

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
APRIL 2, 2024
9:00 A.M.**

Present: Mr. Israel Irrobali, President
Ms. Valerie Beals, Vice President
Ms. Isabel Hernandez, Secretary
Ms. Leah Hanany, Member¹
Mr. Daniel Call, Member
Mr. Vince Sheffield, Deputy Superintendent of Administration

Absent: Mr. Alex Cuellar, Member
Ms. Diana Sayavedra, Superintendent

Others: Mr. Joshua Govea, Assistant General Counsel

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Board President Irrobali.

Board Workshop to Include the Discussion of the Following Topics:

Board President Irrobali opened the meeting stating that Superintendent Sayavedra was not present at the meeting as she was attending funeral services. He also asked the community to keep Mr. Russell Wiggs in their thoughts as he is facing some health concerns. Deputy Superintendent Sheffield reported that the purpose of this meeting was to provide the Board with a budget update.

A. Fiscal Year 2024 Financial Forecast

Ms. Maria Alonso, Executive Director of Financial Services, reported on the adopted and amended budget for Fiscal Year 2024, and provided a forecast of the general fund revenues and expenses. Ms. Alonso also reported on the unassigned fund balance, which is at 88.47 days. Discussion ensued on a transfer of funding between Local and ESSER funds to maximize saving opportunities.

As it pertains to the effect of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) on the financial forecast, Ms. Lisa Estrada-Batson, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, reported on the current ADA as well as Administration's plan and newly established processes to increase student attendance. In response to Trustee Hanany's inquiry on the effect of the 90% Rule on attendance, Ms. Estrada-Batson reiterated the importance of teachers/student communication as it pertains to absences. She also reported that the Student and Parent Services Department is exploring a hybrid model regarding the 90% attendance rule. In response to Trustee Hernandez's inquiry as to School Deployment Teams staffing, it was clarified that investigators will be placed on higher need campuses to assist with unverified absences. Ms. Aguirre reiterated the reason for the discussion of ADA, is due to the financial forecast and low ADA revenue projected percentage. Lastly, she shared that teams are working diligently to help generate additional revenue by clearing up absence verifications and bring the fund balance days above 88.47.

B. 88th Legislative Session Update

Mr. Walt Byers, Treasurer, provided an update on the 88th State Legislative Session (Session #4). He also shared the impact of the Tax compression and Homestead exemption over the last 5 years. Ms. Aguirre shared that the Homestead exemption of \$100,000.00 is only applicable to school districts.

¹ Trustee Hanany arrived to the meeting at 9:14 a.m. during discussion of Item A.

C. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Development Update

Ms. Martha Aguirre, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the budget development process, which includes reviewing data for new initiatives, department hearings, campus staffing, and districtwide allocations. She presented the General operating fund preliminary snapshot, sharing the impact of the Homestead exemption, property values, declining enrollment, and ESSER funding on the local budget. Additionally, Ms. Aguirre reported on new initiatives for the upcoming school year, which include: providing algebra to all middle school students, expanding the extended day program to 10 sites, expanding fine arts opportunities at the elementary level, and expanding Kickstart program opportunities across the District.

Ms. Patricia Cortez, Chief Human Capital Management Officer, reported on the employee compensation process. She provided a comparison of market, as well as neighboring school districts, teacher compensation. Ms. Cortez discussed the impact of a 1% and 2% (from mid-point) salary increase on the budget. She addressed a correction to her presentation of the teacher's starting salary to reflect \$57,750. Lastly, Ms. Cortez reported on the components of the pay systems review process.

In response to Trustee Hanany's inquiry, it was shared that an equity plan update will be shared with the Board at the May budget workshop illustrating how the plan aligns with the budget, as well as a cost and utilization comparison on the Consumer Directed Health Plan (CDHP) mental health plan. Board President Irrobali suggested discussion on the possibility of providing stipends for high demand positions.

D. 2024-2025 Budget Development Update

Ms. Martha Aguirre provided an overview of the budget development timelines and important dates.

2. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

Date Approved: April 16, 2024