

The Ector County ISD Board of Trustees held its October Board Meeting on the 18th. A recap of the agenda is below.

1. Roll Call. Carol Gregg was absent.
2. Verification of compliance with open meetings requirements.
3. Olivia Gaudet and Lyndon Storm from Hays STEAM Academy led the pledges of allegiance.



4. Reverend Mike Atkins from Kingston Avenue Baptist Church gave the invocation.
5. Special presentations included recognition of Permian High School Coach Mike Bettenhausen (below left), the introductions of [Odessa High's Edward Burnette](#) as a National Merit Commended Scholar as well as [this year's AP Scholars](#), and the announcement of New Tech Odessa as an Apple School of Distinction (below right).



6. In his opening comments, Superintendent Dr. Scott Muri welcomed Monica Quintero as the new special assistant to the superintendent. She will officially join ECISD later in the month after serving as the public information officer for the Odessa Police Department.
7. There was no public comment.
8. Public Hearing
 - A. Trustees held a public hearing, then voted 6-0 to approve amendment #1 to the agreement for limitation on appraised valued with GCC Permian, LLC, Application No. 1652 pursuant to Chapter 313 of the Texas Tax Code. This application was originally submitted in September 2021, and approved by Trustees in April 2022. GCC Permian, LLC has now increased the scope and size of the project.

9. Public Hearing on Financial Accountability

For the third year in a row, Ector County ISD received a perfect score of 100 on the state’s FIRST report. FIRST stands for Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas. It assesses how school districts spend their money annually. This FIRST report is for 2021-22, which is based on financial data from 2020-21. Our District earned a Superior Achievement rating, which is equivalent to a grade of A. This was the fifth time in the past six years ECISD earned an A. In the 20 years since this report’s inception, ECISD has earned an A in financial integrity 16 times. Created by the 76th Texas Legislature in 2001, FIRST is designed to encourage public schools to better manage their financial resources to provide the maximum allocation possible for direct instructional purposes. The FIRST ratings are calculated using a series of financial indicators, such as administrative cost expenditures; the accuracy of a district or charter’s financial information submitted to TEA; and any financial vulnerabilities or material weaknesses in internal controls as determined by an external auditor. Congratulations to our ECISD Finance Department for their hard work in managing tax dollars responsibly.

10. Action Items

- A. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve purchases over \$50,000. This is for security cameras in kitchens, serving areas and kitchen back doors, as well as electronic door hardware for back doors of all kitchens.
- B. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve budget amendment #2. Among the items approved is salary/benefits and equipment costs for three additional police officers. These new officers will help the ECISD police department provide coverage to all schools as well as conduct weekly safety audits of all campuses. The new hires will bring the total number of ECISD police officers to 32.**
- C. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve the 2022 certified tax roll as received from the Ector County Appraisal District.
- D. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation to build and maintain a STEM lab center at all elementary campuses and the two early childhood centers over the next two years. Each STEM lab is valued at \$33,500. Along with the lab comes professional learning for teachers and the replenishment of consumable materials over five years. [See more.](#)
- E. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve the submission of a grant to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The Transition Learning Center (TLC) at Odessa High School is proposing a grant of \$25,000 that will allow students, ages 18-21 living with various disabilities, and TLC staff to participate in a series of three camping and fishing trips to the San Angelo State Park. These activities are designed to meet educational objectives aligned with the TLC mission and goals, along with the students' individual education plans.
- F. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve a Care Coordination Agreement with PermianCare. This agreement is created to increase access for students who need community-based mental health and/or substance use disorder services. Through this agreement, PermianCare and ECISD will work together to create student and family centered treatment plans and care coordination activities for those who are served through this partnership.
- G. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve a Bond development process. At last week's workshop, Trustees asked Dr. Muri to bring a plan for a bond committee structure and a potential timeline for a bond election. Dr. Muri proposed forming a new bond committee between now and December, having that committee work on a facility review and bond proposal through May, and then present a proposal to Trustees in June. Trustees would then take the summer months considering that proposal before ultimately deciding in August whether or not to call a bond election for November 2023. He reminded school board members the committee and/or the school board can decide at any point to change the timeline and wait until later to pursue a bond election.**
- In regard to the structure of the bond committee, Dr. Muri recommended 1 parent (non-employee) from each school (44); 1 staff member from each school (44); 10 students; 21 community members (3 recommended by each school board member); 10 principals/assistant principals; and 15 administrative department reps; for a total of 144 committee members. Trustees asked that an alternate parent and staff member be named for each school in case someone cannot attend every meeting. They agreed, the fact that moms and dads will make up the biggest part of the committee is important because any bond proposal is about creating better conditions and opportunities for students to learn and thrive.**

- H. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve a series of priorities they would like to advocate for during next year's legislative session. The list included items that fall under the headings of school finance (*increase basic allotment, increase school safety allotment, and others*) and human capital (*support technical assistance for creative staffing solutions and educator preparation programs, incentivize partnerships between ISDs and colleges/universities to create teacher pipelines, as a few examples*), plus initiatives like using data generated from ESSER investments to inform future funding decisions, redesigning the Chapter 313 program for business incentives, opposing voucher programs or similar efforts, and limiting charter expansion. Trustees agreed these priorities could change as the legislative discussions evolve.
11. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve the Consent Agenda. This month's Consent Agenda included minutes of previous meetings; bills for payments; acceptance of donations over \$10,000*; out-of-state travel by the Odessa High School dance teams to Los Angeles, California during Spring Break; a data sharing agreement with Economic Mobility Systems, LLC; and additional 2022-23 T-TESS appraisers.
12. Report/Discussion items
- A. **Trustees received an update on the Early Childhood program. The department's goal is to ensure students are kindergarten ready. Currently, there are 470 students in the three-year-old pre-k program, up 116 from one year ago; and 1,421 students in the four-year-old program, up 80 from a year ago. The innovative partnership with the Odessa Family YMCA is a tremendous help with three-year-old program and the future expansion of it. ECISD's Early Childhood program supports the YMCA and local daycare centers by making available professional development and training opportunities to better prepare kids for starting school. In data from last year comparing the beginning of the year and the end of the year, PK3 students showed significant growth in language and math, and PK4 students saw growth ranging from 15% to 24% growth in language and math. Once in kindergarten, students are assessed after Labor Day, and ECISD kindergartners have grown from 33.2% in 2020 to 57% this year. [See the earlier press announcement here.](#)**
- B. Trustees heard a report on 2023 medical plan benefits. Open Enrollment for insurance benefits starts next week for district employees. The Medical Plan Committee announced there will be no changes in premium costs for the coming year (insurance benefits run on a calendar year, i.e. January 1 – December 31, 2022). Aetna is the ECISD medical plan administrator, PCARx is the pharmacy administrator, and First Financial offers optional benefits. ECISD offers a variety of coverages and options for care for team members.
- C. Trustees were given an update on school safety audits. In response to Uvalde tragedy the state now requires every school district to be audited for safety by an external entity. Those audits are done at random. In addition to that requirement, our ECISD police are conducting weekly safety audits at every school, checking that safety precautions are all in place. A series of schools have now been through the external audit, and at one location not all inside doors were locked (per ECISD requirement). That finding is required to be reported to the school board. The situation is being addressed, and random external audits will continue over the next four months.
13. There was no closed session.

14. Information items. You can find these items, as well as the descriptions of previous items, here – <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Agenda/1406?meeting=551027>.

15. There were no closing remarks.

16. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

*\$10,000 from James Avery Forging Hope Program for the OHS Transition Learning Center outdoor classroom.