

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired BOARD MEETING MINUTES September 30, 2022 Meeting

Call to Order

Lee Sonnenberg, TSBVI Board President, called the meeting of the Governing Board of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to order at 10:15 a.m. on September 30, 2022.

Introduction of Board Members and Audience

In addition to Lee Sonnenberg, the following board members were present: Julie Prause, Brenda Lee, Maghan Gautney, Dan Brown, Ernest Worthington, and Beth Jones. Board members Elaine Robertson and Michael Hanley were unable to attend the meeting.

Other people attending the meeting included Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Susan Houghtling, Planning, and Evaluation Coordinator; Jenny Wells, General Counsel; Miles Fain, Principal; Sara Merritt, Principal; Kate Borg, Outreach Director; Cheryl Williams, Human Resources Director; Josh Splinter, Accounting Director; Angela Wolf, Curriculum Coordinator; Alex Arguello, Head of Community Engagement; Cyrenna Villegas, Procurement Director; Eden Hagelman, Assistant Principal; Brian McDonald; Support Services Director; and several teachers, teacher aides, students, and their family members.

Recognition of Students for Outstanding Performance on Statewide Assessments

Mr. Sonnenberg and Superintendent Coleman handed out certificates of recognition to students who achieved outstanding performance in their 2021-2022 statewide assessments. The students, family members, teachers and teacher aides left the meeting to participate in a reception in honor of the students.

Report from Family Lynx Program

Barbara Knighton reported on last year's achievements of the TSBVI Family Lynx Program and highlights of projects planned in the current year. Projects completed or planned included creating a banner for the Christmas party, decorating the dorms, a virtual welcome wagon for parent registration, a parent paparazzi and zoom cast for prom, stocking the prom closet, completion of the Sights and Sounds campus video, and the Resource Round-up starting in October. The Butterfly Garden on the campus was completed, the Facebook page is now available, and an e-suggestion box was created for families to communicate with TSBVI administration. Families of students in the Short-Term Programs classes have been invited to join. A virtual alumni mixer is scheduled, Family Lynx will have a table at White Cane Day in October and shared a table with Outreach during fall registration. Family Lynx members will host a family day at the hotel where parents stay before school registration, plan to award lapel pins to TSBVI graduates, and will host monthly meetings on campus and virtually.

Board members shared their appreciation for the amazing work of the Family Lynx Program.

Public Comments/Open Forum

There were no public comments for the September board meeting.

Consideration of Approval of Minutes of August 4 and 5, 2022 Board Meetings

Mr. Sonnenberg noted two corrections for the minutes: (1) the word “reconvene” should be changed to “recess” under the section “Training Session on the Bert E. Broday Trust” when referring to language related to going into closed session and (2) a reference to an organization for which he is executive director should be corrected to say “AER” rather than “All Blind Children of Texas”.

Brenda Lee motioned to approve the minutes with the two corrections from the August 4 and 5, 2022 board meetings. Julie Prause seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Report from the Audit, Compliance and Management Review Committee

a. Consideration of approval of board policies:

BBE (TSBVI)	Board Members: Authority (amend)
BBI (TSBVI)	Board Members: Technology Resources and Electronic Communications (amend)
BDAA (TSBVI)	School Board Internal Organization: Board Officers and Officials (amend)
BDAC	Board Officers and Officials: Duties and Requirements of Vice-President (delete)
BDAD	Board Officers and Officials: Duties and Requirements of Board Secretary and Recording Secretary (delete)

Lee Sonnenberg briefly reviewed the changes recommended for five policies. The Audit, Compliance, and Management Review Committee recommended approval of amendments to policies BBE, BBI, and BDAA and approval of the deletion of policies BDAC and BDAD. Since the recommendation came from the Committee, no second was required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the amendments to, and deletions of, the policies as presented.

Ernest Worthington requested that the Board Orientation Manual be updated and shared with the Board.

Report from the Finance Committee

a. Consideration of approval of Investment Report

Julie Prause briefly reviewed the investment report for the 12 months ending August 31, 2022. Total investments were \$1,646,469 and total interest earned was \$7,853. Investments held include the Texas CLASS Investment Pool, money market/checking accounts, a certificate of

deposit (CD) at First National Bank of Bellville that was rolled into another CD and another for \$200,000 that will mature later. Several CDs are also held at ABC Bank.

