

HISD Board of Education to consider contract for

rebuilding four Harvey-damaged schools

Feb. 7, 2018 – The Houston Independent School District Board of Education on Thursday will consider a construction contract for the rebuilding of four elementary schools — Braeburn, Scarborough, Kolter, and Mitchell — severely damaged by Hurricane Harvey.

The board’s regular monthly meeting begins at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 8, 2018, in the Manuel Rodríguez Jr. Board Auditorium of the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center, 4400 W. 18th St. Click here to view the full agenda.

Trustees are expected to consider authorizing district officials to negotiate and execute a Construction Manager-At-Risk — more commonly known as CMAR — contract with Satterfield & Pontikes Construction. A CMAR contract requires the contractor to commit to completing a project within a guaranteed maximum price. Though that price has not yet been negotiated, the agenda item states that the total cost of the project is not to exceed the project budget.

Trustees voted in December to rebuild the schools at their current sites after facilities assessments found significant property damage, as well as a strong need to raise the elevation of the buildings to prevent potential future flood damage. The cost to replace the schools is estimated at $126 million, which would come from a combination of the operations reserves and Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) funds.

If the item is approved by the board, the schools could be completed and open to students as early as 2020.

“The students at these schools deserve to be back on their home campuses as soon as we’re able to make it happen,” Chief Operating Officer Brian Busby said. “We are excited to get the ball rolling on the next phase of construction.”

Also on Thursday, the board will consider a resolution to pay hourly employees for work days missed as a result of inclement weather throughout the Houston area on Jan. 16 and 17. While salaried employees have been paid as usual for the pay period encompassing those days, and schools are making up the instructional time by increasing the length of the school day by 10 minutes until the end of the school year, these employees will not have the opportunity to work two other days to compensate for the days the district was closed.

The resolution trustees will consider recites a public purpose for paying the group of employees that includes certain district bus drivers and other transportation workers, hourly food service workers, and hourly custodians. That purpose is for the district to demonstrate support of its hourly employees, enhance hourly employee morale, and support the retention of hourly employees by paying them for the two days HISD was closed.

The board will also consider two agenda items related to being able to execute a reduction in force of teachers and other campus-based employees, as well as certain central office employees who hold term and continuing contracts. In the upcoming school year, staffing at the campus level and within central office departments will be impacted by budget and staffing changes aimed at increasing equity across the district. Changes in funding models will impact individual campuses differently. Some campuses will lose staff, necessitating a reduction in force, while other campuses will gain staff.

The need for a reduction in staff in the upcoming school year is also due to the anticipated reduction in revenues because of the potential decline in property values as a result of Hurricane Harvey. A decline in property value will decrease district revenue from property taxes.

The board and public will also be presented with an overview of House Bill 1842 – the legislation that requires schools in “improvement required” status, or IR, for the fourth consecutive year or more to meet state standards by August 15 or the district will face sanctions that include closure of the schools or the appointment of a Board of Managers to replace the current school board.

The presentation will include recommendations for 14 IR schools. Eight schools are being recommended for partnership with outside organizations: Talent Development Secondary (formerly Johns Hopkins Talent Development Secondary) and Children’s Learning Institute at UT-Health). Six campuses are being recommended for a closure/restart option. This means the campuses would close at the end of the current school year and reopen in August with limited grade levels, new curriculum/programming, and a new staff.

The board meeting will be broadcast live online at www.hisdtv.org and on the HISD Channel, which can be found on Comcast Channel 18 or U-verse Channel 99.