

**Rockdale School District 84**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

715 Meadow Avenue Rockdale, Illinois, Wednesday, March 15, 2023.

Closed Session Meeting in the Media Center at 5:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting in the Media Center at 6:00 p.m.

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**Call to Order Regular Meeting:**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Rockdale School District 84 was held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 beginning at 5:33PM.

**Members Present**

Angela Stadler  
Steve Chamblee  
Ahmed Aich-Sandino  
Geraldyn Wyke  
Jolene Chamblee  
Nick Macholz

**Members Absent**

Gerry Phillips

**Also Present**

Dr. Michael Merritt  
Jeff Peterson- [Virtual](#)  
Irene Las

**Approximately 30 Guests**

**Board President Angie Stadler called to order the regular open session at 5:33PM.**

Roll Call was taken and a quorum was established.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

Mrs. Stadler asked all present to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

**Adopt Agenda:**

Member Wyke made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.

Member Aich seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Closed Session:**

Board President Ms. Angela Stadler called the closed meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

Motion to go into closed session at 5:34PM was made by Mr. S. Chamblee and seconded by Mr. Macholz to discuss the following:

- 2.01 The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the District, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5).
- 2.02 Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).
- 2.03 The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees. ILCS 120/2(c)(1), amended by P.A. 101-459.
- 2.04 Semi-annual review of closed session minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(21).

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

Motion to return from closed session was made at 5:53PM by Mr. S. Chamblee and seconded by Mrs. Wyke.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

## Report on Closed Session:

Mrs. Stadler advised that items mentioned per the agenda were addressed during the closed session.

## Receive and Welcome Visitors:

**Staff:** S. Mooney, L. Meister, K. Bublitz  
**Students:** Approximately 13 Students Attended  
**Parents:** Approximately 10 Parents Attended  
**Guests:** Deputy Chief Baikie, Michele James, Mark Ganzer

## Recognitions:

- 4.01 Rockdale Rockstars  
Dr. Merritt shared with the board and parents the process of how the students are each chosen. He then called each student up individual shared the letter from their teacher that explained why they were chosen.
- 4.02 Ken Bublitz  
Dr. Merritt shared with the board and parents the addition of Mr. Bublitz to our Rockdale staff. He explained that he was a lead Dean in Plainfield when they first met in 2006. Thus Dr. Merritt advised that he has had the opportunity to work with him many times prior to their arrival to Rockdale School. Early this year when he saw his name Ken Bublitz on our sub list and thought what a great addition. Now that Mr. Peterson has had to take a leave of absence to be with family, Mr. Bublitz has agreed to come in to sub for Mr. Peterson while he is out. He is very liked by both students and staff. Dr. Merritt then thanked Mr. Bublitz for joining us.

## Public Comment: (See Board Policy 2:230)

- 5.01 Veregy, Inc. - Michele James - Mark Ganzer

The Superintendent introduced Michelle James and advised the Veregy group would be presenting tonight. Veregy shared a new presentation including new prices.

Veregy presented their scope of work to complete the additional plumbing renovations that were not included in their initial scope. This work will include replacement of all pipes supplying water to the drinking fountains in the gym hallway and the 3rd grade/JH hall. This will also include the installations of five new drinking stations in the building, including bottle fillers capabilities.

Anticipated Cost: Water Piping \$124,243

Should be getting the pricing on the courtyard and IT by March 24th.

New item: A chair lift installation and the alley paving.

Dr. Merritt explained that the ramp that was discussed earlier but there is not enough room for a ramp. Not enough room for a landing. So now we need to look into the cost of a wheelchair lift for the second grade rooms and the band room.

IT will be removing all of the old wiring and replacing it with all new wiring.

Mark Ganzer expects a schedule of work in the next few weeks.

Michelle James then shared some floor plans of the ideas for the courtyard space using different configurations, she also showed some of the furniture options that could be used.

### **Consent Agenda:**

Member Nick Macholz made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented

Member J Chamblee seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

6.01 Approval of Regular and Closed Meeting Minutes for February 15, 2023.

6.02 Approval of Financial Report: Treasurer's Report, List of Bills, Check Registry by Type, Funds Balance, and Imprest Account.

