

TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 8, 2022

Call to Order

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President called the full board meeting of the Governing Board for the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to order at 10:18 a.m.

Introduction of Board Members and Audience

Board members present were:

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President; Mike Hanley, Beth Jones, Julie Prause, Dan Brown, Elaine Robertson, Ernest Worthington, and Maghan Gautney.

Board member not present was:

Brenda Lee.

Audience members present were:

Emily Coleman, Superintendent; TSBVI students, Emily Gibbs, Norma Crosby, NFB President; Glen Crosby, NFB member; Dori Senatori, Teacher; Beverly Gandy, Teacher; Alex Arguello, Head of Community Engagement; Cheryl Williams, Human Resources Director; Jenny Wells, General Counsel; Sarah Merritt, Short-Term Programs Principal; Carlotta Binns, Christopher Correll, Teacher; Kim Wright, Residential Instructor; Bridgett Wolf, Residential Instructor; Misty Wade, Residential Instructor; Brian McDonald, Operations Director; Paula Wilson, Teacher; Miles Fain, Principal; Patty Bushland, Parent; Dan Hampton, Information Resources Director; Josh Splinter, Accounting Director; Kate Borg, Outreach Director; Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluations Coordinator.

Audience members present via Zoom were:

Cyrenna Villegas, Procurement Director; and Bryan Maffett, Systems Support Specialist.

Report from Family Lynx Program

Patty Bushland gave a report on the Family Lynx Program. The program officially released the video "Sights and Sounds". It had 1,000 views. Family Lynx partnered with the EXIT program to disseminate Paws awards to staff on campus. A student in the program delivers the TSBVI community with personalized awards and treat bags in honor of their recognition. The Family Lynx Program is making a butterfly garden for TSBVI's community to enjoy. The program will be offering a new Resource Round-Up. Resource Round-Up would offer a monthly email with information about upcoming meetings, training conferences and other various opportunities. The Family Lynx program is organizing prom photos and incorporating families into the event. Ms. Bushland thanked the Board and the School for their support. Mr. Sonnenberg thanked the program and all of those involved for their hard work.

Student to Industry Connection Course and Mentoring Update

Carlotta Binns shared information about the new course the EXIT program is offering called "Student to Industry Connection Course". The students were learning to connect with community organizations dedicated to mentoring students. Dori Senatori shared more on the connection

course. The course started with the resources from National Federation for the Blind. NFB President Norma Crosby described what the process was like working with students via Zoom. She went on to explain students would be building relationships with mentors through the program. NFB intends to keep working with TSBVI students. She stated students can attend NFB's national convention at NFB's expense. She added it was a dream of hers to work with TSBVI. Students shared their perspective working with the program. Mr. Brown asked how long the mentor terms are. Ms. Crosby answered it was typically one year. Ms. Coleman stated that she is proud to partner with NFB.

Public Comments/Open Forum

Christopher Corell was signed up to speak. Mr. Correll stated non-TVI teachers would be left out of the Teacher Incentive Allotment Program. He added non-TVI teachers come to the School with years of special education experience. Mr. Corell proposed TSBVI administration open the allotment program to those non-TVI's with two or more years of experience.

Consideration of Approval of Minutes of February 18, 2022 Board Meeting

Julie Prause motioned to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2022 board meeting with the proposed change to add in the comments section that the Steve and Elaine Robertson elementary school is in Katy ISD. Elaine Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Report from the Finance Committee

a. Consideration of approval of Investment Report

The 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

The Committee recommended approval of receipt of gifts and donations 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

The Committee recommended approval of request for expenditure of gifts and donations, therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

d. Review of budget reports

Ms. Prause gave a review of the budget reports.

➤ Operating Budget Expenditure Report

The total budget used as of February 28, 2022 was as follows: Classroom instruction strategy was at 54 percent expended. Residential program strategy was expended at 56 percent. Summer and Short-Term programs strategy was expended at 30 percent. Related and support services strategy was expended at 53 percent. Technical assistance strategy was expended at 46 percent. Teacher preparation strategy was expended at 23 percent. Central administrative strategy was expended at 46 percent. Other support services strategy was expended at 46 percent. The total all in budget in state treasury was 49 percent.

➤ Legacy Revenue Budget Report

The percent of the budget received as of February 28, 2022 was 43 percent.

➤ Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report

The benchmark for percent of budget used as of February 28, 2022 was 23 percent.

Report from the Program Committee

Ms. Jones gave a report from the Program Committee.

a. Consideration of approval of board policies:

EIC (TSBVI) Academic Achievement: Class Ranking

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

b. Consideration of approval of the School's calendar for 2022-2023

The Committee recommended approval of the School's calendar for 2022-2023, therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

c. Report from Comprehensive Programs Principal

➤ Consideration of approval of recommendations of the Instructional Materials Committee

The Committee recommended approval of proposed instructional materials for 2022-2023 as recommended by the Committee, therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

➤ Austin Bat Cave Writing Program Update

Ms. Jones described the Austin Bat Cave Program. It is introducing students to different genres of writing. Students gave their insight into the program's courses and curriculum.

d. Report from Short-Term Programs Principal

➤ Short-Term and Summer 2022 programs update

Ms. Merritt gave an update on the ongoing events happening through Short-Term Programs. They have an upcoming class called "City Travel" in April. Outreach will help families learn how to help their students navigate and travel. Students are also given a budget for travel. The remainder of the classes will be online for this year. Short-Term Programs offered 264 students opportunities to participate in programs offered, with a target of actually getting 238 students on campus. Ms. Jones stated 122 students had accepted the invitation for summer. The deadline for families to confirm their participation will be April 15, 2022.

e. Report from Outreach Director

Ms. Borg gave a report on the VI Registry/Deafblind Child Count Report.

