

**Harris County Department of Education
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
January 17, 2024**

**NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HARRIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The Harris County Board of School Trustees met in regular session on January 17, 2024, in Conference Room 502, at 6300 Irvington Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77022. Andrea Duhon, Board President, called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. and declared a quorum present, that the meeting was duly called, and that notice of the meeting was posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Gov't. Code §551.041 and §551.051.

Board Members Present: Andrea Duhon, Board President, Richard Cantu, Erica Davis, Eric Dick, and John McGee

Board Members Absent: Amy Hinojosa, First Vice President; David Brown, Second Vice President

Board Attorney: Sarah Langlois

Administration: James Colbert, Jr., County School Superintendent; Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services; Jonathan Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support; C.J. Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent for Education & Enrichment; Joyce Akins, Director Center for Grants Development; Danielle Bartz, Chief of Staff; Jessica Bermea, Executive Assistant Board to Trustees; Joe Carreon, Director Construction; Lisa Caruthers, Senior Director CASE for Kids; Danielle Clark, Chief Communications Officer; Carie Crabb, Senior Director School-Related Therapy Services; Stephanie De Los Santos, Director Client Engagement; Jeff Drury, Director Choice Partners Cooperative; Leslie Edwards-Ethridge, Director Center for Safe and Secure Schools; Travita Godfrey, Principal Fortis Academy, Chris Hoesel, Director Information Technology; Eduardo Honold, Senior Director Adult Education; Edna Johnson, Director Purchasing; Marcia Leiva, Chief Accounting Officer; Charles Ned, Senior Director Schools; Venetia Peacock, Senior Director Head Start; Yolanda Pyrtle, Director Research and Evaluation Institute, Lindsey Sanders, Director Communications and Creative Services; Andrea Seagraves, Senior Director Center for Educator Success; Natasha Truitt, Executive Director Human Resources

Visitors: Kirk Sides, Lisa Hickey

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1. **Invocation** - Alma Ochoa, Secretary, Center for Grants Development
2. **Pledge of Allegiance to the US flag** - Winford Adams, Public Information and Policy Manager, Education Foundation and Partnerships of Harris County
3. **Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag** - Winford Adams, Public Information and Policy Manager, Education Foundation and Partnerships of Harris County
4. **Open Forum** - Gov't Code 551.007 - Public Participation. Pursuant to Policy BED (Local), a citizen who wishes to speak may do so by completing a participation request card available at the Board room at least 10 minutes prior to a regular Board meeting.

Lisa Hickey addressed the board regarding her resignation from her employment with HCDE on January 5, 2024. Ms. Hickey requested the board not vote to terminate her contract and not file for sanctions against her certificate to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and instead accept her resignation.

5. **REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

- A. **Employee of the Month** - Natasha Truitt, Executive Director of Human Resources
Natasha Truitt introduced the January HCDE Employee of the Month, Norma Rodriguez, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Education and Enrichment. Communications showed a brief video regarding her role and impact.
- B. **Superintendent Monthly Report** - James Colbert, Jr.
Superintendent James Colbert expressed his gratitude publicly to the Board members in honor of Board Appreciation Month, which is celebrated across Texas in the month of January. Mr. Colbert also stated that the Audit Committee meeting took place before the board meeting. A presentation from Whitley Penn regarding HCDE's external audit will be given during the board meeting. Mr. Colbert shared a reminder that the Early Childhood Winter Conference will be held on Saturday, January 27th at the Kingdom Builder's Center. Lastly, Mr. Colbert mentioned that the TASA Mid-Winter Conference will be held January 28th – 31st in Austin and HCDE will have several presenters at this year's conference.

Item 7.4. was moved out-of-order.

Approval of the 2022-2023 Annual Financial Audit (including the required annual single audit report). The fund balance categories and amounts presented in the report and in the attached resolution for committed fund balance. The audit was conducted by Whitley Penn LLP.

Presentation by Whitley Penn.

- C. **Annual Division Update** - Center for Grants Development
- D. **Annual Division Update** - Education Foundation and Partnerships of Harris County
- E. **Other reports from Board members** concerning attendance or participation in a board or HCDE-related conference, event, activity, or committee; accolades for an HCDE staff member or other deserving person.
Trustee Erica Davis thanked Mr. Colbert and the HCDE Administration for honoring the Board and its members during the reception held prior to the Board meeting.
- F. **Report of Board Committees** - Committee Chairs
President Andrea Duhon reported that the Audit Committee met before the Board meeting.

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- G. **Monthly Financial Reports through 12/31/2023** - Dr. Jesus Amezcua, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services
President Andrea Duhon left the meeting at 2:19 p.m. and returned at 2:26 p.m.

