

Minutes of Budget Workshop Meeting

The Board of Trustees

Duncanville ISD

A Budget Workshop Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Duncanville ISD was held Monday, May 12, 2025, at 6:30 PM in the Duncanville ISD Education Plaza, 710 S. Cedar Ridge Drive, Duncanville, TX 75137.

President Dr. Flowers LaSonja called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was called under the Texas Government Code 551.045.

Let the record show that a quorum of the Board of Trustees is present, that the meeting has been duly called and that the notice of this meeting has been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Chapter 551. Our mission at Duncanville ISD is to engage, equip, and empower all scholars to achieve their unique potential.

The following trustees were in attendance: Jacqueline Culton, Carla Fahey, Dr. LaSonja Flowers, Phil McNeely, and Janet Veracruz.

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

A. INVOCATION

President Dr. Flowers

B. PLEDGE TO US FLAG AND TEXAS FLAG

Board Members

2. COMMUNICATION FROM CITIZENS TO DISCUSS PENDING AGENDA ITEMS BEFORE THE BOARD

There was no communication from citizens to discuss pending agenda items before the board.

3. BUDGET WORKSHOP

Dr. T. Lamar Goree

Dr. Goree opened the Budget Workshop presentation. Thank you very much, Dr. Flowers, and good evening to all our trustees. At this time, I'd like to invite Ms. Brandy Mayo, our CFO, to the podium who will make the presentation for our budget work session. Please know that the slides do have page numbers on them, so if you want to note your questions for the end of the presentation, we would appreciate that. Thank you.

Ms. Brandy Mayo continued the presentation. Thank you so much. Dr. Flowers, Board of Trustees and Dr. Goree. I'm here to present your May 12th budget workshop. I do want to point out you have a slide, a separate slide. It is a replacement for slide 12 from the presentation you received last week. As we get

there, I'll explain the differences and why we made the modification.

So, thank you. We'll get started. We are keeping focus and our budget priorities that we have kept throughout this fiscal year, and we keep through the end of fiscal year. Our budget priorities are fiscal stewardship and operational excellence, ensure budget alignment with the district's strategic priorities and a focus on student achievement, implement a competitive and market aligned salary structure, and maintain a healthy fund balance. So, today's topics are consistent with our last budget presentations. We're going to have legislative updates, budget assumptions and unknowns, competitive compensation, and the proposed budgets for the 25-26 school year.

The first thing I want to just draw your attention to is where we are. We are winding down the 89th Texas legislative session. These are key dates that we can see as we go through the last. I wanted to point out how quickly this is coming to an end, and that has significant relevance when we start to talk about some of the bills that we are waiting anxiously to hear about. If you see May 28, so today is May 12th, May 28 is the last day for the House of Representatives to vote on senate bills and Senate joint resolutions, and the last day for the Senate to consider all remaining bills and joint resolutions. So, that is very near and the Senate has a lot of work to do before they get to that date.

Then, you can see on June 2nd, that is Sine Die. That's the last day of the regular legislative session and no business is conducted after that point. And then, June 22nd is the last day for the governor to sign or veto bills. That is also going to be very important when we talk about our budget implications and how, if we do receive funding from House Bill 2, why those dates are important when we are a June 30th fiscal year-end and the timing of that.

Currently, what we are looking at now is Senate Bill 2. It was signed by the governor on 5/3 and that is the education savings account or lovingly referred to as the voucher bill. That was a top priority in the last legislative session, it was a top priority in this legislative session, and it has passed, and it has been signed. House Bill 2, which was also the details of this bill, was a priority in the last legislative session and again in this legislative session, and it has not fully been passed. When I created this presentation, we were hopeful that it was going to be heard on the 13th, and based on the information I received today, it is likely not going to be heard until the 15th.

We did have the opportunity to speak with Senator West's office and we're so grateful for him and all the work that he does in our district and the information that was shared today, he had some district finance experts at the table to help explain to us what may or may not happen. Something that we did learn is that there's likely going to be some focus on tenured teachers when they have the final language for the raises that will come out in House Bill 2 and what that'll look like. Later in the presentation, we do have some slides that we can kind of talk about how that may affect Duncanville ISD in the future.

Based on the information today by Moat Casey, some of the experts, there is going to be a lot of discussion surrounding this bill as we go through. And so, we are going to be paying very close attention to how that may affect us and our planning going forward in the future. So, as of today, it is uncertain, and we will continue to follow and update the board as we know what's going on.

