



UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA ACTION ITEM

TOPIC: Approval of Board Minutes for the month of September 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Griselda Rodriguez OF: Secretary to Superintendent

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD: _____

DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: December 18, 2024

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the United ISD Board of Trustees discuss and take possible action to approve the following board minutes for the month of September 2024.

Regular Board Meeting – September 18, 2024

United Independent School District
United ISD Bill Johnson Student Activity Complex, Auditorium
5208 Santa Claudia Lane – Laredo, Texas 78043

Regular Board Meeting
September 18, 2024
6:00 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT:

Superintendent – Dr. Gerardo Cruz

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ramiro Veliz, III, President – Present
Aliza Flores Oliveros, Vice-President – Present
Michelle Molina, Secretary – Present – arrived 6:13 p.m.
Francisco “Frank” Castillo – Present
Gilbert Aguilar, Jr. – Present – arrived 6:13 p.m.
Javier Montemayor, Member – Absent
Ricardo Rodriguez, Member – Present

LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENT: Stephen Trautmann

I. Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Call to Order

II. Pledge of Allegiance

A. Honor the Texas Flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible.

III. Recognitions

A. Technology Department and Admissions/Attendance Department - For the successful implementation of the Skyward Student Information System

B. Col. Santos Benavides Elementary School - Danzerettes Dance Team

IV. Public Comments: Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker, except that non-English speakers requiring a translator are limited to six minutes. The presiding Board officer may modify or waive these time limits as appropriate. Public comment shall not be used for personal attacks by the speaker against District employees or students. Speakers who engage in personal attacks or use insulting, profane, threatening or abusive language during any Board meeting shall be ruled out of order by the presiding Board officer and may be escorted from the Board meeting room by District peace officers or security staff. Any concerns or

complaints regarding individual District employees, students, or parents must be resolved via the appropriate complaint process, as stated in Board Policy BED (Local). Pursuant to section 551.042 of the Texas Government Code, no Board Member or Administrator may respond to a member of the public regarding an item that is not listed on this agenda, unless such response is a recitation of District policy or a statement of specific factual information.

Letty Juarez – addressed the board regarding budget and salaries. Ms. Juarez questioned the salary increases that were given to the Police Department as to why these increases were not made public and asked when the administrators in charge and the board approved these increases. She stated that the board violated four sections of the Open Meetings Act (551.041, 551.042, 551.074, 551.102). Ms. Juarez also questioned the newly posted position for the Public Engagement Specialist and asked why tax payers need to pay for this position when Ms. Susan Carlson and her department do a good job and the UISD Police Department also have a Public Information Officer.

Edna Olmeda – addressed the board regarding concerns for the superintendent. She stated she was upset that the pay increases for substitute teachers was denied and commented the root cause for the increase in money spent on substitutes is because the need has grown and teachers are tired and overworked and it is also due to hiring of positions at central office. She offered some solutions such as not hiring the TIA Director, fix the root cause and to ask administrators with six figure salaries to do more with less, and shift TIA responsibilities to the Instructional Accountability Department. Ms. Olmeda asked that they not be stripped of their rights of freedom of speech and added that the designated area was unnecessary.

Stephen Trautmann noted that we do have a designated area and representatives from the media were made aware of the new designated area which is lawful and in accordance with Texas Government Code section 551.023 and asked the members sitting in the front crowd who are recording to move to the designated area if they choose to record. Mr. Veliz also asked members in the audience who are recording to please move to the designated area.

Victor Vazquez – addressed the board regarding Board Policy GKA that Dr. Cruz implemented regarding recording and freedom of speech. Mr. Vazquez stated he is a veteran and thinks it is an insult for our country because our Founding Fathers for this country fought for rights. He asked that people be treated with dignity and ask district staff not to hide when he goes to talk to them. Mr. Vazquez also made statements regarding the security dog that was given away by the board in October 2003. He added that the dog belongs to Bondoc and it is illegal for the district to pay to get it back. Mr. Vazquez stated, as public servants, nobody should be afraid to be recorded.

