**Harris County Department of Education**
**Minutes of Regular Board Meeting**
**February 18, 2026**

The Harris County Board of School Trustees met in called session on February 18, 2026, in the Board Room, at 6300 Irvington Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77022. Richard Cantu, Board First Vice President, called the meeting to order at 1:04 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.

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| **Board Members Present:** | Richard Cantu, Board First Vice President; Erica Davis, Board Second Vice President; Andrea Duhon; Eric Dick; John McGee and Silky Joshi-Malik |
| **Board Members Absent:** | Amy Hinojosa, Board President |
| **Board Attorney:** | Sarah Langlois |
| **Administration:** | James Colbert, Jr., County School Superintendent;; Jonathan Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support; C.J. Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent for Education & Enrichment; Ann Westbrooks, Chief Financial Officer for Business Services Joyce Akins, Director, Center for Grants Development; Danielle Bartz, Chief of Staff; Jessica Bermea, Executive Assistant to Board of Trustees; Joe Carreon, Director Construction; Lisa Caruthers, Senior Director, CASE for Kids; Danielle Clark, Chief Communications Officer; Carie Crabb, Senior Director School-Based Therapy Services; Curtis Davis, Director Records Management; Jeff Drury, Director Choice Partners; Leslie Edwards-Etheridge, Director, Center for Safe and Secure Schools; Chris Hoesel, Director Information Technology; Eduardo Honold, Senior Director Adult Education; Edna Johnson, Director of Purchasing; Marcia Leiva, Chief Accounting Officer; Charles Ned, Senior Director Schools; Margaret Patton, Director Compliance and Curriculum Services; Venetia Peacock, Senior Director Head Start; Yolanda Pyrtle, Director Research and Evaluation Institute; Andrea Seagraves, Senior Director for Educator Success; Tyrone Sylvester, Chief Human Resources Officer; Trina Silva, Director Education Foundation Community Development; Michelle Williams, Executive Director Facilities |
| **Visitors:** | Derek Montgomery |

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1. **Invocation** - Laura Espinoza, Administrative Assistant, Facilities

2. **Pledge of Allegiance to the US flag** - Thomas Plapp, Clerk Fixed Assets, Facilities

3. **Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag** - Thomas Plapp, Clerk Fixed Assets, Facilities

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.

   *Derek Montgomery addressed the board regarding licensed therapists.*

5. **REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

   A. **Recognition of Black History Month** - Presentation by Communications, Danielle Clark, Chief Communications Officer

   *A video presentation was shown by Communications about Black History month.*

   B. **Employee of the Month** - Dr. Tyrone Sylvester, Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Resources

   *Dr. Sylvester presented the February Employee of the Month, Heather Faunce-Estay, Physical Therapist, School-Based Therapy*

   C. **Superintendent Monthly Report** - James Colbert, Jr.

   *Superintendent Colbert reminded the Board that there will not be a March Regular Board Meeting and noted that Spring Break is scheduled for March 9–13, 2026. He also shared that he and Executive Leadership Team members, will attend the TABSE Conference in Irving, Texas, from February 18–22, 2026. Lastly, Superintendent Colbert stated that he and members of the Executive Leadership and Leadership Teams will attend the Qualtrics Conference in Seattle, Washington, from March 17–19, 2026, where they will participate in extensive training, and the Superintendent will gain inspiration for Convocation.*

   D. **Annual Division Update** – *Joe Carreon, Director, Construction*

   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 Duhon gave recognition to Jade Suan, Administrative Assistant, Marketing & Client Engagement, for signing the National Anthem at the State of the City on Thursday, February 12, 2026.*

   F. **Report of Board Committees** - Committee Chairs

   *None.*

   G. **Monthly Financial Reports through 1/31/2026** - Ann Westbrooks, Chief Financial Officer, Business Services

*Motion made by Second Vice President Davis, seconded by Trustee McGee to approve all Consensus Items.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve all Consensus Items.*

6. **ACTION ITEMS - CONSENSUS**

A. Consider approval of the following Board Meeting Minutes:

1. January 21, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

B. Consider acceptance of the following grant awards:

1. **Consider acceptance of a grant award from the Education Foundation of Harris County (EFHC) to CASE for Kids to implement the All-Earth Ecobot Challenge** for the period of 03/09/2026 through 07/09/2026 in the amount of $7,500 from Henderson Foundation.

2. **Consider ratification of acceptance of the Notice of Award (NOA) 06CH013307-02-00 from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Head Start (OHS), for the operation of a Head Start and Early Head Start program** in the amount of $14,045,792 for the performance period of 07/01/2025 through 06/30/2030.

C. Consider approval of the following item for the HCDE Choice Partners Cooperative:

1. **Consider approval of HCDE Interlocal Agreements with**: Alice ISD, Alice, TX; East Texas Kids Nutrition, Palestine, TX; Potter County, Amarillo, TX; Texas A&M University-Victoria, Victoria, TX; The Tteluh Foundation, DeSoto, TX; and West Orange-Cove CISD, Orange, TX.

