

## MINUTES OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REGULAR MEETING

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

#### SMITHVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Notice is hereby given that a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Smithville Independent School District was held on Monday, July 21, 2025 beginning at 6:00 PM at the Smithville ISD Administrative Building, PO Box 479, 901 N.E. 6th Street, Smithville, Texas 78957.

**Members present:** Grant Gutierrez, Michael Hancock, Chelsa Vinklerek, Josh Magden, and Bryan Jones

**Members absent:** Chris Hinnant, Candice Parsons

**Others present:** Candy Biehle, Stacy Tiner, Jean Ann McCarthy, Whitney Brown, Misty Vasquez, Bethany Logan, Wayne King, Lindsey Saunders, Tracy Johnson, Tucker Copeland, Angie Westerfield, Amanda Hudspeth, Gary Marek, Chris Allen, Holly Brockman, Kristen Merriweather, Paula Miller, Jean Ann McCarthy, Josh Coy, Kris Dillon, Zack Harris, Dr. Molley Perry, Denise Behrens

The subjects to be discussed or considered, or upon which any formal action may be taken, are as follows:

**Call to Order** – The Board President or his/her designee called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m

**Pledge of Allegiance** – The group recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call** – Mr. Gutierrez called the roll of members. Candice Parsons and Chris Hinnant were absent.

**Public Communications** – The Board heard from Kristen Merriweather in support of livestreaming regular and special board meetings for public viewing, and posting the notice of meetings in a wider scope of locations.

**Consent Agenda** – Michael Hancock moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Josh Magden seconded and the motion passed 5-0. The Consent Agenda included:

1. Minutes
2. Financial Statements
3. Investment Report
4. State Aid Comparison - Budgeted vs. Earned
5. Earned vs. TEA Payments
6. Tax Collection Report
7. Financial Report

8. Bond Repayment Resolution
9. Consider Approval of 2025-2026 T-TESS Appraisers and Appraisal Calendar

**Superintendent's Report** – The Superintendent updated the Board on important issues pertaining to the District, including:

**Upcoming Dates**

July 21 - Administrators return to work  
July 30 - New Staff Orientation begins  
August 1 - Teachers return  
August 2 – Back to School Bash at MLK Park from 8am - 12pm  
August 4 - Staff Convocation  
August 13 - First Day of School

**Board Calendar**

August 18 at 6:00 p.m. - 89th Legislative Session Board Update hosted by Region 13 in LaGrange  
August 25 - August Regular Board Meeting  
September 11-14 - TASA/TASB Convention in Houston

**2025-26 Staffing Update**

Several teacher vacancies are still in the process of being filled for the 2025-26 school year.

**Legislative Updates**

First Special Session following the 89th Texas Legislative Session began on July 21 and identified issues that could further impact public education include: replacement of the STAAR test, further reduction in property taxes, and taxpayer funded lobbying

Nationally, federal funds are being withheld since June 30 that impact school districts, including Title I-C, II-A, III-A, IV-A, IV-B. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant, which funds our ACE Program, was included in this list until last Friday, when it was announced that these funds were released.

**Receive an Update from the District's Financial Advisor Regarding Debt Service Payments and Defeasance of Debt** – Chris Allen, Smithville ISD's Financial Advisor with Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), provided an update on current and projected debt service management, including defeasance of debt previously authorized for Fiscal Year 2025. Additionally, he advised the Board to consider defeasance in 2026 pay off principal of existing bonds more quickly and reduce interest paid. Action on this recommendation may be considered at a later date.

**Review of TASB Facilities Assessment** – Gary Marek with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) provided an overview of a facilities audit conducted in spring 2025, including the audit process, findings, and recommendations related to SISD campuses and ancillary facilities. Next steps are to prioritize the identified needs and begin development of a plan to address the needs of existing facilities.

**2025-2026 Budget Development Update** - The school district staff is currently in the process of developing the proposed budget for the 2025-26 school year. The process began in March with budget planning at the campus level. The Board must adopt the final budget on or before August 31, 2025 in accordance with legal requirements. Budget hearings were conducted with each campus principal and each department director. The first draft of the budget was presented at the regular meeting in June. Stacy Tiner, Business Manager, and Jean Ann McCarthy presented the second draft of the district budget, and a special meeting will be held in the coming weeks to review the proposed budget in greater detail prior to adoption.

**Tentative August Agenda Items** – Tentative items to be included on the August agenda are:

- a. Consider Approval of 2025-2026 Student Code of Conduct
- b. 2025-26 Budget Development
- c. Review and Update Board Operating Procedures
- d. Public Hearing on Proposed Budget
- e. Adoption of 2025-2026 District Budget and Tax Rate
- f. Superintendent's Report
- g. Update on the SISD Strategic Plan
- h. District and Campus State Accountability 2025 Ratings Report
- i. Consider Approval of a Resolution regarding Extra-Curricular Status of the 4-H Organization and County Extension Agents

**Discussion and consideration of a change in collateral for the Depository Contract with First National Bank of Bastrop, including possible delegation of authority to the Superintendent to negotiate and execute the necessary forms to effectuate the change** –

Michael Hancock moved to approve the resolution regarding a change in collateral for District funds pursuant to the Depository Contract with First National Bank of Bastrop, to change from investment securities to a federal home loan bank letter of credit, and authorize the Superintendent to execute any necessary documents and legal forms to effectuate the change. Chelsa Vinklarek seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

**Consider Approval of TASB Board Policy Update 125 and Edits or Additions to the Following Local Policies: BDAA, BDB, BDF, EI, FDE, FEC and FFAC** –

The District must update and maintain its policies with the most recent legislation and educational regulation changes. The Update 125 Local Policy Overview was included in the board packet for review and Dr. Perry provided an overview of the recommended changes.