### **Superintendent Report:**

Member Macholz made a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report as presented.

Member Aich seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

### **Dr. Merritt shared with the board the following information:**

#### **7.01 Safety Procedure Review**

The superintendent shared the events of Feb, 16, 2023. He shared that at approximately 10:30 a.m. the school received a phone call from the Superintendent's secretary from Rockdale, TX school district indicating they received a bomb threat at their HS. Through Rockdale TX PD, they determined the call from a Chicago-area area code, prompting Rockdale TX school officials to believe that the call may have been intended for our school. Dr. Merritt contacted Chief Dykstra to make him aware and discuss a response. While he contacted Rockdale TX PD, the superintendent informed the staff of the decision to enter into a soft lockdown. He chose not to evacuate the building, as the threat was not directed to or received

by the school. The rationale for entering into a soft lockdown was to keep all learners and staff in their current location and minimize travel within the building. During that time, we had each class go to the cafeteria to receive their lunch under multiple adult supervision, advised Superintendent Merritt. In the meantime, he heard back from Chief Dykstra who had more detail from the Rockdale TX PD. Based on the information he shared, the decision was made to continue, and out of an abundance of caution, to continue to finish the day under a soft lockdown. Chief made Dr. Merritt aware the earliest any bomb-detecting units would arrive would be 12:30, which was our dismissal time that day. The superintendent asked the units to hold off on arriving until 12:45 to assess the building prior to our Parent Conferences that evening. We did have increased police presence at the building for dismissal. During the event, Dr. Merritt contacted our attorney to review a message that was sent to families. He shared that he greatly appreciated the support of Chief Dykstra and our Rockdale Police partners.

Next, Superintendent Merritt introduced Officer Baikie of the Rockdale Police to go through their response to the situation with the board.

#### **7.02 Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)**

Dr. Merritt shared a powerpoint presentation with the same information that has been shared with the staff. Previously this would have been known as RtI. His hope was to let the board know what is involved in this process and what the teachers are learning and doing. Part of this time is also used to see what the teachers are doing for Tier 1. Currently they are using iReady to assess our students. We may be looking into something else shared by the superintendent..

#### **7.03 FOIA Requests**

Two FOIA requests have been received, advised Dr. Merritt to the board. The first was a request from Bo Kim with UnionBids.com regarding our asbestos abatement work. As we partnered with Thad Daniels with Forensics Analytical Consulting Services, the request was forwarded to him to ensure the appropriate documents were provided to honor the request. The second was requested by Jay Jones with WorkForce Development SMART Local 265 regarding any construction and/or maintenance work planned this year and any contracts that have been awarded. Mr. Jones was provided with a copy of Veregy's contract approved by the Board in December.

#### **7.04 Rockdale 84 2023-2024 Public School Calendar - Third and Final Reading**

To follow up from our February meeting, during which the Board agreed to adjusting the dates of fall Parent/Teacher conferences but keeping the hours (evening and morning) the same as past conferences, this had been adjusted on the calendar to reflect that decision explained Dr. Merritt. Conferences will be scheduled as follows:

Change to: **October** - February

**Early - October Prior Q1 Ending**  
**Thursday 12:30 PM - Early Dismissal**  
**Thursday Night Conference 3:30-7:30 PM**  
**Friday Morning Conferences 8:30-12:00 PM**  
**Friday No Student Attendance**

The superintendent recommended to the Board to approve the Rockdale 84 2023-2024 Public School Calendar as presented for a third and final reading.

**7.05 State of Illinois Police Law Enforcement Portal User Agreement**

On Monday, March 6, we received the revised State of Illinois Police Law Enforcement Portal User Agreement from Keith Cox with the Illinois State Police Office of Firearms Safety Division shared by Dr. Merritt. The purpose of the User Agreement is to provide principals, administrators, and/or designees of the school an electronic means to report when the principals, administrators, and/or designees have determined that a person poses a clear and present danger. Currently, we are to complete documentation and fax the document to the ISP. Recently legislation has tightened the reporting parameters to the ISP. For the remainder of the year, Jeff will be the individual assigned to the portal; beginning next year it will be the responsibility of the Student Services Coordinator advised the superintendent.