We have maintained our budget assumptions. When I walked in here, I had not received the assessed values from DCAB, but I'm certain they'll be arriving today our first thing in the morning. But we met with them last month and we feel like our taxable assessed value growth is a conservative 3% growth and we

have built our budget on those figures. We are maintaining our current tax rates as our M&O tax rate is held to our property tax growth, and we do believe our M&O tax rate will maintain based on the 3% growth for a total tax rate of 1.1027. We maintain the same enrollment projections based on our demographer projections that we have used through the budgets that you'll see. So, the budget you'll see today will be very consistent to the budgets we have been presenting.

We have our budget unknown, so tax rates will be finalized in July. So, with all our projections and all our very wonderful tools, we still will not know the actual final information until we receive certified values from DCAB in July. Any required teacher raises approved by the legislature or the board, we don't have all the details on that and that's what we're hopeful of finding out more as we learn about House Bill 2. Along with that is any changes to the basic allotment or any other budget impacts. And I just realized that I failed to mention something, that when I got caught up in House Bill 2, is if you'll draw your attention to slide five again.

This was something that I learned about late last week, House Bill 500. It's still in discussion but some of the experts are hopeful. It has a lot of appropriations in it and it touches on a lot of different things. But one of the things that might be most valuable for Texas ISDs, in particularly Duncanville ISD, is there's a supplemental budget there that addresses a reduction of federal money from SHAR. So, as you know, in the past few years we have been hit with reductions on our SHAR's Medicaid program. And so, this is, for lack of a better term or one that we're familiar with, might be sort of a hold harmless to help us generate some of that revenue that we lost and get us back where we need to be. I did want to point that out and I failed to do that. So, thanks for going back with me.

So, the teacher pay comparisons. This represents a slide that we have seen before. This shows where Duncanville ISD is in comparison to our neighboring districts with specific focus on the best Southwest partnership in our area, those districts. It's expanded more than just these districts as of today. But in our immediate area, we do look at Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, and Lancaster. Those were the first four cities and districts that participated in the program. And so, when we are looking at those districts compared to where we are, you can see that we are a little bit below a marketable or comparable rate to those districts. And discussion with the board as we've gone through this budget planning process, we began to consider a raise consideration independent of House Bill 2, and so these would be raises that we would fund out of our current budget.

The goal here would be a \$2,500 raise, and if you see in the presentation you received Friday, I put the 7%. That's for the future, that was a typo of mine. This is a 4.27% increase for \$2,500. It's a very significant increase to the teacher pay scale per teacher. That budget impact estimated with benefits is \$2,189,688, which will bring the new teacher starting salary to \$61,000. I also want to add here, we would like to bring, if the board is favorable to this as we move forward tonight, we will be bringing the teacher salary scale for approval on May 19th, and I'll talk a little bit more in detail on why that's important in the next slide.

With the increase, you can see here, for teacher pay comparisons for 25-26, it brings Duncanville ISD up to \$61,000 for starting teacher pay. And now, when you see this in comparison with our best Southwest partnership, when you take note of Cedar Hill, Duncanville and Lancaster, we are now slightly above and at a more marketable and competitive rate of pay in our area. This also has the starting pay for certified bilingual, and SPED self-contained teachers for Duncanville ISD will be \$65,000. And then, kind of circling

back to bringing the teacher scale at the Monday night board meeting, is as you all know, we are in hiring season, and being able to get this information out to our current staff and all of our potential staff is very valuable as we go through the hiring season, especially with the commitment from Duncanville ISD to maintain a marketable and competitive rate. So, it's exciting to be able to present this to you tonight.

House Bill 2, this is on everyone's, well, at least everyone in my world's mind right now. House Bill 2 is related to public education and public-school finance. The House has amended and passed House Bill 2, and it is currently awaiting a vote in the Senate. We did receive information from Senator West's office today that once they receive the committee bill, before it goes to the floor, we'll get it. So, they're going to share it with us. So, that's great that we're going to maybe see it before it goes. Right now it has an increase to the basic allotment of \$395, which makes that \$6,555. So, in the current estimates for Duncanville ISD, based on everything that's in the bill, it has increased the basic allotment, it has increased the special education, it has some changes due to the golden pennies.

