

Wayside Board Meeting
August 25, 2022 at 6:00 PM.
Wayside: Eden Park Academy, 6215 Menchaca Road, Austin, TX 78745

Board Members Physically Present: David Dunn, Stacy Erb, Glenda Ballard, Jesus Becerra, Elaine Candelas (arrived after start), Meredith Sembello (arrived after start)

Staff Members Physically Present: Matt Abbott, Francisco Garcia, Marissa Castanon-Hernandez, Vanessa Ruiz

Public Physically Present: Jessica De Leon, John De Leon, Melinda DeLaCruz

Staff Members/Public Virtually Present: Halley Cade, Maritza Gladyn, Lauren Whitfield, Haylee Lavender, Kierstin Howard, Melinda Gardner, Carlos DeLaCerde, Choi Hicks, Ali Morgan, Anali Espinosa, Jose Rene, Vero Luna, Susan Pommerening, Miranda Regalado

David Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm. Roll called to establish a quorum, and a quorum of board members were present and accounted for.

Scholar and School Feature - Wayside Principals each share one thing about their school this year.

Choi Hicks, REAL: Shared that more scholars than ever are getting free breakfast, and seem to really enjoy the new vendor. Also, the teaching fellow program has 7 trainees.

Melinda Gardner, AMA: Shared that the leadership team at AMA is brand new, but had a surprisingly smooth start to the year. Her team has worked very hard, and stayed very positive.

Haylee Lavender, EPA: Excited about in-person Friday assemblies, which are very popular with scholars and have many parents in attendance. In addition, she shared that more than 30 parents participated in the Coffee with Principal meeting. In addition, she is excited about the new SEL coordinator on campus.

Vanessa Ruiz, STMS: Shared that the STMS back to school night was the best they've ever had, with high attendance and great feedback from families.

Public Comments: Several speakers gave public testimony, limited to 3 minutes each.

Belen Martinez: Parent of STMS scholar. She stated that she wanted to bring her son, but he didn't want to come. Her experience at STMS has been good, with no issues until last week when a scholar brought a BB gun to school and threatened to kill her son if he told anyone. The incident was very upsetting for her and her son. She waited for the school to investigate, but is not satisfied with the outcome. She has concerns about safety, including people experiencing homelessness in the vicinity of the parking lot / entrance. She has withdrawn her son from the school and he now attends a different school.

Yvonne Castañeda: Parent of STMS scholar. She is concerned about the same incident, and feels that a BB gun is a weapon, and should be classified as such.

Marissa Castanon-Hernandez: STMS staff member. She feels security is lacking at STMS, and would like a SRO assigned to the school. She does not feel safe at the school as an educator. She also believes that proximity to I-35 opens the school to possible wrong-doers.

Melinda DeLaCruz: Parent of MS scholar. She is concerned about the same incident. She doesn't believe this is the first or last time it will happen. She also believes the school needs an assigned SRO.

John DeLeon: Parent of several Wayside scholars, including STMS. He takes issue with the definition of a weapon, and believes the BB gun should be treated as a true firearm as it could still cause bodily harm. He believes the scholar should be expelled or asked to leave the school.

Jessica DeLeon: Parent of several Wayside scholars, including STMS. She showed a photo of the BB gun that the scholar brought to campus, making the point that it looked like a real pistol. As a parent volunteer, she spends a lot of time to help boost campus safety. However, she worries more about intruders from within the school than those from the outside.

Olga Perez: Parent of STMS scholar. She feels that the security at STMS is lacking and would like to see it improved. She has seen other incidents that also make her feel unsafe.

Leticia Beltran: Parent of Wayside scholars. She believes that many parents, herself included, are upset about the classification of the BB gun, and feel that it should be considered a firearm.

Elda Alejo: Parent of STMS scholar. She believes that not enough action was taken to discipline the offending scholar, and that he should be expelled. She says it sets a bad precedent for other scholars to see this example. She would like clear backpacks so that it is easier to know what scholars are bringing in. She would also like a SRO.

Carlos DeLaCerde: Staff member of STMS. He believes action needs to be taken to improve safety. 1) training teachers to handle a weapon in the event they have to remove one from a scholar, 2) promote parent involvement during pickup and dropoff, 3) arm teachers with nonlethal weapons.

David Dunn thanked commeters for their time, and adjourned the board for a five minute break.

Closed Session:

David Dunn asked for a motion to exit the public session and enter into Executive Session.

Glenda Ballard motioned to exit the public session and enter into Executive Session and seconded by Jesus Becerra, a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously at 6:55 p.m.

At 8:02 pm David Dunn asked for a motion to exit the Executive Session.

Stacy Erb motioned to exit the executive session and enter into Public Session. Elaine Candelas seconded, a roll call vote is taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Return to Public Session:

David Dunn stated that the board had a long discussion around school safety. The school admin team has been tasked with reviewing policies in place and bringing changes to the next board meeting. Jesus Becerra and Meredith Sembello have been asked to work with the admin team on those changes. David Dunn stressed that community input is needed on potential changes.