D. Consider approval of the following items for Internal Purchasing:

1. **Consider approval of Contract Award for job no. 26/008GM for Construction Related Professional Service for the period of 03/01/2026 through 02/28/2031.** The pool consists of the following firms: Arrow Consulting Corporation; Aster, LP; Aviles Engineering Corporation; Bath Group LLC.; Coastal Commissiong Group, LLC; Collaborate Arch, LLC; Command Commissiong LLC; Doucet & Associates, Inc.; ECS Southwest, LLP; ERC Environmental & Construction Services, Inc.; EMA Engineering & Consulting, Inc.; Geotech Engineering and Testing, LTD dba Geotech Engineering and Testing; HTS, Inc., Consultants; Infrastructure Associates, Inc.; National Precisionaire, LLC; Pennington & Associates Commissioning LLC; Raba Kistner Inc; Rone Engineering Services, LLC; Separation Systems Consultants, Inc.; Terracon Consultants Inc.; UES Professional Solutions 44, LLC; and Wylie & Associates, LLC.

2. **Consider approval of Contract Award for job no. 25/047GM-02 Advisors, Coaches, Consultants, Counselors, Speakers, and Trainers for the period of 03/01/2026 through 02/28/2031 with the following proposers:** Axis Teletherapy, LLC; BonFire Leadership Solutions LLC; Cheryl Robinson Vital; Drink Some Water LLC; East End Driving and Placement Services LLC; Education Powerment LLC; Empowering Business Solutions LLC; Evergreen Behavior Consulting; Imperial Utilities & Sustainability, Inc.; Jennice Hyde Consulting, LLC; Laddering Your Success, LLC; NTXP LLC; Nuestra Palabra: Latino Writers Having Their Say; Onward Search LLC; Point Quest Therapeutic Services, LLC; and Superexpert.

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

1. **Consider ratification of Interlocal (Revenue) Monthly Agreements for FY 2026 in the aggregate amount of $57,000 for ABS East with the following districts:** Alvin ISD for one out-of-county monthly contract for a total of $23,250 ($4,650 per month) for the period of 01/20/2026 through 06/04/2026; Galena Park ISD for one in-county monthly contract for a total of $18,750 ($3,750 per month) for the period of 01/06/2026 through 06/04/2026; and International Leadership of Texas Charter Schools for one in-county monthly contract for a total of $15,000 ($3,750 per month) for the period of 02/09/2026 through 06/04/2026.

2. **Consider ratification of Interlocal (Revenue) Agreements for FY 2026 in the aggregate amount of $18,600 for ABS West with the following district:** Needville ISD for one in-county monthly contract ($4,650 per month) for the period of 02/03/2026 through 06/04/2026.

3. **Consider ratification of the Interlocal (Expenditure) Agreement for FY 2026 CASE for Kids Partnership grant for the period of 10/01/2025 through 07/31/2026 in the amount of $30,000 with the following entity:** Sheldon ISD (30 students served).

4. **Consider ratification of the Interlocal (Expenditure) Agreement for FY 2026 CASE for Kids Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center(s) Cycle 12, Year 3 grant, for the period 08/04/2025 through 08/31/2026 in the aggregate amount of $187,200 with the following entity**: Sheldon ISD (Monahan and Royalwood Elementary Schools; 75 students served).

5. **Consider approval of the Interlocal (Revenue) Agreement between HCDE Records Management Services and Academy of Accelerated Learning, Inc., for an amount not to exceed $5,000, for the period of 03/01/2026 through 02/28/2027** to provide services such as box storage, bin service, records destruction, records control schedules, and training.

7. **ACTION ITEMS - NON-CONSENSUS**

1. **Consideration and possible action to replace Jesus Amezcua with Ann Westbrooks as director to the Harris County Department of Education Public Facilities Corporation.**

*Motion made by Trustee Duhon, seconded by Trustee Joshi-Malik to approve the replacement of Jesus Amezcua with Ann Westbrooks as director to the Harris County Department of Education Public Facilities Corporation.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve.*

2. **Consider adoption of resolution concerning emergency administrative leave with pay for HCDE staff in accordance with Policy DEA (Local) associated with severe winter weather on January 26, 2026.**

*Motion made by Trustee McGee, seconded by Trustee Duhon to adopt the resolution concerning emergency administrative leave with pay for HCDE staff in accordance with Policy DEA (Local) associated with severe winter weather on January 26, 2026.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to adopt the resolution.*

3. **Consider ratification of the amendment to the contract award between Adult Education and Blue Knight Security Services** to increase from $74,000 to $150,000 to cover the balance of security services for the period of 07/01/2025 through 06/30/2026; the increase is supported by the additional Texas Workforce Commission grant funding approved during the December 17, 2025 Regular Board meeting.