So, there's a lot of small things. But the current estimate that I am seeing is \$6.7 million increase in general revenue over this fiscal year to next. Now, please keep in mind I have received multiple runs of this bill, and they are always a couple of hundred thousand up and down. Until what's done is done, we won't know the true dollar for dollar. But based on the tools that I've used in the past, I believe this is going to be a very close number with all things remaining the same. Right now, 40% of the 6.7 would go to salaries for staff. 60% can be used to cover either additional salaries or offset district operational expenses. So, 60% can be used how we need to best fiscally and responsibly manage our general fund budget. Any changes will require a budget amendment.

And so, I want to point that out. Back when we were talking about the schedule of the legislative session, when it comes down to June 2nd for everything to be done and then June 22nd for the governor to sign the bills, that means it is at the very end of June before we fully know the language of this bill and how it affects us. We are legally required to adopt a budget by June 30th because our fiscal year is July 1 through June 30th. So, the recommendation is to adopt a budget based on current law, receive the new law, understand it to the full extent, and then come back into a July budget or July board meeting to amend the budget at that time. And as you know, we amend the budget almost most months. So, that is certainly legal and certainly transparent to do. And so, that's why we're proposing that.

Then the timing of changes is determined by the language of the final law. Back in 2019, I think it was House Bill 3, it was the same experience. But the language of the law, the way it stated that when the raises were to go into effect, had implications if you adopted a budget or adopted a comp manual with raises prior to that day. So, there were districts who were on the hook for the raise they gave and the raise that came out in the legislature. And so, we want to be very careful, and we are being, the experts are sharing with us that it is most certainly the best option to weigh. The administration is recommending the increase to teacher pay so we can maintain or get to our marketable and competitive rate, but any additional changes would wait until after the bill is signed.

And so, which brings us to what that could possibly look like. If House Bill 2 is approved, the way it stands today, and we receive an increase in revenue of 6.7. So, if you look at that chart at the very top, it starts with the projected increase in revenue for the general operating fund. Right now, there's an amendment that states, and it hasn't been adopted this way, but there is an amendment that designates how much goes to teachers, librarians, nurses, and counselors. I did run this with that amendment in account. I just

needed some variables, and I ran it as it sits today. So, \$2.7 million would equate to about \$2,100 for each of the members of that group. The district administration is recommending a 3% increase to auxiliary staff, paraprofessionals, professional staff, and SLT staff, 3% at mid-point.

The total raise using the estimated House Bill 2 would be just over \$4 million, with an estimated \$2.6 million to offset our general fund deficits. And then, as we have talked in great detail before, you can see the estimates that we have seen historically with vacancy saves, non-payroll saves, and we are doing an extensive federal evaluation and they'll be hopefully a re-class that will further reduce that. These are subject to change and are only based on historical averages in the current review of federal funding. So, with that said, back to that mistake I made on the earlier slide, with the \$2,500 increase to teachers and a possible potential \$2,100, the total for teachers could hover somewhere around just over 7%. Now, we do have to keep in mind if they add the detailed language that supports the more tenured teachers, it could vary depending on where you are on the pay scale.

I also want to kind of just remind us, and this is a similar information that you've seen, it's just every week or so, I do a forecast. I review all the numbers to make sure everything is where I want to be and I'm just bringing our 24-25 year in projections to you just so that you know, I do feel confident that it is maintain a consistency with this net impact to fund balance that you see here. Right now, the deficit, as you would see on an amended budget monthly is \$19 million. But with our historical vacancy saves and the realized SRE class, non-payroll and other position reductions, I expect us to be around -9.4. Now, it could be more favorable than that, but that's an estimate that you'll see there.

Last presentation, I did bring you a visual to show you items that were being proposed as investments and reductions to the budget. So, as you know, we are actively engaged in cost containment. We have been working through that all year, and we are going to be continuing that work through the next fiscal year. But while we are actively engaged in cost containment, we also have a duty to make investments into our students because our priority is academic success. And so, as we are combing through line by line of our budgets, we do have some ads here that we are considering. They were either on those investment reductions last time or they were specifically discussed. So, I think with attention to doctorate degree stipends, and then the communication supervisor, that name changed. There was discussion about a name change there, so please note that that will change for purposes in HR. But everything here, so we still are showing a reduction of almost \$2.2 million.

