

Essence Prep Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: June 30, 2025

Location: Zoom

Presiding: Vice Chair (Chair absent due to last-minute conflict)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by the Vice Chair Lopez

The Chair conveyed apologies for his absence.

2. Roll Call

- Board Members Present: Kanwal Lopez, Mike Frisbie, Dr. Henri Munoz, Dr. Cynthia Warrick, and Lucinda Vigil
- Board Members Absent: Chair Brian Dillard
- Staff/Guests: Superintendent & CEO Akeem Brown; CSS- Finance Dir. Deanna Angel Ladd
- Quorum: Yes

3. Mission Moment – Summer RISE Update

- Program Participation: ~107 scholars enrolled; 96% ADA to date.
- Assessment: Pre-tests administered; post-tests conclude July 25. Superintendent will report pre/post growth at the August meeting.
- Broadway Bank Partnership: 10 rising 7th–8th graders in Summer Work Program; academic block + workplace learning. Scholars will open minor savings accounts; \$500 stipend upon completion (scaled for attendance).
- Ella Austin Partnership: Site serving ~78 children; 21 have enrolled at Essence Prep via summer recruitment. Ratification of the revised agreement on consent agenda.
- The DoSeum Partnership: Year-round partner provided STEM labs (e.g., eye dissections) directly to scholars this summer.
- Community Meals: Free NSLP breakfast & lunch offered to all youth 18 and under, not limited to EPPS enrollees.

4. Superintendent's Report (Verbal Highlights; written report to follow)

- Organizational Health/Finance: Ongoing cash-flow constraints; active work with legal counsel, bond counsel, and TEA. Exploring payroll cadence adjustments (bi-monthly vs. monthly) based on cash-flow.
- Academics: STAAR shows some growth trends but significant improvement still needed; detailed Instructional Plan to follow.
- Staffing: Very tight; approximately \$248k over initial staffing target (to be reduced); vacancies noted in PK3, 1st, Kinder, and 4th–5th Science.

- Leadership: Superintendent will serve as Principal for 2025–26. Angel returning to support operations leadership. External coaching supports: Dr. Lisa Stanley (HQIM/Bluebonnet), Dr. Pat Lewis (coach development), Dr. Cynthia Wise (leadership & systems).

5. Consent Agenda

- May 2025 Minutes: Approved. (Motion: Mike; Second: Cynthia; Passed.)
- WestCare/Ella Austin Agreement (Revised): Ratified. Typographical error corrected in final version. (Motion: Jackie; Second: Mike; Passed.)

6. Federal Entitlements/Spending Plan (Public Notice & Adoption)

- Superintendent confirmed required public postings, Title I committee consultation, and community outreach completed.
- The plan to expand federal entitlements, as presented, was adopted. (Motion: Mike Frisbie Second: [Lucinda Vigil]; Passed.)

7. Finance – FY2024–25 Final Budget Amendment (Amendment #3)

- Philanthropy revenues \approx \$1.9M; expenditures \approx \$1.9M.
- General Fund: revenues \approx \$4.0M; expenditures \approx \$6.1M \rightarrow deficit \approx \$2.1M.
- School Nutrition (240): revenues \approx \$0.29M; expenditures \approx \$0.40M \rightarrow deficit typical for young schools.
- Federal/State Grants: revenues \approx \$0.638M; expenditures \approx \$0.616M \rightarrow net \approx +\$22k (indirect/asset effects).
- All Funds Combined: revenues \approx \$6.9M; expenditures \approx \$9.1M \rightarrow overall deficit \approx \$2.2M; outstanding payables \approx \$1.8M.
- Discussion on bond interest deferment/forbearance, auditor treatment, and TEA timelines (AFR in November). Corrective Action Plan expected due to negative net position.
- Action: Amended FY2024–25 budget adopted. Resolution to circulate via DocuSign. (Motion: [Mike Frisbie]; Second: Cynthia Warrick; Passed.)

8. Finance – FY2025–26 Proposed Budget (for Adoption)

- Key Assumptions: 486 enrollment; adjusted ADA \approx 432.5; staffing (26 teachers; 3 campus admin; 4 district admin; 3 district support). Debt service interest \approx \$2.3M; depreciation \approx \$0.934M.
- Projection: Revenues \approx \$5.0M; expenditures \approx \$8.0M \rightarrow deficit \approx \$2.4M; combined net position approx. $-\$4.5$ M.
- If interest deferred for FY26: projected deficit \approx \$1,953,620 (still negative overall net position). Additional savings possible if deferment backdated (\approx \$0.3–\$0.5M).



- State Funding Changes (HB 2): facilities funding (\approx \$372.90/ADA), \$106/enrolled ABC allotment, teacher raise allotment (flow-through), support staff retention
- (\$45/ADA), basic allotment +\$55/ADA, safety funds (per campus + \$10/ADA), EEA, pending dyslexia guidance, tutoring funds, future SPED model change (26–27).
- Enrollment Status: 432 confirmed applications to date; projection 512 on Day 1 based on two-year trend; retention focus (transportation, schedule, classroom consistency).
- Action: FY2025–26 budget adopted. (Motion: Lucinda Vigil Second: Dr. Henri Munoz Passed.)

9. Curriculum & Instruction – HQIM Adoptions

- Bluebonnet ELA (K–8) and Secondary Math (6–8): Adoption approved to unlock LASSO 3 HQIM funding and technical assistance; prior April approval for Math K–5 affirmed/extended. (Motion: Dr. Cynthia Warrick Second: [Mike Frisbie]; Passed.)

10. STAAR Results (Preliminary Overview)

- Tested grades 3–8; preliminary counts shared (Did Not Meet: 60; Approaches: 48; Meets: 28; Masters: 10). Cohort-level plans to be presented in August.\

11. Public Comment

- None registered or present.

12. Next Steps & Announcements

- No July meeting. Next regular meeting: August 20, 2025.
- Superintendent to email missing packet materials (draft forbearance agreement, full instructional plan, budget PDF) and circulate budget amendment resolution for signatures.

13. Adjournment

- With no objections, the Vice Chair adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Recorded by: Akeem Brown

Approved by: Jackie Gorman, Board Secretary