   *Motion made by Trustee Duhon, seconded by Second Vice President Davis to ratify the amendment contract award between Adult Education and Blue Knight Security Service to increase from $74,000 to $150,000 to cover the balance of security services for the period of 07/01/2025 through 06/30/2026; the increase is supported by the additional Texas Workforce Commission grant funding approved during the December 17, 2026 Regular Board Meeting.*

   *Motion passes with 6-0 voting to ratify.*

4. **Consider first reading of the following revised and new Board local policies:**

   A. BDAA
   B. BDB
   C. BE
   D. BED
   E. CH
   F. CJ
   G. CQB
   H. CQD
   I. CSA
   J. DBD
   K. DEC
   L. DFBB
   M. DGBA
   N. DH
   O. DNA
   P. EHBAF
   Q. FFAC
   R. FFB
   S. FFF
   T. FFG
   U. FNCE
   V. FNG
   W. FO
   X. GF
   Y. GKA

   *No action was taken on this agenda item.*

5. **Consider approval of the Contract with CDW-G (Job No. 25/018MF-12), and its financing agent Insight Investments, LLC (Job No. 22/043KN-07)** to lease technology equipment for four (4) years in an amount not to exceed $675,000 per year, for a total not to exceed $2,700,000 and delegate authority to the Superintendent and his designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute the related contract documents.

   *Motion made by Second Vice President Davis, seconded by Trustee Duhon to approve the contract with CDW-G (Job No. 25/018MF-12), and its financing agent Insight Investments, LLC (Job No. 22/043KN-07) to lease technology equipment for four (4) years in an amount not to exceed $675,000 per year, for a total not to exceed $2,700,000 and delegate authority to the Superintendent and his designee to negotiate, finalize and execute the related contract documents.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve.*

6. **Consider approval of the Resolution of HCDE Head Start Impasse Procedure.** The process has been revised based on updated Head Start Performance Standards. Head Start Performance Standards 1301.6 requires that the Head Start program has an Impasse procedure to facilitate meaningful consultation and collaboration about decisions of the governing body and the policy council.

   *Motion made by Trustee McGee, seconded by Trustee Joshi-Malik to approve the Resolution of HCDE Head Start Impasse Procedure. The process had been revised based on updated Head Start Performance Standards. Head Start Performance Standards 1301.6 requires that the Head Start program has an Impasse procedure to facilitate meaningful consultation and collaboration about decisions of the governing body and policy council.*

   *Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve the Resolution.*

7. **Consider approval of the Head Start School Readiness Goals due to a change in the Head Start program's ongoing assessment tool for the 2025-2026 school year.**

   *Motion made by Trustee McGee, seconded by Second Vice President Davis to approve the Head Start School Readiness Goals due to the change in the Head Start program's ongoing assessment tool for the 2025-2026 school year.*

   *Motion passes with 6-0 voting to approve.*

*The Board entered Executive Session at 1:55 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; 551.072; 551.074

   A. **Deliberate** the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline and/or dismissal of HCDE employee.

   B. **Deliberate** the purchase, exchange, sale and/or value of real propert(ies) and obtain legal advice regarding the same.

*The Board reconvened at 2:13 p.m.*

9. **RECONVENE** for possible action on items discussed in executive session

   1. **Consider whether to adopt a resolution described by Texas Education Code Section 25.0823(a-1).**

      *Motion made by Trustee Duhon, seconded by Trustee McGee that the board not adopt a resolution described by Texas Education Code Section 25.0823(a-1).*

      *Yay: First Vice President Cantu, Second Vice President Davis, Trustee Duhon, and Trustee Joshi-Malik.*
      *Record vote was held:*

      *Nay: Trustee Dick and Trustee McGee*

      *Motion passes with 4-2 voting to not adopt the resolution.*

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

*None.*

11. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. **Submission of grant proposal to PNC Foundation via the Education Foundation of Harris County in the amount of $15,000** to support the Family Connection component of HCDE Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Requested funds will serve approximately 1,000 children.

2. **Submission of grant proposal to Henderson Foundation via the Education Foundation of Harris County in the amount of $10,000** to support CASE for Kids' All-Earth Ecobot Challenge. Requested funds will support the addition of drone technology for a robotics project for 350 students in 4th-8th grades.

3. **Amend the term of Contract Award for job no. 25/008TD-2 Event Spaces and Venues** to reflect the period of 04/17/2025 through 04/16/2026 with four (4) additional one-year terms with the following vendors: The Anderson Center for the Arts; Salon 180 Angels, Inc. DBA Bsgg youth program-Stop the violence; and Imagen Management Group Inc. This contract was awarded during the 04/16/2025 Board meeting.

A. **Human Resources**

1. Personnel

2. Employee Count

12. **ADJOURN** - Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.

*Motion made by Second Vice President Davis, seconded by Trustee Duhon to adjourn.*

*Motion passes with 6-0 voting to adjourn*

*Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.*

Amy Hinojosa
Board President

Richard Cantu
Board First Vice President