So, when we look at the 25-26 year-end projections, you will see here in this proposed budget now, I have added the proposed teacher increase based on current budget so that you can see the total expenditures based on the total revenue. We were able to decrease the budget, but with the raises it brings it to \$18 million. And then, if you see the 25-26 expected saves like we have been talking about, it's down to about a -9. Now, this does not include any estimates from House Bill 2, so if we are to realize \$3 million from House Bill 2, then that would bring us down further to get us closer to balance.

This is in line with, there's not been any major changes to this budget. And then, just to kind of reiterate where we are and align with revisiting that forecast, making sure everything is going as we planned. We are still very confident that we are going to maintain about a little over five months of fund balance when we finish this fiscal year. And so, while adopting a deficit budget is maybe not our favorite thing to do, the district has made very valuable financial decisions that has gotten us into a place where we have time to make very thoughtful decisions. As we go into the next year, that work can continue.

This is the 25-26 budget by function. So, per board policy and per education code, the Board of Trustees for the Duncanville ISD will adopt a budget based by function. So, I wanted to give you the opportunity to see what you will see on June the 16th. You can see the fund balance student nutrition and debt service have not changed since the presentation last month. They are still holding strong there, and the general operating fund is still consistent and in very consistent percentagewise to what we've seen year over year. And as you would always expect, much of the budget is in function 11 with instruction, with our focus on students.

In our next steps as we approach the end of the 24-25 fiscal year, you can see May 12th is where we are today. We will be discussing the changes, and the impact to local and state federal funding is discussed in our budget presentation. And as we have shown, when we were going year over year for our local state and federal revenue, we have discussed the changes in prior budget workshops and today of the impacts of SHARS to our federal revenue budget, and we have discussed in prior budget workshops the impact of when we're projecting our enrollment decline and decline of ADA. So, those are the two major impacts to our state revenue and to our federal revenue.

Other than that, local sources, Duncanville ISD is collecting their taxes at a very high percentage rate, and so that's a great tribute to the community here in Duncanville. And so, we don't expect to see any major changes to our local state and federal funding. It is required to have a discussion as part of the first rating, and we have met that discussion in all our budget workshops. May 19th next Monday is our regular board meeting where we'll be hopefully bringing the teacher pay scale for review and adoption by the board, and May 28th is an internal process that we do.

We will be putting out our notice of public meeting to discuss the budget and proposed tax rate according to law in the Dallas Morning News. When we discuss that, I do want to point out that because we don't know our taxable values, and you probably have done this in the past, we will propose in that documentation the tax rate we are using for the 24-25 year. The reason for that is because if we publish a lower tax rate and then July 25th comes and it's higher, we must republish, and the timing is so tight at that time. So, it is recommended in almost every district. I know it also. So, we will post the tax rate that we have today. It's just a few pennies, well, less than a few pennies difference. So, we'll publish that. And then, on June 16th, we'll come for the adoption of the 25-26 budget, and we will discuss the proposed tax rate at that time. So, questions.

President Dr. Flowers commented. Thank you so much for that, and to be able to see the teacher increase proposal or recommendation and numbers and percent, that was very helpful. So, thank you.

Trustee Fahey commented and asked. Thank you. Brandy, that was a wonderful presentation. You make it easy for us to understand. I hope I'm speaking for everyone.

With the teacher pay comparison, do you know how many of the school districts have voted on their budget? If we put ourselves in with a new salary, I hope we're not going to have to do the play catch-up thing. Do you know any of these who have already publicized or talked about, or I guess I could watch all the videos from all the board meetings. Do you know?

Ms. Mayo replied. I know what they share with me. It's a tight game these days. So, I do have, because I'm familiar with the financials of some of these districts, I know that they don't have the capacity to offer

a raise out of their current budget as we are considering today. Many, many districts, and I'm close with a lot of the CFOs that run these districts, they're waiting until House Bill 2. I think one of the reasons after discussion with SLT and Dr. Goree is, when we were looking at where we fell, we were below. If we didn't become competitive and marketable and waited until House Bill 2, then we would be giving the same raise as everyone and we would just continue to be in the same place. So, I think the advantage of this gets us to where we need to be. Then as House Bill 2 raises and they begin to give their raises, we'll be able to maintain our competitive and marketable rates.

Trustee Fahey asked. If House Bill 2 is still in a muddle puddle, can we actually call an election, I mean, a vote for June the 29th, or? I mean, do you think any of that will be happening? I mean, it depends on the legislature and all, but do you think we could do that?

