

**HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD AUDIT COMMITTEE
December 3, 2018
1:00 P.M.**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER 1:04 p.m

PRESENT:

Committee Members	Sue Deigaard Anne Sung Holly Maria Flynn Vilaseca @ 1:16 p.m.
Other Trustees	Dr. Sergio Lira
Staff	Garland Blackwell, Chief Audit Executive Dr. Tammi Mitchell, Audit Manager, Educational Programs Elneita Hutchins Taylor, General Counsel Sylvia Trinh, Chief of Staff
Other	David Thompson, Partner, Thompson Horton Dr. Doris Delaney, Conservator Robby McGowen, Deputy Executive Director, Region 4 ESC

ITEMS DISCUSSED

- CHARTER SCHOOLS AUDIT

Dr. Lira requested that an audit be done of 3 specific charter schools. This will be done in the first quarter of 2019 as part of audit plan for next year and will be spearheaded by Dr. Tammi Mitchell, the new audit manager of educational programs.

Specifically, the schools to be audited will be:

- 1) Young Learners

Opened in January 2001, Young Learners is a charter school system that serves only prekindergarten students at 21 HISD schools. Young Learners collaborates with community daycare and Head Start centers to ensure that Houston's "youngest learners" have a solid academic foundation. Their main office is located in southwest Houston.

- 2) Texas Connections Academy.

Texas Connections Academy is a free virtual public school serving students in grades 3-12 throughout Texas, combining the flexibility of working at home with personalized distance learning, strong parental involvement, and traditional public education to serve students in grades 3-12.

3) Energized for Excellence Academy (Elementary) #364

These schools were chosen based on student enrollment.

Dr. Lira's request stemmed from prior board meetings where we were considering partnerships with charter schools as a result from SB1882/HB1842 and also from the closure of Victory Prep Charter Schools. At that time, he became more curious about the status of other in-district charter schools. How were they performing academically? Are they financially solvent? Other basic information such as board of managers, hiring practices and salaries was also relevant to him.

Mr. Blackwell mentioned that as audit progresses, they may have additional questions and they will bring forward as they come.

Ms. Deigaard wants to make sure that student achievement is on par with our other non-charter schools. Are they performing better relative to their student population? Do we audit our non-charter campuses for red flags?

Ms. Flynn Vilaseca reiterated the need to review charter contracts way in advance of their expiration in order to give enough time for school to get another authorizer and/or parents can find another school in the case that contract does not get approved.

What types of screeners? Are their data included in the monthly progress/constraint progress monitoring reports? Do they take universal screener? Ms. Trinh will check and provide.

Ms. Sung inquired whether charters have a performance contract? Ms. Hutchins Taylor will provide a template.

Ms. Deigaard provides additional points for evaluating charter schools earlier in the school year. Charter schools are schools of choice. Firstly, if we decide not to renew, the first deadline for magnet applications is in December. Second, not all of students attending charter schools live within HISD boundary zones. If they decide to go back to their home schools, we lose out financially because enrollment numbers decrease.

Ms. Trinh recapped requests for local accountability data from all charters (Circle Renaissance, DLA, etc). Do they take or not? If they do, are they reporting it? If not, what do they take as a substitute? Regarding accountability, how do they monitor?

Dr. Lira requested a 3 year longitudinal study because this was the best effective method of having a pattern of effectiveness of student achievement.

Dr. Lira decided that Audit Department will provide all information instead of administration following up.

ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION AT 2:00 P.M.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION AT 2:11 P.M.

ADJOURN AT 2:11 P.M.