

Hallsville Independent School District
For the Consideration of the Board of Trustees

Date of Board Meeting: May 18, 2026

Agenda Item#: _____

Topic: Approval of Engagement with Independent Financial Auditor for 2025-26 Annual Financial Audit

Background and Rationale:

This item provides the Board with the opportunity to consider the Administration's recommendation to approve the engagement with Squyres & Co., for the annual financial audit for the year ending August 31, 2026. The proposed fee for the engagement is \$60,000, with as-needed hours up to and not to exceed \$65,000.

Relationship to Strategic Plan:

Personnel Affected:

Budget Implications:

- Included in this year's budget
- Amendment of this year's budget required
- Increase in this year's budget required
- Expenditures required for next year's budget

Recommendation:

The Administration is recommending the approval of Squyres & Co., as the District's financial auditors for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2026.

Mary Brown

Signature
(Person Bringing Information to the Board)



Superintendent's Signature



April 30, 2026

Mrs. Mary Brown
Assistant Superintendent of Finance
Hallsville Independent School District
PO Box 810
Hallsville, Texas 75650

Dear Mrs. Brown,

The following represents our understanding of the services we will provide Hallsville Independent School District.

You have requested that we audit the financial statements of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Hallsville Independent School District, as of August 31, 2026, and for the year then ended and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise Hallsville Independent School District's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents. We are pleased to confirm our acceptance and our understanding of this audit engagement by means of this letter.

The objectives of our audit of the financial statements are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and in accordance with Government Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements, including omissions, can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, (U.S. GAAP,) as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) require that certain required supplementary information (RSI), such as management's discussion and analysis (MD&A) be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by GASB, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. As part of our engagement, we will apply certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information (RSI) in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, (U.S. GAAS). These limited procedures will consist primarily of inquiries of management regarding their methods of measurement and presentation, and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries. We will not express an opinion or provide any form of assurance on the RSI. The following RSI is required by U.S. GAAP. This RSI will be subjected to certain limited procedures but will not be audited:

- 1) Management's Discussion and Analysis
- 2) Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance Budget and Actual – General Fund
- 3) Schedule of the District's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability (TRS)
- 4) Schedule of District Contribution to TRS
- 5) Schedule of the District's Proportionate Share of the Net OBED Liability (TRS)

Squyres & Co LLP

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6) Schedule of District's Contributions for OPED to TRS

Supplementary information other than RSI will accompany Hallsville Independent School District's basic financial statements. We will subject the following supplementary information to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the basic financial statements and perform certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling the supplementary information to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. We intend to provide an opinion on the following supplementary information in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole:

- 1) Combining Balance Sheet – Nonmajor Governmental Funds
- 2) Combining Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances – Nonmajor Governmental Funds
- 3) Schedule of delinquent taxes receivable
- 4) Schedule of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance budget and actual – child nutrition program
- 5) Schedule of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance budget and actual – debt service fund
- 6) State Compensatory Education and Bilingual Education Expenditures
- 7) Schedule of expenditures of federal awards

Auditor Responsibilities

We will conduct our audit in accordance with GAAS; the standards for financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996; and the provisions of the Uniform Guidance. As part of an audit in accordance with GAAS and in accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. However, we will communicate to you in writing concerning any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control relevant to the audit of the financial statements that we have identified during the audit.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Hallsville Independent School District's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Although we are currently in the planning stage of our audit, we have identified the following significant risks during our audit to date that require special audit consideration:

- Improper revenue recognition is considered an inherent risk according to GAAS
- Management override of controls is considered an inherent risk according to GAAS

As required by the Uniform Guidance, we will perform tests of controls over compliance to evaluate the effectiveness of the design and operation of controls that we consider relevant to preventing or detecting material noncompliance with compliance requirements applicable to each major federal award program. However, our tests will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on those controls and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to the Uniform Guidance.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, together with the inherent limitations of internal control, an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements may not be detected exists, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with GAAS and, in accordance with Government Auditing Standards. In addition, an audit is not designed to detect immaterial misstatements or violations of laws or governmental regulations that do not have a direct and material effect on the financial statements or on major programs.

Our responsibility as auditors is limited to the period covered by our audit and does not extend to any other periods.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

As previously discussed, as part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the basic financial statements are free of material misstatement, we will perform tests of Hallsville Independent School District's compliance with the provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and agreements. However, the objective of our audit will not be to provide an opinion on overall compliance and we will not express such an opinion.