Stephen Trautmann clarified that Zanti is currently a dog that is in service with UISD as a working K9. He stated the other dog that has been a concern is Muk and explained that Muk was a bomb dog that got rehomed to another agency and he is alive and well and is being trained and cross-trained in ammunition to serve other agencies within the state of Texas. Mr. Trautmann stated we get the dogs from TSA at no cost to the district and whenever they are rehomed, there is no money given to the district. These dogs are donated and both dogs are in service and doing well.

Dolores Medrano – addressed the board regarding Board Policy GKA. She stated it was disgraceful what she just saw happen to the people in the audience. Ms. Medrano added that this is a public forum and they have a right to record if they want to and it is their constitutional rights and asked what type of disruptive behavior has occurred for this type of action. She also stated she will be making an open records request on the legal authority they are using, prior cases and any other legal documentation that they are using to conduct themselves in this manner.

Stephen Trautmann clarified that the claims regarding using a designated recording area are unconstitutional are false. He mentioned that statute Texas Government Code 551.023 titled Recording of Meeting by Person in Attendance, section B, a governmental body may adopt reasonable rules to maintain order at a meeting including rules relating to the location of recording equipment and the manner in which the recording is conducted and assured that this is not a violation of the constitution as they are alleging.

Lucia Pena – addressed the board regarding teacher salaries and superintendent responsibilities. Ms. Pena reminded that board that they were elected or placed on that seat to be guardians of the public and community's youth best interest and not the district's best interest. Ms. Pena stated that although changes have been made to the TIA, the component that keeps many from the designation is still there. She asked that the district be clear and direct when addressing raises and future pay for educators.

Erika Rodriguez Rendon – clarified to the board that she was speaking on behalf of someone else who was afraid to speak for fear of retaliation. She spoke regarding unethical practices exhibited by the board and on behalf of those who fought to protect freedom they seek to take from the community. Ms. Rendon stated that a severe lack of customer service is exhibited by the leaders of the district. She added that there is a serious need for change in the district.

Clarissa Fraga – addressed the board regarding the superintendent's responsibilities, implement practices and the unethical practices exhibited by the board. She spoke regarding the freedom the district is seeking to take away from the community and added that she will not be silenced and will speak for those who can't and defend the rights of the poor and the needy and commented that it is time for change.

Keila Sanchez – addressed the board regarding the unethical practice of not allowing them to record. Ms. Sanchez also spoke regarding salary increases and the implementing of positions that are not needed. She added that her daughter has only one elective and that class did not have the proper equipment. She told the board that they are there to listen to the parents and will continue to speak to the board so they can listen to them.

Valentin Ruiz – addressed the board regarding the first amendment right of free speech, freedom of press. Mr. Ruiz also mentioned that successful school districts in the state do not have a TIA Director and that is the reason UISD cannot afford a cost of living adjustment for classified staff or teachers. Mr. Ruiz was also upset and stated it was unethical that his friends were removed from the meeting.

Stephen Trautmann stated the last speaker was Ismael Rincon but he was lawfully removed from the meeting. Mr. Trautmann made one more comment regarding the pay raises for the police department and the comments that were made. He clarified that the budget was approved on August 21st and it included all expenditures of the district and was posted in accordance with the open meetings act and is confident that no violations of the law were made.

V. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Gerardo Cruz stated he is pleased that UISD continues to demonstrate solid commitment to the academic excellence as evidenced by the recently projected designation as an A-Rated school district and said this is a testament to the hard work of students, teachers, campus administrators, curriculum and instruction and support from parents in the community. He mentioned that UISD enrollment continues to grow steadily across all schools with a student enrollment of 40,716 and the district continues to fill teacher vacancies. Dr. Cruz also assured that the district is working diligently with the attendance department and attendance officers to ensure that all students attend school regularly. He stated he is pleased that the district's safety measures are proving highly effective and he is also pleased with the implementation of Skyward student management system which is managing student information more efficiently and effectively. He added that the management team is preparing for upcoming legislative sessions focusing on public school funding. Dr. Cruz also spoke regarding the designated areas for recording at the meetings and asked all attendees to abide by these rules to promote a respectful and organized environment. In closing, Dr. Cruz stated UISD is making tremendous progress in academics, student engagement and building a thriving district culture and he is confident that with the support from the Board of Trustees, staff and community, we will continue to provide the best educational experiences possible for our students and thanked the board for their continued trust and dedication to the success of United ISD.