Dr. Merritt recommended the Board approve the State of Illinois Public Law Enforcement Portal User Agreement.

**7.06 Athletic Directors Job Description - First Read**

The superintendent shared that as he was reviewing the job description created or updated by Dr. Schrick in 2018, He realized we did not have a job description for our Athletic Director position. Therefore, Dr. Merritt researched the Athletic Director job descriptions from other local districts, as well as the suggested templates provided by the Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators (IASPA) to create our own. This job description has been shared with union leadership for their review.

Superintendent Merritt recommended the Board approve the Athletic Directors Job Description for a first read. He will then ask for the final approval during the April meeting.

**7.07 School Fees for 2023-2024 - First Read**

We are now at a point in the year when we are preparing for registration for the 2023-2024 school year explained the superintendent. As part of the registration process, we look to make any necessary adjustment to the school fee structure. With our fund balance in the Ed fund, Dr. Merritt recommended that we eliminate the school registration fees that are charged to our families. Currently, we budget an estimated revenue of 4,500 for registration fees, he continued. With our significant number of families who qualify for free or reduced lunch and a waiver of school fees, we collect from approximately 75 learners. Finally, the superintendent shared that he believed eliminating school fees would be a welcome gesture to our families. Additionally, he said that it removes the responsibility on our office staff of collecting money from families.

He recommended the Board approve the School Fees for 2023-2024 as a first read. Then he will ask for final approval during the April meeting.

**7.08****Current Enrollment and 2023-2024 Staffing Considerations**

The projected staffing plan for the 2023-2024 school year was shared by Dr. Merritt with the board. It showed anticipated lower class sizes in Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, and 4th grades. Class sizes are larger in 2nd grade, one 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and 5th grade. Our junior high classes are larger with the exception of 7th grade, which is currently split into two groups advised the superintendent. This predominantly falls in line with the expectations from the federal government as outlined in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Additionally, class sizes such as these align with a component of the rationale communicated to the community when advocating for the passing of the property tax increase referendum in 2019 he continued. To ensure our class sizes remain similar for next year, we will look to add two Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees; one of course being the Student Services Coordinator Position, the other due to a shift in our Special Education services resulting in a cluster approach. Due to the amount of minutes listed within our special Education learners' IEPs, we will move from two resource educators (K-4, 5-8) to three educators serving in the grade level clusters (K-2, 3-5, 6-8) explained D. Merritt. At this time, due to shifts within our staffing he continued, we can anticipate an opening in JH Math and JH ELA. We have also explored room placements he shared. Based on current projections, we will have all K-2 classrooms on the first floor, with our intermediate (3-5) classes contained to the front and west hallways of the second floor, and our JH learners contained to the back and east hallway of the second floor shared Dr. Merritt.

**7.09 Statement of Economic Interest**

As a reminder, we have approximately six more weeks to complete the Statement of Economic Interest advised Dr. Merritt. The purpose of completing the Statement of Economic Interest is to meet the requirements of The Illinois Governmental Ethics Act, which requires Will County elected and appointed officials and certain employees of units of local government to file a Statement of Economic Interests with the Will County Clerk's Office each year he continued. An email from the Will County Clerk's Office with information about the required filing should have been received. If you did not receive an email, Dr. Merritt asked to be contacted. The deadline to file is May 1. If you do not submit/file your statement by May 1, a \$15 late filing fee will be assessed. Once you have submitted your statement, please provide Irene a copy of your statement to be filed in the District Office the superintendent requested.

**7.10 IASB Constitution, Position Statements and Belief Statements**

In your supplemental materials, you will find the recently released annual publication of the IASB Constitution, Position Statements, and Belief Statements explained Dr. Merritt. He consulted with Justin Petrarca to determine if there was any particular item within the publication that the Board needed to be aware of. Justin did not indicate anything was of significant importance shared the superintendent, but did indicate Justin Petrarca plans to have a conversation with the new IASB Director, Kimberly Smalls, (who begins her tenure on July 1) regarding the Association's recent more liberal direction with some of the PRESS Policies that have been released as of late.