6. **ACTION ITEMS – CONSENSUS**

*HCDE Administration requested to remove Item 6.A.1. from the Consensus Agenda.
Andrea Duhon requested to remove item 6.D.2. from the Consensus Agenda.*

*Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by Erica Davis to approve the Consensus Agenda with the exception of items 6.A.1. and 6.D.2.
Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.*

A. Consider ratification/approval of the following Business Services items:

2. Disbursement Report
3. Budget Amendment Report
4. Monthly Investment Report for December 2023

FY 22-23 Small Business Report was provided to the Board, Business Services is in the process of gathering ethnicity information as previously requested by the Board. Trustee Richard Cantu asked what the threshold was to define a Small Business. Sarah Langlois clarified policy CV Local defines what a Small Business qualifications are. Dr. Amezcua stated once the ethnicity surveys are completed a follow-up presentation will be available to the Board.

President Andrea Duhon requested to remove item 6. A. 1. Public Hearing on the Annual Financial Management Report for FY 2023. and item D.2 Approval of the Contract Award for job# 24/018MR, for the period of 01/17/2024 through 01/16/2025, for the Job Order Contracting IDIQ Minor Construction, Maintenance, Repair, Alteration, Renovation, and Remediation Services.

*Motion made by Trustee Richard Cantu, seconded by Trustee Erica Davis to approve all items under the Consensus Agenda except items A.1 and D.2.
Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.*

B. Consider ratification/approval of the following Board Meeting Minutes:

2. December 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

C. Consider ratification/approval of the following Interlocal Contracts:

2. **Ratification of the Interlocal (expenditure) contract for FY 2024 for the period of 08/01/2023 - 07/31/2024 in the amount of \$187,200, CASE for Kids Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center(s) Cycle 12, Year 1 grant with the following entity: Sheldon Independent School District (150 students served).**
3. **Ratification of the Interlocal (expenditure) contract for FY 2024, 01/01/2023 through 07/31/2024 in the amount of \$93,600, CASE for Kids Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center(s) Cycle 12, Year 1 grant with the following entity: Southwest Schools-Charter (75 students served).**

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4. **Ratification of the Interlocal (revenue) contract for Adult Education with Harris County Public Health for the ACCESS Harris County program for the period of 01/31/2024 through 01/31/2025, with a three-year renewal option not to exceed \$74,774.**
 5. **Ratification of Interlocal (revenue) annual and monthly contracts for FY 2024, in the aggregate amount of \$47,450 with ABS West with the following districts:**
Annual: Stafford MSD for one (1) in-county annual contract in the amount of \$23,800 (\$23,800 each) for the contract period of 08/28/2023 through 06/03/2024; Monthly: Brazos ISD for one (1) out-of-county monthly contract in the amount of \$23,650 (\$4,300 a month) for the contract period of 12/04/2023 through 06/03/2024.
 6. **Ratification of the FY 2024, agreement for Schools Division (ABS East and ABS West) with Houston ISD Food Services to provide breakfast and lunch, during the period of 08/21/2023 through 08/20/2024, for an amount not to exceed \$300,000**
- D. Consider ratification/approval of the following items for the HCDE Choice Partners Cooperative:
1. **Approval of the Contract Award for job # 24/016MR, for the period of 01/17/2024 through 01/16/2025, for Motor & Aviation Fuel, Alternative Fuels, Lubricants & Related Items with the following vendors: Arnold Oil Company of Austin, LP (24/016MR-01); Jaguar Fueling Services, LLC (24/016MR-02); Liberty Equipment Sales, Inc. (24/016MR-03); Petroleum Traders Corporation (24/016MR-04); and Pinnacle Petroleum, Inc. (24/016MR-05).**
 3. **Approval of HCDE Interlocal Agreements with:** Arlington Community Schools Board of Education, Arlington, Tennessee; City of Leander, Leander, Texas; City of Orange, Orange, Texas; City of Palmer, Palmer, Texas; Milam County, Cameron, Texas; Robstown Independent School District, Robstown, Texas; Rogers Independent School District, Rogers, Texas; Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority, Cincinnati, Ohio; Trinity County, Trinity, Texas; Vega Independent School District, Vega, Texas, and West Orange-Cove Independent School District, Orange, Texas.
- E. Consider ratification/approval of the following items for Internal Purchasing:
1. **Approval of Contract Award for job # 24/006YR-02, for the period of 01/17/2024 through 01/16/2029, for Local Food and Catering Services, to the proposer offering the best value to HCDE and meeting the specifications outlined in the proposal: Deli Management, Inc. dba Jason's Deli.**
- F. Consider ratification/approval of the following Revenue Agreements:
1. **Approval of (revenue) Services Agreement with Tejano Center for Community Concerns, for the period of 02/01/2024 through 08/31/2024, in the amount of \$168,000, for HCDE's Business Services (Erate, business services and operations) to provide ongoing support and streamline processes.**
- 6.A.1. **Public Hearing on the Annual Financial Management Report for FY 2023**
President Andrea Duhon opened the public hearing and asked if any member of the public desired to provide public comment on the Annual Financial Management Report for FY 2023. No member of the public participated in the public hearing.