Mr. Veliz noted for the record that two additional board members were present; Ms. Michelle Molina and Mr. Gilbert Aguilar.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

A. Monthly Disbursements

B. Approval of Awarding Bids, Proposals and Qualifications

C. Interlocal Agreement between Webb County and United ISD for Juvenile J.P. Court Coordinators

D. Internal Audit Plan for 2024-2025

E. First and Final Reading of revised Board Policy EB (LOCAL)

F. Memorandum of Understanding between United Independent School District and The Boys and Girls Clubs of Laredo

G. Additional T-TESS Appraisers for the 2024-2025 School Year

H. Facilities Rental Service Agreement with AEP Texas at United South High School

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented was made by Ricardo Rodriguez and seconded by Aliza F. Oliveros.

Motion was unanimously approved.

VII. Items for Individual Consideration for Discussion and Possible Action:

A. Donations for the month of September 2024

Dr. Gerardo Cruz read the donations into the minutes for a total of \$186,113.00

A motion to approve the donations for the month of September 2024 was made by Aliza F. Oliveros and seconded by Michelle Molina.

Motion was unanimously approved.

B. Resolution to approve the 2024 Appraisal Roll as the 2024 United ISD Tax Roll

Monica Madrigal presented the Resolution to the board.

A motion to approve was made by Aliza F. Oliveros and seconded by Francisco Castillo.

Motion was unanimously approved.

C. Selection of Board Member(s) as Delegate and Alternate Delegate to attend the 2024 Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Delegate Assembly

Aliza Oliveros made a motion to keep the same board members which are Ramiro Veliz, III and Francisco Castillo. Motion was seconded by Ramiro Veliz, III.

Motion was unanimously approved.

D. Board Travel to attend the 2024 TxEDCON Convention the month of September 2024 in San Antonio, Texas

A motion to approve the board travel was made by Michelle Molina and seconded by

Motion was unanimously approved.

E. Board Minutes for the months of June 2024 and July 2024

A motion to approve the board minutes was made by Aliza F. Oliveros and seconded by Gilbert Aguilar.

Motion was unanimously approved.

F. Update Board Policy DFE (Local) - Termination of Employment: Resignation Designees

David Canales presented the information on Board Policy DFE (Local).

A motion to approve the updated policy was made by Michelle Molina and seconded by Gilbert Aguilar.

Motion was unanimously approved.

G. Request(s) from Board Member(s) in re: Use of Board of Trustees Discretionary Funds for Various Projects/Campuses

Mike Garza stated there were no additional requests to present.

A motion to approve the discretionary funds was made by Ricardo Rodriguez and seconded by Michelle Molina.

Motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. Closed Session: Board will adjourn into closed session pursuant to the following sections of the Texas Open Meetings Act

The board adjourned into closed session at 6:57 p.m.

A. TGC 551.071 Consultation with Board's Attorney; Closed Meeting

1. Superintendent's Duties and Responsibilities

2. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel, regarding Board Policy DC (Local) - Employment Practices

3. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel, regarding Board Policy GKA (Local) - Community Relations: Conduct on School Premises

B. TGC 551.071 Consultation with Board's Attorney; Closed Meeting
TGC 551.072 Deliberation regarding Real Property; Closed Meeting

1. Legal consultation and report on the status of the lawsuit filed by Potential Holdings, LLC against the United Independent School District ("UISD") et. al. regarding the UISD Student Activity Complex/Educational Support Center Plat filed of record in Volume 21, Pages 43-44 of the Webb County Plat Records, and the UISD Las Cruces School Plat filed in Volume 18, Page 55, of the Plat Records of Webb County, Texas, and Santa Claudia Lane and Santa Monica Drive within the UISD SAC Plat and matters incident thereto, including legal options available to UISD. The suit was filed in the District Court of the 111th Judicial District of Webb County Texas, under cause number 2023CVG000151D2.

2. Update on the completion of construction of Juan Ramirez Middle School located at 402 Aquero Boulevard and the completion of construction of Aquero Boulevard and related easement and reimbursement obligation issues including the reimbursement due from Aquero Ltd, arising under the Original Purchase and Sale Agreement executed in connection with the purchase of the one-half undivided interest in the property over which the extension of Aquero Boulevard runs.