The recommendation to approve the Investment Report came from the Finance Committee therefore no seconded was required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the report.

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

Ms. Prause reported that one donation not mentioned in the donations report was for \$20,000 to go towards a new Maker's Space. The recommendation to approve the donation came from the Committee therefore no second was required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the donation.

c. Consideration of approval of request for expenditure of gifts and donations

Ms. Prause stated that no further recommendations for approval of gift and donation expenditures were forthcoming.

d. Review of budget reports

- Operating Budget Expenditure Report

Ms. Prause reported on the final budget expenditure report for the year ending August 31, 2022 by funding strategy. The final expenditures for the year totaled 97% of appropriated funds.

- Legacy Revenue Budget Report

Total Legacy Budget revenues for the year totaled \$974,336 and came primarily from the Broday Trust Fund and crop income. Mr. Sonnenberg asked a notation in the report regarding summer school expenditures at 1% of the budget and Josh Splinter answered that the final figure will be determined at a later time.

- Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report

Ms. Prause reported that Legacy Budget expenditures for the year totaled 57% of the \$1,240,700 budgeted with \$632,249 of the funds to be rolled forward.

Report from the Program Committee

a. Report from Comprehensive Program Principal

- **Statewide Assessment results**

Brenda Lee stated that students attend programs at TSBVI because they are struggling in local district programs. She reported that, in terms of performance on statewide assessments last school year, students performed above the state average. She briefly reviewed the results of STAAR, STAAR EOC and STAAR Alt 2 assessments.

- **Plan to promote academic excellence**

Ms. Lee briefly presented the plan shared by Principal Miles Fain to promote student achievement on the STAAR in the 2022-23 school year.

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

Ms. Lee summarized the ESL report for the 2021-22 school year that was shared with the Program Committee.

➤ **TSBVI Student Performance Indicator results**

Ms. Lee stated that the Student Performance Indicators (SPIs) are used as TSBVI's accountability agreement with TEA to show that students are making progress and showing growth. In the 2021–22 school year, of 130 enrolled students, 119 were assessed and 83% made moderate to substantial progress on the SPIs with 75% being the criteria set in TSBVI's agreement with TEA. A second criteria with TEA was that at least 50% of students would make substantial progress on the SPIs and 90% of students did so. Some of the assessments may be revamped in the current school year.

➤ **Consideration of membership to the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

Ms. Lee said that the Program Committee recommended approval of the proposed membership to the SHAC including parents and TSBVI staff members Amy Potts, Barbara Knighton, Mara LaViola, Ria Ferrich and Angela Wolf. A second of the motion was not required and the Board approved membership to the School Health Advisory Council.

b. Report from Short-Term Programs Principal

➤ **Short-Term Programs update**

Ms. Lee reported that Short-Term Programs is currently offering a remote Algebra I class as a credit course all school year with students coming on campus for one weekend in the fall and in the spring along with tutoring to support instruction. The class is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. remotely from the students' homes in Google Classroom.

Ms. Merritt said that the braille Algebra textbook is 100 volumes long and only 1 volume has been received. John Rose is putting the book in Google Classroom to make it accessible to students with supplies to support the class being mailed out to students in advance. Angela Wolf explained that math textbook adoption won't happen for another several years and braille production is slow.

Ms. Lee reported that her district is still waiting for textbooks even after seven weeks into the school year. Sara Merritt said that the braille release tests are not available at this time but her staff are coming up with solutions around it.

STAAR testing strategy classes are being offered in Short-Term Programs with one class already completed. Students can sign up for Chemistry and a professor at Baylor will provide access to lab tests for the students. Three chemists who have visual impairments are coming onto the campus to assist.

c. Report from Outreach Director, Kate Borg

➤ **Media Minute update**

Ms. Lee stated that TSBVI's media archivist, Suzanne Becker, reported to the Program Committee and discussed all the media available in the school's media library.

➤ **Outreach Program update**

In the Committee, Outreach staff reported on the intervener team model, White Cane Day plans, a new Coffee Hour tech teatime, Family Recharge Zone that will include a speaker who is deafblind, and the upcoming SWOMA conference scheduled in Round Rock.

