ITEM J.1

What was the process for vetting these law firms?

Why were these law firms not included in the August agenda item?

Three additional law firms—Husch Blackwell LLP; Seyfarth Shaw, LLP; and Dean G. Pappas Law Firm, PLLC are presented for the Board’s consideration on the September 2019 Agenda.

Husch Blackwell, LLP is a national firm which started in the Midwest. It now has offices in 19 cities across the country, including school law practices in Chicago and other Midwestern locations. The firm’s presence in Texas began approximately five years ago with the opening of an Austin office. It has now added Dallas and Houston offices expanding the firm’s capacity to service clients across the state. The Houston office opened in 2017. Legal Services wishes to add this firm to be able to continue to utilize the legal expertise of Arturo Michel, former law partner at Bracewell; former City Attorney for the City of Houston; and former law partner at Thompson and Horton. Mr. Michel joined the Husch Blackwell firm in January 2019. Attorney Michel has performed legal work for HISD for many years while at Bracewell, and Thomson & Horton, as well as working with the HISD General Counsel’s Office on various matters during his tenure as City Attorney. He has a wealth of expertise and knowledge about school law and public law matters. Legal Services would like to continue to be able to engage Mr. Michel on an as needed basis. The Husch Blackwell firm has approximately 15 lawyers in the Houston office with expertise in a variety of fields that will enhance Attorney Michel’s work on behalf of the district. This firm was inadvertently left off the August Board Agenda.

Seyfarth Shaw, LLP is also a national law firm with offices in approximately 13 cities, including four international offices. This firm is well known for its representation of public school districts across the country. There are approximately 60 lawyers and support staff in the Houston office. In addition to being aware of the firm’s reputation in public law and labor law, the firm was recommended by a former HISD staff attorney who previously worked in the firm’s Chicago office. Prior to bringing the firm forward on the agenda, a partner in the Houston office was interviewed by the district’s General Counsel and Deputy General Counsel to obtain additional information about the firm’s practice. This firm was inadvertently left off of the August Board Agenda.

This firm has represented HISD in Benefits matters and was included in the RFP for Benefit Services. HISD uses the services of this firm for subrogation claims. This firm was inadvertently left off of the August Board Agenda.
ITEM K.1

Do the proposed changes to CH local come from model TASB language or were they written in-house? If the latter, who wrote these, what was the process for developing the language, and what best practices were referenced?

Do the rules and criteria in the resolution come from model TASB language or were they written in-house? If the latter, who wrote these, what was the process for developing the language, and what best practices were referenced?

Are there any risks associated with implementing electronic bids? If so, what are they and how will they be mitigated?

In reference to both CH local and the resolution, we used language already in place for Harris County Department of Education and other surrounding school districts that utilize electronic bidding. Once drafted, both documents were submitted to HISD legal for approval. There are really no risks associated with electronic bidding as the system is set up to automatically close bidding at the time/date posted. Basically, any late submittals are locked out of the system and can’t be accepted.

ITEM K.2

What conversations has the administration had over the past year with labor representatives about the consultation process in general and about this policy in particular?

CHRO attended one meeting (12/18/18) with General Counsel, Zeph Capo and Wretha Thomas regarding possible changes to policy.

In addition, please see Administrative Response to HFT FAQs Supportive of Proposed Revised DGB (LOCAL) at number 8.

What concerns if any does the administration have about this particular item?

See Administrative Response to HFT FAQs Supportive of Proposed Revised DGB (LOCAL), and Memorandum HISD Administrative Position Statement Regarding proposed Revised DGB (LOCAL)
ITEM I.3
TEA Dyslexia grant:
What are the outputs and outcomes that this award will support?

Outcomes and Outputs supported by the grant:

- Continued Neuhaus training for 66 interventionists through Advanced level
- Partnership with four other districts: Beaumont ISD, Spring ISD, Goose Creek ISD, and Southwest Charter Schools
- Technology to be used for assessment and interventions for Dyslexic students.
- Region 4 evaluation and identification training for 66 interventionists
- Support for parent sessions