➤ VI Registry/Deafblind Child Count Report

She stated the numbers for the report. They were as follows:

Total Number of VI/DB Students: 10,639 down from 10,892

Total Number of DB Students: 708 down from 804

Total Number of SpEd VI Students: 8388 down from 8559

Total Number VI/DB Students Age 0 thru 2: 291 down from 312

Total Number of 504 Students: 2301 down from 2333

Total Number of Primary Braille Readers: 338 (no change from 2021).

Report from Personnel Committee

a. Recommendation for new internal auditor

There were no applicants, therefore, no action was taken. The position will remain posted.

Board Selection of New Internal Auditor

No action was taken.

Lunch with Student Council

Mr. Sonnenberg announced that the Board would recess for lunch with the Student Council. The time was 11:31 a.m.

Mr. Sonnenberg announced that the Board would reconvene in open session and it was 12:15 p.m.

Consideration of Approval of Proposed Renewals and Non-renewals of Staff Contracts

Ms. Coleman named the deletions of staff; Lauren Allen, Betty Hefflinger, Susan Yarborough, Debra Sewell and Elizabeth Marshall. They would not be renewing their contracts.

Mr. Hanley motioned to approve the proposed renewals and non-renewals of staff contracts. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

Consideration of Approval of Agency Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

Ms. Coleman stated the Agency Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures were unchanged.

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the Agency Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures. Ms. Gautney seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

Review of Needs Assessments and Proposed Action Plans and Consideration of Approval of Proposed Objectives for the 2022-2023 Annual Improvement Plan

Ms. Coleman stated the Board has already approved parts of the Annual Improvement Plan. Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the proposed objectives for the 2022-2023 Annual Improvement Plan. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

Report from the Superintendent

a. Campus activities

Ms. Coleman reported the following activities on campus.

Comprehensive Programs

February 24 Black History Month concert
February 26 Texas Regional Braille Challenge
March 1 Virtual Student Talent Show
March 3-8 TSBVI Ski Trip for two students
March 8 Students vs. Staff Goalball
March 9 Guide Dogs for the Blind Walk
April 6 Jump Rope for Heart
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
- May 18 Safe Alliance – “Where’s Your Line” performance
- May 20 Fiesta Celebration
- May 24 9:45 a.m. Big Show Virtual performance
- 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
- February 22-25 Junior Access to Academic Skills #2 (grades 6-8)
- March 4-6 In the Driver’s Seat: An Introduction to Safe Driving with Low Vision (grades 9-12)
- March 21 Writer’s Workshop Series #4 (grades 6-8)
- March 24-27 Health and Well-Being: An Introduction to Human Sexuality (grades 5-7)
- 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)

Outreach Programs

Workshops and Conferences:

- March 4-6 In the Driver’s Seat: An Introduction to Safe Driving with Low Vision (with Short-Term Programs)
- 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

- February 28 Learning Management Systems: What TVIs Need to Know
- March 3 Teaching a Child’s First Teacher: Adult Learning in Early Intervention
- March 7 Negotiation Skills for the Educational Professional
- March 21 Early Childhood
- March 28 CHARGE Syndrome: The Puzzle, The Practicals, and The Possibilities

Webinars

- February 24 Active Learning Case Studies: Student Centered Planning
- March 24 CVI Study Group
- March 30 Introduction to the Intervener Team Model Discussion
- April 21 Active Learning Case Studies: Student Centered Planning

b. Superintendent’s activities

Ms. Coleman reported she attended Texas Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (TAER). She presented at the conference on strategic planning at TSBVI. She said that TSBVI’s goals were in line with others in the field.

Ms. Coleman and Ms. Darden visited the Governor's Office and discussed the School's needs and exceptional items for the next legislative year. The Governor's Office said meeting with legislators was a good idea and encouraged. She stated that a new General Counsel had been hired. Jenny Wells will start on Monday April 11, 2022. Ms. Coleman added TSBVI's Curriculum Director will be retiring. Ms. Coleman would be attending the American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference (AFBL). She added she will be giving a presentation regarding the Bill of Rights at the conference.

Consideration of Approval of Board Meetings and Training Dates for the 2022-2023 School Year and Summer 2022

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the board meetings and training dates for the 2022-2023 school year and summer 2022. Mr. Worthington seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

Discussion of Future Board Meeting Topics

The Board asked for an update from Dan Hampton on the School's website.

Announcements

Beth Jones was awarded the Wade Recipients Award. Mr. Sonnenberg stated TAER was great with great presentations from the TSBVI community. Students gave a presentation on 3D printing and talked about the designs they work on including a project for TSBVI's coffee shop, making labels for their coffee flavors.

Adjournment

Mr. Hanley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:09 p.m. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting and the motion was approved.

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