Management Responsibilities

Our audit will be conducted on the basis that management and, when appropriate, those charged with governance acknowledge and understand that they have responsibility:

- a. For the preparation and fair presentation of the basic financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
- b. For the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of basic financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to error, fraudulent financial reporting, misappropriation of assets, or violations of laws, governmental regulations, grant agreements, or contractual agreements; and
- c. To provide us with:
 - i. Access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the basic financial statements such as records, documentation, and other matters;
 - ii. Additional information that we may request from management for the purpose of the audit;
 - iii. Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom we determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence and;
 - iv. A written acknowledgement of all the documents that management expects to issue that will be included in the annual report and the planned timing and method of issuance of that annual report.

- d. For including the auditor's report in any document containing basic financial statements that indicates that such basic financial statements have been audited by us;
- e. For identifying and ensuring that the entity complies with the laws and regulations applicable to its activities;
- f. For adjusting the basic financial statements to correct material misstatements and confirming to us in the management representation letter that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the current year period under audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the basic financial statements as a whole;
- g. For acceptance of nonattest services, including identifying the proper party to oversee nonattest work;
- h. For maintaining adequate records, selecting and applying accounting principles, and safeguarding assets;
- i. For informing us of any known or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving management, employees with significant role in internal control and others where fraud could have a material effect on the financials;
- j. For the accuracy and completeness of all information provided;
- k. For taking reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable and other sensitive information; and
- l. For confirming your understanding of your responsibilities as defined in this letter to us in your management representation letter.

With regard to the supplementary information referred to above, you acknowledge and understand your responsibility: (a) for the preparation of the supplementary information in accordance with the applicable criteria; (b) to provide us with the appropriate written representations regarding supplementary information; (c) to include our report on the supplementary information in any document that contains the supplementary information and that indicates that we have reported on such supplementary information; and (d) to present the supplementary information with the audited basic financial statements, or if the supplementary information will not be presented with the audited basic financial statements, to make the audited basic financial statements readily available to the intended users of the supplementary information no later than the date of issuance by you of the supplementary information and our report thereon.

As part of our audit process, we will request from management and those charged with governance, written confirmation concerning representations made to us in connection with the audit.

Nonattest Services

With respect to any nonattest services we perform;

We will assist in preparing the financial statements, preparation of GASB conversion entries, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, and related notes of Hallsville Independent School District in conformity with U. S. generally accepted accounting principles and the Uniform Guidance based on information provided by you.

We will not assume management responsibilities on behalf of Hallsville Independent School District. However, we will provide advice and recommendations to assist management of Hallsville Independent School District in performing its responsibilities.

Hallsville Independent School District's management is responsible for (a) making all management decisions and performing all management functions; (b) assigning a competent individual to oversee the services; (c) evaluating the adequacy of the services performed; (d) evaluating and accepting responsibility for the results of the services performed; and (e) designing, implementing, and maintaining

the system of internal controls, including the process used to monitoring the system of internal control.

Our responsibilities and limitations of the nonattest services are as follows:

- We will perform the services in accordance with applicable professional standards.
- The nonattest services are limited to the services previously outlined above. Our firm, in its sole professional judgment, reserves the right to refuse to do any procedure or take any action that could be construed as making management decisions or assuming management responsibilities, including determining account coding and approving journal entries.

Reporting

We will issue a written report upon completion of our audit of Hallsville Independent School District's basic financial statements. Our report will be addressed to Board of Trustees of Hallsville Independent School District. Circumstances may arise in which our report may differ from its expected form and content based on the results of our audit. Depending on the nature of these circumstances, it may be necessary for us to modify our opinions, add an emphasis-of-matter or other-matter paragraph(s) to our auditor's report, or if necessary, withdraw from the engagement. If our opinions on the basic financial statements are other than unmodified, we will discuss the reasons with you in advance. If, for any reason, we are unable to complete the audit or are unable to form or have not formed opinions, we may decline to express opinions or to issue a report as a result of this engagement.

The Government Auditing Standards report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters will state that (1) the purpose of the report is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance, and (2) the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. The Uniform Guidance report on internal control over compliance will state that the purpose of the report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control over compliance and the results of that testing based on the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Both reports will state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose.

Other

We understand that your employees will prepare all confirmations we request and will locate any documents or support for any other transactions we select for testing.

If you intend to publish or otherwise reproduce the basic financial statements and make reference to our firm, you agree to provide us with printers' proofs or masters for our review and approval before printing. You also agree to provide us with a copy of the final reproduced material for our approval before it is distributed.