Ms. Mayo replied. As long as you adopt a budget before the end of June 30th. I think the only concern there would be, even though the bill has gone to, just like with the Education Savings Plan, even though the bill is now signed by the governor, we are not privy to all the language of the bill. It has not been dissected, so to speak, by the experts by TEA. So, even though the governor signs it or hits his bill, there's still some work to be done. The other thing is, depending on the language of the bill, it may not be prudent to adopt before June 30th, even if we know it all, if it says it must be applied at a certain time.

This was years ago and we had a pandemic, so I don't remember exactly, but I think in the last bill that we had to, it was raises had to be done in September. So, we adopted the budget, then adopted the comp manual according to law, and then we had to retro back the people who started getting paid on July 1st so that we can make sure we were following the letter of the law. So, it really goes down to what those details are. I've read the law, I'm not a lawyer, so I would be hesitant to give advice on the language that's used there.

Trustee Culton commented and asked. Thank you very much for your presentation. I just have a couple of questions on slide 12. Regarding the proposed increases, do you know the number of employees in each category and the average increase that they would receive? So, I know you probably don't have that information.

Ms. Mayo replied. I do not. Yeah, I know the teachers. But I could put that together for you.

Trustee Culton asked. And then, so the estimated balance to use for deficit is 2.763?

Ms. Mayo replied. Yes.

Trustee Culton asked. Where does that number come from?

Ms. Mayo replied. So, the very top, well, at first, these are all estimates. So, they're forecast based on the expert's information. So, the very top line that says estimated House Bill 2 - Related Use of Increased Revenue, there's a 6.781 figure there. If you take that number and subtract the 4018 figure, it is my sincere hope that that equals 2.763.

Dr. Goree asked. Brandy, is that the 40 and 60%?

Ms. Mayo replied. That is, yes.

Dr. Goree asked. Right. So, the \$2.7 million represent the 60%?

Ms. Mayo replied. Well, it's not exactly split between 40 and 60 because there is a small bleed over for the 3% that goes. So, it's the 40, so I think it's like \$300,000. That was more than the 40 into the 60. I'd have to do the math. But the 2.7 is the majority of the 60% that's left over to reduce operational expenses. Yes.

Trustee Culton asked. Can you explain the 40 and 60% then?

Ms. Mayo replied. Of course. If you look at slide 11, the current estimate is 6.781948. If you take 40% of that figure, the loss, as it states now, is directing us to use that money towards salary increases.

Trustee Culton asked. So, that means that the 2.7 is the 40%, and the difference of the \$4 million includes the auxiliary staff paraprofessional, right?

Ms. Mayo replied. Yes.

Trustee Culton asked. And so, that 2.7 can be used for anything else?

Ms. Mayo replied. Yes. So, essentially, I guess if you could just think about it as that number increasing the state revenue line on revenue, thus making the variance less.

Trustee Culton commented and asked. Thank you all for providing additional information related to funding for literacy and prioritization of academics in the budget. Is there anything you might want to highlight for the record in those items?

Ms. Mayo replied. I did not produce all those items, so I may have to lean on the team.

President Dr. Flowers stated. We're going to stay with your presentation before we move to those. And then, we'll go to whatever other questions anybody may have.

Trustee Veracruz asked commented and asked. Thank you so much for your presentation. I really do appreciate the breakdown. On page 12, staff other than teachers. And so, there is a number of \$1 million there. And so, is that with the increase, that page?

Ms. Mayo replied. I have failed to share with you, Ms. Veracruz, That there was a supplemental page that replaced 12. My apologies, I should have said that when you arrived. Yes.

Trustee Veracruz commented. Thank you. I got it. Yes.

Trustee Culton asked. What is the publication for the budget? Is it 72 hours?

Ms. Mayo replied. Oh, to post in the newspaper? The newspaper posting must be done within either 10 days before the adoption and no more than 30 days. So, there is a window there. I usually just try to count back 10 days and give a couple of conservative days because so many things change this time of year, and so I was planning to do it. I was saying that June 3rd would be the date it would actually appear in the newspaper, but I do try to give some flexibility there. So, it's probably not exactly 10 days.

Trustee Culton asked. Does it have to be on a particular date?

Ms. Mayo replied. If it falls within that date range, it's okay. But it is a very specific document with a very specific font, and there are many rules and text code around that document.

