

AT A SPECIAL BOARD MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING FOR ADOPTION OF 2025-2026 OFFICIAL BUDGET OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF ECTOR COUNTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT HELD AT THE ADMINISTRATION BOARD ROOM, 802 NORTH SAM HOUSTON, ODESSA, ECTOR COUNTY, TEXAS, AT 6:00 P.M., JUNE 24, 2025, WITH THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

Present:

Delma Abalos
Dr. Steve Brown
Tammy Hawkins
Dawn Miller
Christopher Stanley
Wayne Woodall

Virtual:

Robert Thayer

School Officials: Dr. Keeley Boyer, Mike Adkins, Deborah Ottmers, Alicia Syverson, Lauren Tavarez, Dr. Anthony Sorola, Dr. Robert Trejo

Others: Tatiana Dennis, Aaron Hawley, Julie Marshall, Michelle Keast, Matthew Spivy, Jieun Pando, Sam Magallan, Armando Nunez, Jerry Mahana, Chris Bartlett, Scott Rudes, Albessa Chavez, Morgan Eaton, Jennifer Moran, Gabriella Cleveland, Ruth Campbell, Rita Lopez, Mary Franco

27251 **Meeting Called to Order:** Tammy Hawkins, Board President, called the Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

27252 **Verification of Compliance with Open Meeting Law:** Tammy Hawkins, Board President, verified that the provisions of Section 551.001 of the Texas Government Code have been met in connection with public notice of this meeting.

27253 **Opening Remarks by Superintendent:** In her opening comments, Superintendent Dr. Keeley Boyer

27254 **Public Comment:** Individuals who wish to participate during the portion of the meeting designated for public comment shall sign up with the presiding officer or designee before the meeting begins as specified in the Board's procedures on public comment and shall indicate the agenda item on which they wish to address the Board. *BED(LOCAL)* The following citizen participated during this portion of the meeting.

In public comment, Dallas Kennedy touched on two topics. He expressed a desire to see a zero-balance budget but acknowledged that, given the current political climate, achieving that goal may not be possible. He also shared his appreciation for the school district and the community for recognizing the needs of special education students. In particular, he noted his gratitude for the inclusion of a significant project in the 2023 bond — the approval of a new Transition Learning Center for the students he teaches.

Public Hearing

27255 **Public Hearing for Adoption of 2025-2026 Official Budget:** Trustees held a public hearing for the adoption of the 2025-26 budget. A school board in Texas is legally required to approve three separate budgets: General Fund revenue budget which is projected to be \$369,560,000; Debt Service revenue budget projected at \$48,949,768; and School Nutrition \$21,817,628.

The General Fund budget is based on current appraisal district estimates for Ector County, current school finance laws, expected enrollment, and projected attendance rate. General Fund projected expenses are about \$373 million, creating a General Fund deficit of \$4 million. The largest expense by object is employee payroll (76%). The largest expenditure by function is Instruction (57%).

The General Fund budget was built around the school board's budget goals and Legislative requirements: retain high quality programs and employees, ensure strategic and differing pay increases for employees, minimize General Fund budget deficit, retain General Fund available fund balance at approximately 90 days, provide equity weighted strategic campus staffing and funding allocations, consider departmental resource needs for success. It included the Compensation Plan approved at last week's board meeting. The first element to this year's compensation plan is House Bill 2 (HB 2) passed by the Texas Legislature. HB 2 mandates teachers with 3-4 years of experience receive a \$2,500 pay increase (that is approximately a 4% increase) and teachers with 5 or more years of experience receive a \$5,000 increase (an average of about 7% increase). Along with this, ECISD will increase starting teacher pay to \$61,000. For those non-teaching staff positions, Trustees approved a 2% general pay increase based on the midpoint of the employee's respective pay grade. Trustees also approved an increase to pay for bus drivers, raising the starting pay to \$26/hour – a 22% increase from the current \$21.25/hour. All current bus drivers will be assured of earning more than the starting \$26/hour. Trustees also approved an increase to the District's minimum starting pay to \$15.50/hour.

The anticipated tax rate for 2025-26 is broken down this way: \$0.7567 for Maintenance & Operations + \$0.2544 for Debt Service = \$1.0111 total tax rate, a slight decline from this current year.

- The total tax rate is slightly less than the prior year
- The M&O tax rate is slightly less
- The I&S tax rate is the same
- The total tax rate is at or below the voter approval rate
- The total tax rate is at or under the maximum tax rate allowed without a tax rate election
- The M&O tax rate is at or below the voter approval/rollback/no new revenue tax rate
- The I&S tax rate is at or below the allowable to cover bond cost

The proposed tax rate is based on current law; however, an election is forthcoming in which Texas voters can vote on an increase to the Homestead Exemption. If successful, taxpayers will likely pay less in property taxes than presented in this proposal. Additional changes to the legislative formula for the school district's tax rate could also bring about additional updates. The Board of Trustees will officially adopt the tax rate in September.