Meeting Minutes

Receive and approve Minutes from June 23, 2022

David Dunn asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

Jesus Becerra moved to approve the minutes from June 23, 2022. Glenda Ballard seconded the motion, roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda Items

- a. ESSER II and ESSER III Expense Update for TEA Submission
- b. Contracts since the last board meeting:

- Ambassador Services
- Austin Charter Services
- half Helen
- St. David's Foundation
- The Conscious Schools Projects

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David Dunn asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Elaine Candelas made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Meredith Sembello seconded, a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Chief Executive Officer Update

a. Changes to School Operations for 2022-23 due to COVID-19 including Waiver(s) and Resolution(s) for TEA and Local Policies for Operations

Matt Abbott shared that there was a surge of COVID cases in July among staff. However, that it calmed down once the school year began and has been manageable, though there was a cluster of cases at AMA that has caused several scholars and their teacher to be absent. He sees no need for operational changes at this time.

b. Fundraising and Enrollment Update for FY 23

Matt Abbott stated that he is currently interviewing candidates for the Sr. Director of Development role. If current candidates do not work, he will hire a headhunter. He stated that fundraising needs significant catchup to reach goals.

Maritza Gladyn stated that currently there are 1658 scholars enrolled. There were over 400 no shows, which strongly impacted enrollment. Her team is still enrolling many scholars every week. Overall, there have been almost 1100 applications for this school year. Maritza stated that her team will dedicate time to surveying families who have left Wayside to find out their reasons and see what, if any, changes can be made. She said so far, transportation, convenience and potty training (for Pre-K) have impacted many no shows.

c. Wayside Schools 10-year Charter Renewal Update and Review of Process

Matt Abbott stated that the school must renew every 10 years. He and David Dunn will be speaking with TEA, who will walk them through the renewal process. He said there is no reason to believe that the charter will not be renewed, but it is a lengthy process that must be completed.

d. Discussion and possible action on Superintendent Performance Review
(Tabled for Executive Session)

e. Texas Charter School Conference in San Antonio: Sept. 26-28 (M-W)

Event has a board-specific day for any board members who would like to attend.

Chief Academic Officer Update

a. August Academic Report and Action Plan

Susan Pommerening presented the August report. She stated that Wayside received a B (83) rating from TEA, which is an improvement from the last time Wayside was rated in 2019 prior to COVID-19. Looking at the data, Wayside saw improvements across the board, especially in Academic Growth. She believes closely watching data on Common Assessments has helped to improve scores.

Susan presented findings for each school. Full reports can be found in the board report folder. All schools saw improvement, with the exception of EPA, which remained the same.

b. 21-22 TEA Academic Accountability Reports
Included in August Academic Report

c. Special Education Services concerning specific student(s)
Tabled for Executive Session

Sr. Director of Operations Update

a. Statement of Activities as of 7/31/2022

Francisco Garcia presented the finance report for 7/31/22. Only 8% of the year has been completed as of the end of July. A full copy can be found in the board folder. He stated that some funds will need to be moved around due to a recent hire.

b. FIRST Report for SY22 using FY21 Data

Francisco Garcia presented that Wayside scored an 89. One indicator was failed (#17) because PEIMS data did not match data on the annual financial report due to a system error. He is appealing this and will update the board in upcoming months.

c. FY22 Independent Audit Update

Francisco stated that his team is in the process of gathering required materials and submitting for the audit. He said it is a lengthy process and likely will not finish until November. He hopes to have a draft at the November meeting for board approval. He stated that they are on track to meet this deadline.

d. School Safety Audit and Actions

Francisco presented that Wayside is working with Texas State Safety Center on an audit and safety committee (made of a police officer, staff members, parents, superintendent, and emergency contact). The first meeting of the committee will be next Wednesday, and the operations team will present their work. TSSC will do two audits - one that is announced, and one unannounced. Wayside will be doing weekly door sweeps to ensure doors are working and properly locking. Wayside is training subs on emergency protocols so that they can act in the event of an emergency.

e. Updates Concerning Changes in Food Service Provider and Bussing

Francisco stated that scholars are enjoying the new food vendor, and there has been an increase in participation. Wayside has contracted with Austin Achieve to provide bussing to and from school. Soon we will roll out an app so that parents can see where the bus is, and if it is running late. He stated that there have been hiccups along the way as the new bussing has been implemented, but things are getting better. He hopes to have updated figures on ridership next month.

f. Concerning specific personnel issues (Executive Session)

Tabled for Executive Session

Closed Session:

David Dunn asked for a motion to exit the public session and enter into Executive Session.

Elaine Candelas motioned to exit the public session and enter into Executive Session and seconded by Stacy Erb, a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously at 9:09 p.m.

At 9:20 pm David Dunn asked for a motion to exit the Executive Session.

Stacy Erb motioned to exit the executive session and enter into Public Session. Elaine Candelas seconded, a roll call vote is taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Return to Public Session:

No discussion in the executive session requires action in the public session.

Adjourn

David Dunn asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Jesus Becerra motioned to adjourn, Elaine Candelas seconded, a roll call vote is taken, the motion passed unanimously.

David Dunn adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.