The update includes changes to the following local board policies:

BDAA(LOCAL): OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS - DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF BOARD OFFICERS, BDB(LOCAL): BOARD INTERNAL ORGANIZATION - BOARD COMMITTEES, BDF(LOCAL): BOARD INTERNAL ORGANIZATION - ADVISORY COMMITTEES, EI(LOCAL): ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, FDE(LOCAL): ADMISSIONS - SCHOOL SAFETY TRANSFERS, FEC(LOCAL): ATTENDANCE - ATTENDANCE FOR CREDIT, FFAC(LOCAL): WELLNESS AND HEALTH SERVICES - MEDICAL TREATMENT.

Josh Magden moved to approve TASB Board Policy Update 125 as presented. Bryan Jones seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

**Consideration, discussion, and possible action regarding Policy FNCE(LOCAL) update related to student cell phone use during the instructional day** – As signed into law following the 89th Legislative session, HB 1481 requires school districts to prohibit student use of personal communication devices at school during the school day. School boards may either choose not to allow possession of communication devices on property or to establish processes for storage of such devices during the school day, with very limited exceptions allowable for the use. Administrative guidelines will be developed to provide additional guidance and detail regarding implementation of this policy.

In order to comply with lawful requirements, Chelsa Vinklerek moved to adopt the proposed Board Policy FNCE (Local) as presented. Josh Magden seconded and the vote passed 5-0.

**Consideration, discussion, and possible action regarding Child Nutrition Services and meal pricing for 2025-26**

Candy Biehle, Child Nutrition Director, gave a report to the Board on numerous activities that she and her team support throughout the year. The Child Nutrition department is responsible for the meals programs for breakfast, lunch, the After School Program, and Summer Feeding. Proposed meal prices for students not eligible for free/reduced lunch in 2025-26 are as follows:

<b><u>Campus</u></b>	<b><u>Breakfast</u></b>	<b><u>Lunch</u></b>
Brown Primary	\$1.75	\$2.75
Elementary	\$2.00	\$3.00
Junior High	\$2.00	\$3.25
High School	\$2.00	\$3.50

Following a review of prior years' budgets, current year projections, and the impact of increasing costs coupled with decreasing revenue, Bryan Jones moved to approve the meal prices for 2025-2026 as proposed. Josh Magden seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

**Approval of Expenditure in Excess of \$50,000: Safety fencing at Smithville Junior High School using Safe Grant 1 funds**

Continued efforts to enhance the physical safety and security across SISD campuses include the installation of fencing at Smithville Junior High. This fencing will be commensurate with that installed at Smithville High School, and include a 70 inch non-scalable slats, enclosing the southeast corner of the building, extending through the bus drop-off area by the cafeteria. This addition will improve student safety by directing foot traffic and preventing students from crossing into the side parking lot during arrival and dismissal.

Following the solicitation of three quotes for this project, The Anchor Group was selected as the lowest bid. Josh Magden made a motion to authorize SISD to engage with The Anchor Group for the construction of a safety fence at Smithville Junior High using SAFE Grant 1 funds in the

amount of \$57,106. Michael Hancock seconded and the vote passed 5-0.

**Approval of Expenditure in Excess of \$50,000: Approve annual renewal of ESC Region 13**

**Contracted Services** – ESC Region 13 provides a variety of services for the District annually including: Product/Service 25-26 Pricing, Ascender Enterprise System \$54,054, Cooperative Participation, Behavior Specialist \$4,500, Career & Technical Education\* \$2,800, Homeless Education\*\* \$1,500, School Finance \$4,000, State Comp Ed \$1,000, PEIMS \$5,500, Human Resources \$1,200, TEKS Resource System \$11,005, TExGUIDE PK-12 \$5,505, TXED Support Service \$20,000, \* Carl Perkins grant funds and \*\* Title I-A grant funds. Josh Magden moved that the Board authorize payment to ESC Region 13 for continuation of contracted services in the amount of \$111,064 from a combination of grant and general funds. Michael Hancock seconded and the vote was 5-0.

**Call for Public Hearing on Proposed Budget and Tax Rate** - The goal of the District is to adopt a budget and set the tax rate for the 2025-2026 school year. State Truth in Taxation laws require the school district to publish a public notice of public hearing to discuss the proposed budget and proposed tax rate for the new fiscal year. Legally the budget must be developed on or before August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and adopted by August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. The school district must publish the notice of the public hearing in the local newspapers to comply with state laws and timelines for budget adoption and setting of the tax rate. Bryan Jones moved to call for a public hearing on the proposed budget and tax rate for Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Chelsa Vinklarek seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

**Closed Session** – The Board entered closed session at 8:41 p.m. and returned at 9:16 p.m. with no action taken.

**Consideration and discussion regarding the Superintendent's Annual Evaluation** – Board Policy BJCD [Legal] requires the Board to annually evaluate the Superintendent. In accordance with Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code, the Board met in closed session to discuss Personnel Matters. No action was taken.

**Adjournment** – Josh Magden moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 p.m. With a second from Chelsa Vinklarek, the meeting was adjourned.