**Principal's Report:**

Member J. Chamblee made a motion to approve the Principal's Report as presented.  
Member Macholz seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.  
Mr. Phillips was absent**

Mr. Peterson shared the following information with the board:

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Agenda Point:**

##### Celebrations

- Rockdale Rockstars-March
- Mr. Bublit
- Tremendous PTO Donuts with Grownups held on Friday, March 10. We had around 150 students participate with each having at least one or two grownups with them. The gym was packed. Huge shoutout to Home Cut for their generous donation of 10 dozen donuts for the event and to the Rockdale Police and Fire Departments for mingling with our parents, students and staff during the event.

##### Extra curricular update

- Girls Volleyball wrapped up on Saturday, March 4th with a tough 3 set loss to Morris Nettle Creek in the first round of Regionals.
- Boys Volleyball finishes up with an end of the season tournament on Friday, March 17th versus Richland in the first round of the tourney. Boys Volleyball is not an IESA sanctioned sport that hosts Regionals, Sectionals, etc.
- Track and Field starts up on Monday, March 13.
- Potential donation of a batting cage for CB Diamond field by Mayor and Mrs. Wyke. Dr. Merritt and Mr. Puckett is beginning the process so it is set up by the end of the school year.

##### Rockdale Rammy Award.

- Starting April 3, parents and staff can nominate individuals for the inaugural Rockdale Rammy Award
  - We will be recognizing one Rockdale Teacher, one Rockdale Support Staff member, and one Rockdale Parent Volunteer for this award.
  - Light reception prior to the May BOE meeting where they will be officially recognized for their commitment to Rockdale School for the 22-23 school year.
  - Nominations are due Wednesday, April 26 at 4 pm and nominations will be submitted via Google form.

##### IAR testing (illinois Assessment for Readiness)

- IAR testing is slated to begin April 11th for our 3rd-8th Grade learners.
- 3rd-5th Grade students will take one test a day for 5 days and 6th-8th Grade students will take two tests in one day for 3 days.
- 5th and 8th Grade students will also be taking the ISA, Illinois Science Assessment, as per state requirement.



### Building update

- Due to asbestos abatement in anticipation of the summer scope of work to be completed, the building will be closed from 2:30 pm on Friday, March 24-the morning of Monday, April 3rd.
- April 1, invitations will be sent out to the community for the annual Science Expo, sponsored by ExxonMobil, and held at Minooka Intermediate School.
  - Last year, Rockdale was representing with the most club teams (6)
  - Event is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 26th

### Parent/Student Handbook update

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kYI1zL01na8ctlehqJOxnMoqusNVf9KqEzoxjBg4Ls/preview>
- Handbook committee met on Monday, February 6 to review current handbook and to make recommendations for revisions to the 2023-24 Parent/Student Handbook
  - Mr. Domenico, Ms. Holt, Miss Nordstrom served on the committee
- Minor revisions made due to grammatical errors, updating new information, more targeted, specific language, i.e., page 34, under Level III offense, Examples are a toy gun, i.e., Orbeez, Nerf gun, etc. with or without bullets, which is difficult to distinguish from an actual gun. See Weapons below for additional information, etc.  
In addition, page 56, under the Academics section, Junior High sub-heading, **Students who fail to turn in have three or more missing assignments and/or failing (with an F) one or more CORE classes within a grading period will be issued an academic detention and required to stay after school two days per week, days to be determined, from 3:30-5:00 until the student no longer meets the criteria. Phone calls, email communication will be made to parents the Friday before and the expectation is that the student attends the Academic Detention. This is crucial as we instill academic excellence and work habits into our students, while setting them up for success.**
- February BOE meeting was for a 1st viewing, March for a second and final view so that school registration can begin at/or on April 1st.

### Upcoming Events/Meetings

- March 10-End of 3rd Quarter
- March 13-Start of the 4th Quarter
- March 14-Grades due by 4 pm
- March 16-Elementary team meeting, 8 am, library
- March 16-NJHS meeting, 8:15 am (Ms. Kirk)
- March 16-Miles of Smiles event (Nurse Vicky-conference room)
- March 17-Grades live to parents on Teacherease, 4 pm
- March 24-SIP Day, 12:30 pm student dismissal
- March 27-31-Spring Break, building is closed
- April 3-School resumes after Spring Break
- April 7-Good Friday, no school
- April 10-Easter Monday, no school
- April 11-19-IAR testing, 3rd thru 8th Grade
- April 28-ExxonMobil Secrets in Science Event (Kindergarten thru 8th Grade)

**Board Discussion Items:**

Vice-President S. Chamblee asked how the E-learning Day went?