Immediately following the presentation, Board President Tammy Hawkins declared the Public Hearing on the proposed 2025-2026 Budget **open**.

There was no public comment.

Board President Tammy Hawkins declared the Public Hearing on the proposed 2025-2026 Budget **closed**.

No action required.

Action Items

27256 **Adoption of 2025-2026 Official Budget:** Moved by Brown, seconded by Woodall that the Board of Trustees approve the Adoption of the 2025-2026 Official Budget as presented in accordance with The Texas Education Code Section 44 and the Texas Tax Code Chapter 26. The Official Budget includes the General Fund, the School Nutrition Fund, and the Debt Service Fund.

Motion unanimously approved.

27257 **Discussion of and Request for Approval of Resolution to Calculate the Property Tax Rates:** Moved by Brown, seconded by Stanley to approve the Resolution to Calculate the Property Tax Rates as presented.

Motion unanimously approved.

27258 **Discussion of and Request for Approval of 2024-2025 Budget Amendment #8:** Moved by Woodall, seconded by Hawkins to approve the 2024-2025 Budget Amendment #8 as presented.

Motion unanimously approved.

27259 **Discussion of and Request for Approval of Resolution Committing Fund Balance in Accordance with GASB 54:** Moved by Abalos, seconded by Miller to approve the Resolution Committing Fund Balance in Accordance to GASB 54 as presented. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requires a district to approve categories for fund balance commitment or assignment for the coming year.

Motion unanimously approved.

- 27260** **Discussion of and Request for Approval of Purchases over \$50,000:** Moved by Abalos, seconded by Miller to approve the Purchases over \$50,000 as presented.

Motion unanimously approved.

- 27261** **Discussion of and Request for Approval of Bond 2023 Purchases over \$50,000:** Moved by Woodall, seconded by Abalos to approve the Bond 2023 Purchases over \$50,000 as presented. This list includes \$15 million to Bluefin, LLC for roofing consultant services for Priority 1 and Priority 2 roofing projects; \$9.89 million to Teinert Construction for the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for the renovation of the Permian High School Auditorium; \$7.46 million to Teinert Construction roof projects at Burleson, Fly, Travis, and Zavala which will be the first Bond 2023 roofing projects completed; \$6.19 million to Henthorn Commercial Construction for construction of the new Transition Learning Center; \$100,000 to 1 Priority Environmental Services/Advanced Environmental Services to asbestos abatement; and \$50,000 to DomTech Electrical and Controls for electrical installations, repairs, and other projects.

Motion unanimously approved.

- 27262** **Discussion of and Request for Approval to Enter into the Participation Agreement that will Extend the Interlocal Agreement with Purchasing Cooperatives (COOPS) and Ector County ISD:** Moved by Miller, seconded by Woodall to approve to enter into the Participation Agreement that will Extend the Interlocal Agreement with Purchasing Cooperatives (COOPS) and Ector County ISD as presented. This extension of the interlocal agreement is with Choice Partners Cooperative for School Nutrition.

Motion unanimously approved.

- 27263** **Possible Request for Approval to Move to Closed Meeting - Personnel Matters - Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code [Board will deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of public employees of the District or hear a complaint or charge against an officer or employee.] (The Board of Trustees will deliberate on the hiring of Principal for Ireland Elementary School and Chief Financial Officer.) Consultations with Attorney – Section 551.071 of the Texas Open Meetings Act [The Board will meet in Closed Session in Consultation with the Board's Attorney Regarding all Matters as Authorized by Law.]:**

Board President Tammy Hawkins convened the Board of Trustees to closed session at 7:03 p.m.

Board President Tammy Hawkins reconvened the Board of Trustees to open session at 7:08 p.m.

- 27264** **Request for Approval of Personnel Recommendation to Hire Principal for Ireland Elementary School:** Moved by Miller, seconded by Stanley to approve the

personnel recommendation to hire Michelle Keast as the Principal for Ireland Elementary as presented.

Motion unanimously approved.

27265 **Request for Approval of Personnel Recommendation to Hire Chief Financial Officer:** Moved by Stanley, seconded by Woodall to approve the personnel recommendation to hire Albessa Chavez as the Chief Financial Officer as presented.

Motion unanimously approved.

27266 **Closing Remarks by the Superintendent:** There were no closing remarks.

27267 **Adjournment:** Board President Tammy Hawkins adjourned the Board meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Board President
Tammy Hawkins

Board Secretary
Robert Thayer