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- 6.D.2. **Approval of the Contract Award for job # 24/018MR, for the period of 01/17/2024 through 01/16/2025, for Job Order Contracting IDIQ Minor Construction, Maintenance, Repair, Alteration, Renovation, and Remediation Services with the following vendors:** Brown and Root Industrial Services, LLC (24/018MR-02); Construction Masters of Houston, Inc. (24/018MR-03); Fitz Associates, LLC (24/018MR-04); Floors 2 Adore (24/018MR-05); FMG Construction Group, LLC (24/018MR-06); Freedom Construction (24/018MR-07); GC Commercial Construction (24/018MR-08); Hunton Services (24/018MR-09); Leopardo Companies (24/018MR-10); Marek Brothers Construction (24/018MR-11); Millenium Project Solutions, Inc. (24/018MR-12); Mitchell Paint & Wallcovering, Inc. DBA Mitchell Contracting (24/018MR-13) Noble Texas Builders, LLC (24/018MR-14); PL20 Construction & Consultancy DBA Rava Construction, LLC (24/018MR-15); Prestige Building Maintenance (24/018MR-16); Rio United Builders, LLC (24/018MR-17); SDB, Inc. DBA SDB Contracting Services (24/018MR-18); SETEX Facilities & Maintenance, LLC DBA Preferred Facilities Group-USA (24/018MR-19); J.T. Vaughn Construction DBA Vaughn Construction (24/018MR-20) and Virtue Construction Partners, LLC (24/018MR-21).

Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by John McGee to approve the Contract Award for job# 24/016MR, for the period of 01/17/2024 through 01/16/2025, for Motor & Aviation Fuel, Alternative Fuels, Lubricants & Related Items with the listed vendors.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

7. ACTION ITEMS - NON-CONSENSUS

1. **Approval for Information Technology Services to purchase servers and storage arrays from DataVox (Job # 22/041KN-01) for an amount not to exceed \$717,436.** This purchase will be a capital outlay expense.

Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by John McGee, to approve Information Technology Services to purchase servers and storage arrays from DataVox (Job # 22/041KN-01) for an amount not to exceed \$717,436.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

2. **Approval for Information Technology Services to purchase network switching and security equipment (Category 2) from DataVox, job No. (22/041KN-01) at the discounted amount of \$105,213 under E-rate which totals \$342,490.**

Motion made by Erica Davis, seconded by John McGee to purchase network switching and security equipment (Category 2) from DataVox, job No. (22/041KN-01) at the discounted amount of \$105,213 under E-rate which totals \$342,490.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve

3. **Approval to amend CH Local FY 2024 to increase SOA Fin 1st (job # 20/019KJ) by \$60,000 for a total amount of \$185,000 to provide Business Services support; add Launch Point CDC, Inc. (job # 21/056YR) for a total amount of \$150,000 to provide Educational and Vocational Training for Adult Education; add Monarch Academy to provide enrichment services for CASE (job #23/006IA-04) for a total of \$85,000; and add Job #23/030TP-03 to Hardie's Fruit & Vegetable Co.**

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Motion made by Richard Cantu, seconded by John McGee to approve to amend CH Local FY 2024 to increase SOA Fin 1st (job # 20/019KJ) by \$60,000 for a total amount of \$185,000 to provide Business Services support; add Launch Point CDC, Inc. (job # 21/056YR) for a total amount of \$150,000 to provide Educational and Vocational Training for Adult Education; add Monarch Academy to provide enrichment services for CASE (job #23/0061A-04) for a total of \$85,000; and add Job #23/030TP-03 to Hardie's Fruit & Vegetable Co.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

4. **Approval of the 2022-2023 Annual Financial Audit (including the required annual single audit report).** The fund balance categories and amounts presented in the report and in the attached resolution for committed fund balance. The audit was conducted by Whitley Penn LLP.

Motion made by John McGee, seconded by Richard Cantu to approve the 2022-2023 Annual Financial Audit (including the required annual single audit report).

