructional Program: Required Instruction (All Levels)

The Program Committee recommended the approval of policy DMBA and EHAA as presented; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Consideration of Approval of Broday Trust Modifications
Ms. Coleman stated the Broday trust would terminate in 2027. There would be a penalty for collecting the funds in full; therefore, it would be in TSBVI's best interest to keep the money invested in a trust and continue to collect annual interest.

Dan Brown motioned to approve the modification of the Broday Trust. Beth Jones seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

Consideration of Approval of New Contract Staff
Ms. Prause motioned to approve the renewal of teacher Victoria Garate, Teacher. Ms. Robertson seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Consideration of Approval of TSBVI Organizational Chart
Ms. Robertson motioned to approve TSBVI's organization chart. Mr. Brown seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously. Mr.Brown seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Final Update on Completion of Action Plans in the 2023-2024 Annual Improvement Plan
Ms. Coleman updated the Board on the status of completion of the School's action plans from the 2023-2024 Annual Improvement Plan.

Report from the Superintendent

a. **Legislative update**

Ms. Coleman gave an update on the Legislative items pertaining to the School.

b. **Campus activities**

Ms. Coleman stated that registration day was successful. The first day of classes was August 19, 2024. White Cane Day would take place October 16, 2024. Family Day would take place on November 9, 2024. Short-Term Programs as well as the Outreach program have several programs happening through November.

c. **Superintendent activities**

Ms. Coleman stated that she is continuing her schooling for her doctorate. She attended several conferences including APH and COSB. She continues to serve on COSB's board.

Consideration of Superintendent's Formative Evaluation and Personnel Update

The Board recessed the open session and convened in a closed meeting to discuss the following item listed under agenda item #15 – 'Consideration of Superintendent's Formative Evaluation' 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 reconvenes in the open meeting. It was 12:05 p.m.

It was 1:18 p.m. and the Board convened in open session. No action was taken on the above agenda items.

Report on TASA/TASB Convention

Ms. Rogriguez shared her experience at the convention. She recommended the TX Trustee Institute Program to all new members.

Discussion of Future Board Meeting Topics and Training Dates

The Board requested that a student lead the pledge of allegiance and the Texas pledge.

Announcements

Mr. Brown stated his birthday soon after the meeting.

Adjournment

Ms. Prause motioned to adjourn the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Board of Trustees meeting at 1:37 p.m. Mr. Brown seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.