

The Ector County ISD Board of Trustees held its March board meeting on the 26th. A recap of the agenda is below.

1. Roll Call. Dr. Steve Brown was absent.
2. Verification of compliance with open meetings requirements.
3. Spencer Dugie and Noah Natividad from Sam Houston Elementary led the pledges of allegiance.



4. Reverend Michael K. Shelton, Sr. from Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church gave the invocation.
5. In special presentations we introduced the state-qualifying [Academic Decathlon teams](#) from New Tech Odessa and Odessa Collegiate Academy; announced NTO's Damian Gaytan was named the Small School Decathlon Coach of the Year; announced Dr. Kristen Vesely, ECISD Director of Advanced Academic Services, has been elected to the Southwest Region Board of the College Board; recognized Abigail Agdipa

and Ashley Nevarez from Bowie MS who qualified for the State Science & Engineering Fair; and introduced [Odessa HS's Anika Gundlapalli as a National Merit Finalist](#).

6. In his opening comments, Superintendent Dr. Scott Muri reminded those in attendance that ECISD will be closed on Friday and Monday, then he talked about the announcement made earlier that day regarding the University of Texas Permian Basin's new direct admissions program. Through direct admissions, UTPB will annually identify ECISD seniors who automatically qualify to enroll – this year that is about 795 seniors. These are students with a 2.75 Grade Point Average or higher, those with 3.0 or higher have scholarship money available to them. UTPB will notify all of these students directly about the three easy steps to apply and schedule a New Student Orientation.
7. In public comment, Michael Nunez from New Tech Odessa and Baden Seigman from Odessa Collegiate Academy talked about their experiences as Decathlon competitors. Michael expressed gratitude to the District for supporting Academic Decathlon and to his teammates and coaches. He said Decathlon taught him hard work, perseverance, and the power of unity. Baden echoed those sentiments about hard work and dedication. She said Decathlon challenged her in ways athletics and other classes have not, adding it made her a better student and a better person.
8. Action items
 - A. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve purchases over \$50,000. The two items on the list this month were for the replacement of wireless access points (\$159,777) and internet connectivity (\$158,040) throughout the district.
 - B. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve budget amendment #7.
 - C. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve the Science K-12 textbook adoption. A district committee reviewed eight platforms, selecting five finalists which were vetted by grade-level committees using the Texas Science Education Leadership Association's rubric. The materials approved are comprehensive, dual-language curriculums. McGraw Hill for Kinder-5th Grade; Savvas for 6th Grade-8th Grade; McGraw Hill for IPC, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, Aquatic Science, Environmental Systems, Anatomy and Physiology; Cengage for Forensics; Savvas for AP Environmental Systems, AP Biology, AP Physics, AP Chemistry. All resources are aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS), and the core curriculum is vetted and reviewed by the State Board of Education.
 - D. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve educational specifications, method of compliance and level of flexibility in facility design. The Texas Education Agency requires school districts to create a written educational plan that guides the design process of new facilities and major renovations. The designs ensure a connection between learning and the design of the facility, equity across the district, and establish expectations for future buildings all while meeting TEA guides.
 - E. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve a resolution to nominate Dr. Scott Muri for 2024 Superintendent of the Year Award from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). Dr. Muri was the Region 18 Superintendent of the Year and a TASB state finalist in 2022.
9. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve the Consent Agenda. The consent agenda is a group of routine, or previously discussed items presented together for a single approval vote. This month's Consent Agenda included minutes of meetings; bills for payment; acceptance of donations over \$10,000*; and out-of-state travel for Permian High School Theatre students to visit London and Paris in June of 2025.