Dr. Goree continued. Thank you very much. This time, Dr. Nix, I'd like to ask you to come and highlight some of the academic focus. And again, I do thank the trustees for your attention to the budget. We're super excited about having the opportunity to jump out in front of the other districts and our immediate competing area with pay. We do believe that will help us to attract the absolute best talent to our schools. Dr. Nix.

Dr. Nix added to the presentation. Thank you. President Flowers, members of the board, Dr. Goree, it's my absolute pleasure to share with the board based on the board's request of how we are prioritizing academics in our budget. That really gave us a wonderful opportunity to provide the board with feedback on all the things that we are doing, or what we've done to prioritize our academics. Really highlighting, as Trustee Culton asked, Dr. Goree always talks about no matter what we do, nothing improves student education like quality tier one instruction. So, our focus on ensuring quality tier one support, programming, implementation of curriculum is paramount, and we look at that when we are budgeting. Is there anything that's going to impede quality teaching and instruction? And those are the things that we put parameters around to make sure that we don't mess with too much, whether it be literature and things of that nature, things that support teachers and student learning.

So, that is a huge piece of just really looking at the budget, what's our priority? And as we're pulling things back and as we're making budgeting decisions, what's going to impact quality tier one instruction or not and then making sure we're prioritizing those things. That's a highlight of something that we wanted to add. Also, I just wanted to highlight, as a board in our district improvement plan, we list priority one, priority three, priority four in our strategic plan. Those are things that we prioritize when we budget. For example, priority one, raising academic performance in early literacy, numeracy and post-secondary readiness. We are currently working on an early literacy plan. It's not just a document that we're working on. Board, as you guys know, we've got some work to do in early literacy. It's not just a statement; it's real work that we've been working on for months to develop a plan.

When we're talking about budgeting and how that has an impact on budget, we're making sure that we are fiscally responsible with what that's going to look like, that we're rolling that out responsibly, that we are getting all stakeholder input and that we're funding it appropriately. Because at the end of the day, if we are failing our students when it comes to early literacy, we can budget for whatever we want. We're going to be behind the eight-ball. So, prioritizing that is key. Priority three, improving teacher quality

through effective developing and coaching. I highlight this because it's no secret. Our teachers are coming into the profession year after year after year, needing more support. And so, if we don't plan for that, we don't plan in our budget for that, that's key. One of the things that Dr. Goree came up with, in my opinion was brilliant this year, was really supporting the teachers at the campus level with those ISS teachers, putting them in the classroom, ensuring that our teachers have access, I mean students have access to those individuals that are super qualified and are able to support their colleagues in the classroom.

That's an example of how we've prioritized academics in the budget. How we've done our PLC model. I mean, I could go on and on, but you just asked me to kind of highlight and so I'll stop with the priority four, and that is practicing fiscal stewardship by reducing cost tied to inefficiencies. But as difficult as it is, we've really had to look at our programs that are offering duplicatable services, right? So, there are so many things that we are doing, and we've had to scale back. I'll give you some examples. We scale back on some programs that just weren't giving us the return on investment as we were looking at student achievement. So, whether that be Istation, that is not a knock on Istation, it's just that we weren't seeing what we needed to see there. Or things like using both MAP and using i-Ready, well, we're paying a lot of money for that, but are we utilizing that data and is it helping students to be successful?

So, as we're going through the budget process, really looking at those programs, looking at that data and making decisions based on student data, not on what's comfortable for adults, not on what we're used to, not on what we like. So, those are just some examples of how we're prioritizing academics in this budget process. It would be easy to just say, "Yeah, cut everything." But we're prioritizing what is having the biggest impact on students. What does that take to be successful? How are we budgeting, how are we prioritizing? And then, really putting a bubble around that as we're going through the budget process. I hope that that answered the question, Trustee Colton.

Trustee Culton commented. Thank you very much. I really appreciate that. And I appreciate all that y'all are doing to help academically and putting more people or more maybe highly qualified or seasoned people in the classroom where they're needed, and the focus on literacy and eliminating programs that are duplicate each other. So, thank you, Dr. Goree for that and team, thank you.

Trustee Veracruz asked. I wanted to ask, you mentioned about the prioritization of what could be used and what is not helping, right? So, are the educators able to be pulled to discuss any of this? Are they having table talks with you about what is working for them versus you know?

