



Texas Education Agency

Commissioner Mike Morath

1701 North Congress Avenue • Austin, Texas 78701-1494 • 512 463-9734 • 512 463-9838 FAX • tea.texas.gov

Via Certified Mail,
Regular Mail & Email

227-901

October 5, 2023

Mr. Matias Segura, Interim Superintendent
Austin Independent School District
4000 S. IH 35 Frontage Rd.
Austin, Texas 78704

Ms. Arati Singh, Board President
Austin Independent School District
4000 S. IH 35 Frontage Rd.
Austin, Texas 78704

RE: Monitor Appointments to Austin Independent School District

Dear Mr. Segura and Ms. Singh:

In correspondence dated March 31, 2023, as part of the Final Report resulting from a Special Investigation (SI) of the district, Austin Independent School District ("district" or "ISD") was given notice of my decision to appoint a management team to the district and the requirement of an external audit related to the district's demonstrated systemic failure to meet the requirements of their special education program. The March 31, 2023 correspondence additionally provided that an informal review related to the final investigation report and the appointment of a management team must be requested by the district no later than April 17, 2023, and further advised that if no informal review was requested by the deadline, a final decision may be issued without informal review.¹ On April 17, 2023, the Texas Education Agency ("TEA" or "agency") received your response to the March 31, 2023 notice of appointment and request for informal review. The informal review was conducted with district representatives on May 10, 2023.

On August 30, 2023, the agency provided the district with a Proposed Agreed Order following the review. Please be advised that per the final approved Agreed Order, which was approved by the board of trustees on September 26, 2023, and signed by the Commissioner of Education on September 28, 2023, I am appointing Sherry Marsh and Lesa Shocklee as the monitors to Austin ISD. As the TEA monitors, Sherry Marsh and Lesa Shocklee's role will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Overseeing district and board actions including but not limited to any action related to the district's special education program;
- Facilitating a needs assessment of district's governance systems;
- Conducting onsite inspections during the period of the placement;
- Monitoring and supporting the implementation of a corrective action plan outlined in Paragraph 3.6 of the Agreed Order;

¹ 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §157.1123(d).

- Monitoring and participating in the required external audit; and
- Participating in and reporting to the agency on the progress toward completing the corrective action plan and all governance activities of the district.

Please note that the appointment of the monitors does not relieve the district and its governing board of the responsibility to, at all times, operate the district in compliance with all applicable statutes and rules. The agency reserves the right to implement all available interventions and sanctions under Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapters 39, 39A and Title 19, TAC, Chapter 97, singly or in combination, to address the current, or any future, deficiencies identified for the district. The cost of the monitors' services will be paid by the district in accordance with TEC §39A.903. Each monitor's fee shall be \$125 per hour plus necessary travel expenses not to exceed the state per diem rate. Failure to make timely payments to the monitors may result in appropriate amounts being deducted from the district's Foundation School Program (FSP) funds.

It is my sincere desire that all parties work together in a cooperative and productive manner to address the issues identified for the district. If you have questions about the appointment of the monitors, please contact Garrett Black, Director of Sanction Monitoring at (512) 463-9146 or via email at Garrett.Black@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,



Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education

MM/lm