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

5. **Approval of FY 2023-2024 Investment Resolution for the annual review of HCDE's Investment Policy, Broker Dealers, and Investment Trainers** in accordance with the Public Funds Investment Act.

Motion made by Erica Davis, seconded by John McGee to approve FY 2023-2024 Investment Resolution for the annual review of HCDE's Investment Policy, Broker Dealers, and Investment Trainers in accordance with the Public Funds Investment Act.

Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.

6. **Consideration and possible vote (election) to appoint up to four directors to the Harris County Department of Education Public Facilities Corporation.**

Motion made by Andrea Duhon, seconded by John McGee that the Board of Trustees appoint the following individuals as directors to the Harris County Department of Education Public Facilities Corporation for three-year terms: (1) Richard Cantu (reappointment), (2) Andrea Duhon (reappointment), (3) Amy Hinojosa, and (4) the individual to be appointed by Mr. Colbert to fill the current vacant position of HCDE's Executive Director of Facilities, whose term on the PFC Board shall begin with his/her employment in the Executive Director of Facilities position begins. Motion passes with 5-0 voting to appoint.

7. **Consideration and possible vote (election) to appoint Head Start Policy Council delegate and alternate.**

Motion made by Andrea Duhon, seconded by Richard Cantu to reappoint David Brown as the delegate and to appoint John McGee as the alternate to the Head Start Policy Council. Motion passes with 5-0 voting to reappoint and appoint.

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The Board entered Executive Session at 2:56 p.m.

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** Under the Texas Government Code pursuant to any and all purposes permitted by Sections 551.001-551.084, including, but not limited to: 551.071; 551.074
- A. **Deliberate** the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline and/or dismissal of HCDE employee.
1. Deliberate whether Chapter 21 term contract teacher at Fortis Academy failed, without good cause, to comply with the resignation requirements of the Texas Education Code and abandoned her contract with HCDE; obtain legal advice regarding same.
 2. Deliberate Superintendent's recommendation to propose termination of Fortis Academy teacher's Chapter 21 term contract, for good cause as determined by the Board; obtain legal advice regarding same.
 3. Obtain legal advice regarding SB 763 and Resolution regarding SB 763.
- B. **Deliberate** the purchase, exchange, sale and/or value of real property(ies) and obtain legal advice regarding the same.

The Board re-entered Open Session at 4:07 p.m.

10. **RECONVENE** for possible action items discussed in executive session.
1. Consider possible action whether Chapter 21 term contract teacher at Fortis Academy failed, without good cause, to comply with the resignation requirements of the Texas Education Code and abandoned her contract with HCDE.

No action taken due to no motion made.
 2. Consider possible action regarding Superintendent's recommendation to propose termination of Fortis Academy teacher's Chapter 21 term contract, for good cause as determined by the Board.

No action taken due to no motion made.
 3. Consider approval of Resolution regarding SB 763

*Motion made by Eric Dick, seconded by John McGee to approve Resolution regarding SB 763.
Record vote: Trustee Dick – Yes, Trustee Davis – Yes, Trustee McGee – Yes, Trustee Cantu – Yes, President Duhon – Yes.
Motion passes with 5-0 voting to approve.*

9. **Discussion and possible action regarding future agenda items**

Eric Dick shared information about the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and would like to place an agenda item on a future board meeting agenda for the board to discuss and consider joining UNESCO.

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11. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Submission of grant proposal to SkillsFWD in the amount of \$1,213,522 to support CASE for Kids' LevelUp Houston!: Digital Pathways initiative. Requested funds will serve 12,000 youth.
2. Submission of grant proposal to Bank of Texas/Bank of Oklahoma Financial in the amount of \$9,400 via the Education Foundation of Harris County to support Area I Head Start's REAL SuperMENTors Read program, which focuses on literacy skills. Requested funds will serve 261 students in the 2024-2025 school year.
3. Memorandum of Understanding Contracts (non-monetary) for the CASE for Kids Afterschool Strategic Investment (ASI) program: CASE for Kids certifies afterschool investments of public funds through collaborators as part of our Houston-Galveston Area Council contract.
4. The LinkedIn Learning online educational platform was awarded during the 12/13/2023 Board meeting under Job # DIR-TSO-4288. The vendor's name appeared on the agenda item as Carasoft Technology Corp., which was incorrect. The correct name is Carahsoft Technology Corp.

A. Human Resources

1. Personnel
 2. Employee Count
12. **ADJOURN** - Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

*Motion made by Erica Davis, seconded by Eric Dick to adjourn.
Motion passes with 5-0 voting to adjourn.
Meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.*



Andrea Duhon
Board President



Amy Hinojosa
Board First Vice President