Mr. Peterson responded that middle school had good attendance. The lower grades did well also. We did have some absences he advised.

Vice-President S. Chamblee suggested that since the various locations suggested for the Summerbridge Program were not working out, maybe E-learning and doing the program remotely could be a possibility?

Dr. Merritt advised that we could look into the possibility of it however, when we communicate to our families that we will do it remotely, we could lose students. Also, prior to that we only had one staff member interested in doing it on site.

Mr. Peterson also shared that in lieu of the actual on site program staff have been asked to provide some skill work to students to work on in the summer. A packet like that can be used while families are traveling. We would also like to have some sort of incentive for complete packets. We can't assign a grade but maybe the incentive will help them keep up over the summer, he explained. This will be especially true of those tiered students we talked about earlier this evening suggested Superintendent Merritt.

In response to the concerns presented by the board Dr. Merritt advised that he would see if any staff members would be interested in facilitating a Summer Bridge class remotely.

**Closed Session: N/A**

**Report on Closed Session: N/A**

**Board/Action Items:**

**Action item: Motion to approve Allyson Stewart's Maternity Leave beginning August 14, 2023 with a return on Monday, September 18, 2023**

Member Aichmade a Motion to approve Allyson Stewart's Maternity Leave beginning August 14, 2023 with a return on Monday, September 18, 2023

Member Macholz seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Comments:**

**Action item: Motion to approve Christina Olino's FMLA Leave beginning April 26, 2023 with a return on May 25, 2023.**

Member Aich made a Motion to approve Christina Olino's FMLA Leave beginning April 26, 2023 with a return on May 25, 2023.

Member Macholz seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Comments:**

**Action item: Motion to approve the Rockdale 84 2023-2024 Public School Calendar for a Third and Final Reading**

Member Aich made a Motion to approve the Rockdale 84 2023-2024 Public School Calendar for a Third and Final Reading

Member Macholz seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Comments:**

**Action item: Motion to approve the State of Illinois Police Law Enforcement Portal User Agreement**

Member Aich made a Motion to approve the State of Illinois Police Law Enforcement Portal User Agreement

Member J. Chamblee seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Comments:**

**Action item: Motion to approve the Athletic Directors Job Description - First Read**

Member Aich made a Motion to approve the Athletic Directors Job Description - First Read

Member J. Chamblee seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Comments:**

**Action item: Motion to approve the School Fees for 2023-2024 - First Read**

Member Macholz made a Motion to approve the School Fees for 2023-2024 - First Read

Member Aich seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Comments:**

**Action item: Motion to approve the project status update as presented by Veregy to include the Water Fountain Piping renovation at a cost of \$124,423.**

Member Aich made a Motion to approve the project status update as presented by Veregy to include the Water Fountain Piping renovation at a cost of \$124,423.

Member Macholz seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried with all six (6) members voting 'aye'.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Comments:**

**Board Comments:**

**Board Member Aich:**

I wish you and your family well Mr. Peterson.

Happy Easter everyone.

Have a great Spring break!

**Board Member J. Chamblee:**

Wishing everyone a good spring break and get rejuvenated.

**Board Vice President S. Chamblee:** N/A

**Board Member Macholz:** N/A

**Board Member Phillips:** N/A

**Board Treasurer Wyke:** N/A

**Board President Stadler:**

Have a great Spring Break!

**Dr. Merritt:**

**Adjournment:**

Member S. Chamblee made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Member Macholz seconded the motion.

**The motion was carried on a voice vote.**

**Mr. Phillips was absent**

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:12PM**

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**Angela Stadler**  
**President, Board of Education**

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**Ahmed Aich-Sandino**  
**Secretary, Board of Education**

**Next Board Meeting:**

**6:00PM, Wednesday, April 19, 2023, Media Center**