Dr. Nix replied. Thank you so much for asking. Yes, ma'am. Part of what has slowed the process down, and that's not a negative thing, is getting everybody's input, right? So, let me give you a couple of examples of that. I mentioned i-Ready and NWEA MAP. Well, we've used both for quite a while. Putting out a survey, I've got survey feedback from teachers at every campus in this district, from middle school down, had the opportunity to provide feedback. Assistant principals, principals, C&I staff, school leadership staff. What are we seeing? Why are we seeing it? Does this help? How are you using it? So, we are talking, I'm spending literally, and this is not kudos, just the team, right? Literally months getting feedback and talking to teachers and seeing what's happening and getting parent feedback, and that's just with i-Ready and MAP, to decide as to, when we pull this trigger, what's the impact going to be? And what's the impact going to be on teachers? What's the impact going to be on students? What's the impact going to be at the district level with what we track in our metrics, and how we determine whether or not schools are

successful? It includes school leadership and the metrics they have. That's just one example. So, yes ma'am. We're not making decisions in isolation. Now, there are some decisions that we include more than others, for example, but we must get that feedback because when we are looking at making these shifts and these changes and these programs, the people that use it are the people that are benefiting from it or not, and we need to know.

Trustee Veracruz asked. I would like to hear from Mr. Graham regarding the counseling and social workers, regarding that branch of workers and leadership, and can you come and share a little bit about what we can trust that they are doing?

President Dr. Flowers stated. That's kind of broad. Can you...

Trustee Veracruz clarified. I would just like him to share a little bit about this report here, I would like to hear about everything that he has to share about what they do and what they are expanding to do on a continual basis.

Mr. Graham replied. Thank you, to President Flowers, to all trustees and to Dr. Goree. As we started the conversation last week, we know that we do have those three levels of counselors in our district. We currently have our comprehensive counselors, and we do have 35 of them in total in the district. We currently have 17 counselors at our high school, and with that, we do have our support counselors, of which we have four of them in the district, and those what we consider our social-emotional learning counselors. Then we have our restorative practice counselors, and we have four of them in the district as well, and then we have our social work position. Currently, we have one social worker in the district. And the first thing that I would like to go into is what are the differences? Or the question was, can comprehensive counselors do the job of the social workers?

And to that, yes, our comprehensive counselors could do the job of the social workers, yet it is the time available for them and the training that they would need for that to happen. We can see that some of the things that our social workers do take them away from the campus. They spend a lot, most of course they spend all their time away from the campus, which in turn, if our campus counselors were to take on those particular items, they would be doing that same thing. We can see that some of the jobs of the social workers are to connect with families and shelters and assist with housing instability, make home visits and assist the needs and follow up, conduct with community partners and secure food, clothing, supplies and household items. Stock, organize and manage the pantry, arrange for donation pickups and drop-offs for families without transportation, advocate for pregnant and parenting students, help families navigate complex systems like applying for assistance throughout the community, and of course build relationships with agencies and provide long-term support for those particular families.

So, they do spend a lot of time working with our families, with our community, and of course with our students. Some of the services that our comprehensive counselors would have to take on and provide assistance for, right now, case management for home visitation. Again, we know that our campus counselors can do that, but again, our goal is for them to help with the students on the campus and provide that academic support and behavior support on the campus. Of course, we do trauma-informed family support work, community resource navigation, housing and homelessness and intervention, coordination of materials and resources and donations. Our social workers do a great job of finding and getting support for donations throughout our district. And of course, working with certain agencies to

collaborate on resources and grant development.

We try to look at the differences between those particular jobs as our social workers do more of the family, and system specialists, of course, they are licensed professionals in social work. We look at our restorative practices specialists and most of them work at training teachers on how to work on climate and culture in their classroom. So, they train certified educators on CHAMPS, they train them on, CHAMPS is one of our behavior intervention models where it's called Conversation Help Activity and Movement, and that's what we use for our tier one behavior plan for our teachers. They do PD for that throughout the year for our teachers.

President Dr. Flowers stated. I'm sorry, Mr. Graham. We're not expecting you to read the packet that you gave us. Thank you so much for listing them and we have them. I think that, is there a particular question?

Trustee Veracruz commented. No, I just wanted him to be able to express that to the audience and just share, and I do appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Graham.

Trustee Culton asked. So, we have one social worker, is that the only one that does the home visit?

Mr. Graham replied. Well, we had two in the district. We currently have one, but both were doing the home visits.