Regarding the electronic dissemination of audited financial statements, including financial statements published electronically on your Internet website, you understand that electronic sites are a means to distribute information and, therefore, we are not required to read the information contained in these sites or to consider the consistency of other information in the electronic site with the original document.

Professional standards prohibit us from being the sole host and/or the sole storage for your financial and non-financial data. As such, it is your responsibility to maintain your original data and records and we cannot be responsible to maintain such original information. By signing this engagement letter, you affirm that you have all the data and records required to make your books and records complete.

Provisions of Engagement Administration, Timing and Fees

During the course of the engagement, we may communicate with you or your personnel via fax or e-mail, and you should be aware that communication in those mediums contains a risk of misdirected or intercepted communications. In addition to fax and email, we also send data over the internet using other methods (such as portals) and may store electronic data via software applications hosted remotely on the Internet, or allow access to data through third-party vendors' secured portals or clouds.

Wayne Barton is the engagement partner and is responsible for supervising the engagement and signing the reports or authorizing another individual to sign them. We expect to begin our interim audit procedures in July 2026, and to issue our reports no later than the January 2027 board meeting.

Our fee for these services will be based on the actual time spent at our standard hourly rates plus out-of-pocket costs. Our base fee for these services is \$60,000, including out-of-pocket costs for travel (but not for postage or other out-of-pocket expense). Our standard hourly rates will be charged for amounts in excess of our standard rates of \$60,000 up to \$65,000. Our fees are based on the amount of time required at various levels of responsibility, plus actual out-of-pocket expenses. Invoices will be rendered every month and are payable upon presentation. Payment is due within 30 days of invoice billing date. Invoices unpaid 30 days past the billing date may be determined delinquent and are subject to a late fee of 1% per month.

If significant additional time is necessary, we will discuss it with you and arrive at a new fee estimate for amounts in excess of \$65,000. We will notify you immediately of any circumstances we encounter that could significantly affect this initial fee estimate. Whenever possible, we will attempt to use Hallsville Independent School District's personnel to assist in the preparation of schedules and analyses of accounts. This effort could substantially reduce our time requirements and facilitate the timely conclusion of the audit. Further, we will be available during the year to consult with you on financial management and accounting matters of a routine nature. *Government Auditing Standards* require that we document an assessment of the skills, knowledge, and experience of management, should we participate in any form of preparation of the basic financial statements and related schedules or disclosures as these actions are deemed a non-audit service.

During the course of the audit we may observe opportunities for economy in, or improved controls over, your operations. We will bring such matters to the attention of the appropriate level of management, either orally or in writing.

We agree to retain our audit documentation or work papers for a period of at least five years from the date of our report.

You agree to inform us of facts that may affect the basic financial statements of which you may become aware during the period from the date of the auditor's report to the date the financial statements are issued.

At the conclusion of our audit engagement, we will communicate to the Board of Trustees the following significant findings from the audit:

- Our view about the qualitative aspects of the entity's significant accounting practices;
- Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit;
- Uncorrected misstatements, other than those we believe are trivial, if any;
- Disagreements with management, if any;

- Other findings or issues, if any, arising from the audit that are, in our professional judgment, significant and relevant to those charged with governance regarding their oversight of the financial reporting process;
- Material, corrected misstatements that were brought to the attention of management as a result of our audit procedures;
- Representations we requested from management;
- Management's consultations with other accountants, if any; and
- Significant issues, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed, or the subject of correspondence, with management.

The audit documentation for this engagement is the property of Squyres & Co., LLP and constitutes confidential information. However, we may be requested to make certain audit documentation available to Texas Education Agency (TEA) or other grantors pursuant to authority given to it by law or regulation, or to peer reviewers. If requested, access to such audit documentation will be provided under the supervision of Squyres & Co., LLP's personnel. Furthermore, upon request, we may provide copies of selected audit documentation to TEA. TEA may intend, or decide, to distribute the copies of information contained therein to others, including other governmental agencies.

Please sign and return the attached copy of this letter to indicate your acknowledgment of, and agreement with, the arrangements for our audit of the basic financial statements including our respective responsibilities.

We appreciate the opportunity to be your financial statement auditors and look forward to working with you and your staff.

Respectfully,



Squyres & Co., LLP

RESPONSE:

This letter correctly sets forth our understanding.

Hallsville Independent School District

Acknowledged and agreed on behalf of Hallsville Independent School District by:

Title: _____

Date: _____