- 10. Trustees moved to closed session to consult with their attorney regarding contracts with architect firms for bond program construction projects. Upon returning to the open meeting, Trustees unanimously approved:**
- A. Architect-Owner contracts with Parkhill for the Transportation Facility, Permian High School auditorium renovation, and JROTC facilities at PHS and Odessa High School.**
 - B. Architect-Owner contracts with PBK for the new middle school and the new Career & Technical Education Center.**

11. Bond 2023

- A. In an overview of the Bond 2023 projects, the presentation gave Trustees a look at the updated budget spreadsheet showing encumbrances and dollars spent so far. The District is still finalizing land purchases and has not closed on those properties yet; some fine arts instruments have already been ordered and received; installation of interactive flat panels is continuing; and the Athletics Department is working quickly to get quotes and vetting vendors for its bond projects. ECISD will issue Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) Geotechnical & Special Testing for the land purchases, and for Construction Manager at Risk for the several projects utilizing that method of construction.**
- B. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve the construction delivery method for two Bond 2023 projects: the JROTC facilities/renovations at PHS and OHS will be awarded through a Competitive Sealed Proposal, meaning the District will request proposals, rank the offerors, negotiate, and then contract with a general contractor for the work. Second, Priority I & II maintenance/repair projects will be done through Job Order Contracts, a popular method for these types of work. Instead of an RFP (as in the competitive sealed proposal) one bid is conducted and catalogued by skilled trade type, contractors submit price quotes for projects, and then the selected contractor can begin immediately if pricing is acceptable to the district. This method also provides the opportunity to include more local contractors. The action in this item also approved Gordian for Third Party Project Oversight, meaning the company will coordinate the day-to-day progress of all projects from beginning-to-end.**
- C. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve two Bond purchases over \$50,000: Gordian for Third Party Project Oversight of Priority I & II repair/maintenance bond projects (\$6,052,941); and Gallagher Construction Company, PROCEDEO, and TWS Advisory Group as a pool of qualified candidates who may be selected in the future for project management services (\$4,000,000).**
- D. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve an updated bond financial advisory services agreement, keeping the agreement with the current company BOK Financial Securities, Inc.**
- E. The Board took a look at the preliminary Bond 2023 financing plan with guidance from the District's financial advisors, BOK Financial Securities. BOK lauded ECISD's active management of its outstanding debt; since 2007 more than \$50 million of direct savings for tax payers has been achieved with prepayments and refinancing. ECISD maintains independent bond ratings of "Aa3" by Moody's Investors Service and "A+" by S&P Global Ratings both very attractive to investors. An initial sale is planned for May 2024 using fixed interest rates (Series 2024-A), with a second sale in June 2024 using variable interest rates (Series 2024-B) and then a third in August 2025 (Series 2025). This work is part of a plan for long-term financial stability for ECISD and the community. A sales announcement will be put together to be publicized for opportunity for local investors to purchase them first.**

F. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve the issuance of up to \$196,230,000 Ector County Independent School District Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds Series 2024-A.

G. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve the issuance of up to \$100,000,000 Ector County Independent School District Variable Rate Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds, Series 2024-B.

12. Budget discussion – Trustees continued their discussion of budget priorities for the 2024-25 school year. ECISD is in the same position as school district across Texas, cutting budgets due to the Texas Legislature’s inaction regarding school funding during the last legislative session. The state has not increased the basic allotment for public education since 2019 while costs have risen dramatically. Money is available and set aside for public education but it has not been distributed. Legislators will not meet again until January 2025, so Trustees must consider that it looks like schools will wait until next summer to learn if public education will receive new funding. The District is anticipating a budget deficit of about \$24 million for next year, that is with mostly the same expenses without any additional revenue expected. Operational costs continue to rise, and fund balance must be kept at recommended guidelines so significant cuts will need to be made. District leaders and Trustees will continue these discussions through June, when a new budget is adopted.
13. Information Items – <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Agenda/1406?meeting=618492>
14. There were no closing remarks.
15. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

*\$197,750 from FMH Foundation through the Education Foundation for 21 pianos

\$160,500 from Permian HS Athletic Booster Club to replace indoor practice facility turf

\$110,906.40 from CDW-G for 220 Dell Chromebooks (3% free with purchase of 7,400 units)

\$41,350 from Permian HS Baseball Booster Club for shade structures over home and visitor stands

\$36,987 from Education Foundation for remainder of 2023-24 salary for director and administrative assistant for STEAM initiatives

\$17,007 from Education Foundation for Project Lead the Way teaching materials