Trustee Culton asked. And so, did we cut one, or?

Mr. Graham replied. Yes. That just happened a few weeks ago.

Trustee Culton asked. So, I guess, will this one staff member be able to perform?

Dr. Goree added. One thing I'll tell you, and certainly I appreciate the questions, because it did give us an opportunity to provide some in-depth thought around how we're utilizing people and that's something we've done all year. The sad part is, even though more social workers would bring more value, we're still in many situations going to have to look deeper and cut even more as we go into the next few years. So, we will this next year, and this is why I thank this board and past administration for the healthy fund balance, because it does give us time to be more methodical about what are those roles that we need in the district.

Mr. Graham has said several times that our campus counselors can do this, but time. Those are the type of things that we have to study as we're going through this next year to see how we can ensure that we are as fiscally efficient as we can be with our positions, and this is [inaudible 00:52:52], and we have a very unique population of kids that have some unique social needs.

Trustee Culton commented. I was going to say that's true, and we know that they can't learn when certain things are going on.

Dr. Goree replied. They cannot.

Trustee Culton commented. And to have someone who is available to kind of bridge that gap.

Dr. Goree replied. Right, and this board did a wonderful job, even post-COVID of expanding in our responsive services. But again, those are those things that many were funded and made possible through ESSER dollars, and now we're having to look at bringing those back to our general fund budget. Now, what I appreciate about the board is that we are not just saying cut everything that was associated with ESSER, but let's look at some of the other things like the MAP and the i-Ready, and let's look at removing one of those and that frees up space for us to keep some of those things like some of our restorative practices that were working well.

Trustee Culton asked. So, could a volunteer manage the Panther Pantry?

Dr. Goree replied. Absolutely.

Trustee Culton asked. So, is that something that we need to be looking for to being done?

Mr. Graham replied. We are looking at different options for that to provide extra help in this plan for next year. That is changing some of the expectations for some of the other SEL counselors and restorative practice counselors, looking at some of the secretaries and what they're doing, and their jobs to ensure that we get people over there to ensure that that Panther Pantry can be open enough and serve our community.

President Dr. Flowers commented and asked. Thank you for that. That was on my list too, because as I went through the duties and responsibilities of the social worker, many of those, any adult could do. That did not require a social worker expertise. So, if we reassign or create a different position for someone that's doing those, or like you said, spread them out, I'm not here about the how, but I am talking about what. I saw many of those that don't have to be a social worker to do those things. And my question is, are the home visits, are those specifically for the McKinney-Vento students? Or home visits whenever anything comes up?

Mr. Graham replied. Home visits are for whenever situation is needed for that particular time. It could be because this student is not coming to school, as far as attendance issues. It could be related to McKinney-Vento, it could be related to some academic issues that are on that particular social worker's caseload. And as they speak with the parents, they're doing all of that, providing all those services to ensure that we're getting connected to what can help that particular child.

President Dr. Flowers asked. Can we look at additional resources that we can use for home visits instead of that just being on one person, Dr. Goree?

Dr. Goree replied. Absolutely. In fact, you think about what we're doing with CASA, we're doing that very thing now. We'll provide the board with more information. We're looking at different ways that we can do this more efficiently. One thing I'll say about home visits that I'll just brag a little bit about our team is that recently, we went out and did home visits on all the high school students that have not been, had missed a specific number of days. And we did this where staff, we had people from communications from all

departments that volunteered and actually made little teams and actually went out and went out to homes. So, we are looking at different ways that can be more efficient with the people that we have.

President Dr. Flowers stated. We do not have any communications from citizens regarding pending agenda items.

Dr. Goree announced. Just to remind the trustees and anyone that's out there listening, that tomorrow at 9:00, we will have the groundbreaking, I should say, for our new CTE building at the high school. So, if your schedule permits, we'd love you to come be a part of that historic event. Thank you.

Trustee Fahey asked. Will it be on that west side? Where do we meet?

Dr. Goree addressed Ms. Wallace. Ms. Wallace, that's correct, right? That it'll be on the west side.

Dr. Goree replied. Yes.

President Dr. Flowers stated. Thank you again on behalf of the board team for all of the responses. They were clear and concise.

4. ADJOURNMENT AT 7:28 PM

Trustee McNeely made a motion to adjourn; Trustee Culton seconded the motion.



Dr. T. Lamar Goree
Superintendent of Schools

Board President

Board Secretary