Report from Personnel Committee

a. Recommendation for new internal auditor

Ms. Prause reported that the Personnel Committee meeting did not meet due to the applicant for the internal auditor taking another position.

b. Consideration of next steps regarding the hiring of an internal auditor

No discussion occurred on this agenda item.

Board Selection of New Internal Auditor

No action was taken on this agenda item. The internal auditor position remains posted.

Review and Public Comment on TSBVI's Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan

Emily Coleman reported that this agenda item is scheduled to allow public comment on TSBVI's Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan. Staff and family members received a survey asking for feedback about the plan in advance of the Board meeting and 76 responses were received. Follow up comments in the survey included questions about future masking requirements that are tied to county requirements, a question about a required 5 days of isolation after a COVID diagnosis, and a question about Monkeypox. This agenda item required no approval by the Board. There were no public comments.

Consideration of Approval of New Contract Staff

Ms. Coleman asked for approval of four new TSBVI contract staff including an OT, instructional specialist, and two lead teachers. Julie Prause made a motion to approve the contract staff and Dan Brown seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Consideration of Approval of TSBVI Organizational Chart

Ms. Coleman reported that no new staff names appear on the organizational chart and asked for its approval. Brenda Lee made a motion to approve the TSBVI organizational chart and Meghan Gautney seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Final Update on Completion of Action Plans in the 2021-2022 Annual Improvement Plan

Ms. Coleman provided an update on the status of completion of the actions plans from the 2021-2022 Annual Improvement Plan. She briefly reviewed some of the plans including one on the low vision clinic, the staff development plan, Short-Term Programs enrollment increases, and Outreach actions towards improving Child Find.

Report from the Superintendent

a. Legislative Appropriations Request hearing

Ms. Coleman reported that she will testify today at 3:30 p.m. at the Capital at a public hearing regarding TSBVI's Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR). She and former CFO Pam Darden met with Legislative Budget Board and Governor's office staff in August regarding the request in

order to allow them to ask questions. Both offices were not surprised that the LAR focused on staff salary increases. She will schedule meetings with legislative offices after today's hearing.

b. Campus activities

Ms. Coleman reviewed past and upcoming activities on campus including students are flying to Washington state today for a goalball tournament. White Cane Day festivities are scheduled for October 12 on campus with live broadcasts starting in the morning including a recorded interview with TSBVI students available on the TSBVI Facebook page. A high school national goalball championship is scheduled for November in Florida and TSBVI Family Day is scheduled on campus in November. The SWOMA Conference is scheduled for November 6-8 in Round Rock.

c. Superintendent activities

Ms. Coleman worked with TSBVI's new Safety and Security Supervisor Stacy Correa to conduct a staff training session on dealing with active threats. They also attended a recent school safety conference. Interviews for the CFO position occurred this week and she will attend the COSB Leadership Institute next week where she will present on recruitment and retention and participate in a panel on Child Find. Two TSBVI staff, Dori Senatori and Cecilia Robinson, are being recognized at the COSB national conference.

Consideration of Superintendent's Formative Evaluation

Mr. Sonnenberg announced at 11:35 a.m. that the Board would recess the open session and convene in a closed meeting to discuss the following item listed under agenda item #17 – 'Consideration of Superintendent's Formative Evaluation' in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.074 – Personnel Matters. Mr. Sonnenberg stated that no voting would take place in the closed meeting and 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.

At 12:00 p.m. the Board convened in open session.

No further action was taken on this agenda item.

Discussion of Future Board Meeting Topics and Training Dates

Since the September 29, 2022 training session for the Board was canceled due to the facilitator's illness, Mr. Sonnenberg proposed rescheduling the training for November 17, 2022 and the Board agreed to move it to that date.

Dan Brown requested that the Safety and Security Committee report to the Board on their activities. Ms. Coleman said Board members are welcome to participate in the November meeting of the Committee since it is held via Zoom.

Announcements

Beth Jones reported that her son participated in a program with Chris Tabb's group and he was given the opportunity to talk to an astronaut on the international space station and also with NASA engineers.

Adjournment

Julie Prause made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Governing Board of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Dan Brown seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

Following the meeting, members of the Board toured the Security Department on the TSBVI campus.