3. Report on alongside execution of a 20 ft wide sanitary sewer easement to the City of Laredo from the sanitary sewer lift station site running north through the UISD Student Activity Complex property to the current 21-inch-wide gravity sewer line that runs alongside of the Kansas City Southern railroad track.

C. TGC 551.071 Consultation with Board's Attorney; Closed Meeting
TGC 551.074 Personnel Matters; Closed Meeting

1. Discussion regarding the appointment of the Teacher Incentive Allotment Director

2. Discussion regarding the appointment of the Associate Superintendent of District Administration and Student Services

IX. Reconvened from Closed Session, the Board will take appropriate action on items, if necessary, as discussed in Closed Session

The board reconvened from closed session at 8:16 p.m.

A. Possible action regarding revisions to Board Policy DC (Local) - Employment Practices

Dr. Gerardo Cruz made a recommendation noted that this revision will include assistant principal, associate principal, dean and director and said the prior policy only included the principal and director.

Aliza F. Oliveros made a motion to approve the recommendation and was seconded by Gilbert Aguilar.

Motion was unanimously approved.

B. Possible action regarding revisions to Board Policy GKA (Local) - Community Relations: Conduct on School Premises

Dr. Cruz stated that as superintendent of UISD he wants to address the need to safeguard the employees and students from unauthorized video recording on district property and to enhance security and privacy he proposed a revision to prohibit unauthorized audio and visual recordings of students or district employees on district property during regular school or business hours. He added that this revision will not apply to photography or recordings taken at public school related activities and additionally media representatives will be required to obtain permission from the district's Communications Department before interacting with staff or students on district property. Dr. Cruz said this revision is essential to ensure a safe and secure environment for our schools and community.

Stephen Trautmann clarified that the Texas Education Code vests the right entitled to both real and personal property to the district's board of trustees and explained that when you are a property owner, you have the right to institute rules. He assured the board that this policy is legal and his recommendation is to approve it.

Jaime Garcia explained that the model language for this came from the Texas Association of School Boards, our policy consultant, and they base their language on what other districts are doing across the state. He added that it's a local policy and that language is adopted by the board.

Michelle Molina clarified that the board is not telling them not to record or take pictures, it is just designating an area and no one's rights are being violated.

A motion to approve the recommendation was made by Aliza F. Oliveros and seconded by Gilbert Aguilar.

Motion was unanimously approved.

C. Possible action with respect to the lawsuit filed by Potential Holdings, LLC against the United Independent School District ("UISD") et. al. regarding the

UISD Student Activity Complex/Educational Support Center Plat filed of record in Volume 21, Pages 43-44 of the Webb County Plat Records, and the UISD Las Cruces School Plat filed in Volume 18, Page 55, of the Plat Records of Webb County, Texas, and Santa Claudia Lane and Santa Monica Drive within the UISD SAC Plat and matters incident thereto, including legal options available to UISD. The suit was filed in the District Court of the 111th Judicial District of Webb County Texas, under cause number 2023CVG000151D2.

Stephen Trautmann stated the recommendation is to allow legal counsel to proceed as discussed in closed session.

A motion to approve the recommendation was made by Gilbert Aguilar and seconded by Michelle Molina.

Motion was unanimously approved.

D. Possible action regarding the completion of construction of Juan Ramirez Middle School located at 402 Aquero Boulevard and Aquero Boulevard and related easement issues and reimbursement obligations arising under the Original Purchase and Sale Agreement executed in connection with the purchase of the one-half undivided interest in the property over which the extension of Aquero Boulevard runs.

Stephen Trautmann stated the recommendation is to proceed as discussed in closed session.

A motion to approve the recommendation was made by Michelle Molina and seconded by Gilbert Aguilar.

Motion was unanimously approved.

E. Possible action on authorizing the execution of a 20 ft. wide sanitary sewer easement to the City of Laredo from the sanitary sewer lift station site running north through the UISD Student Activity Complex property to the current 21-inch-wide gravity sewer line that runs alongside the Kansas City Southern railroad track.

Stephen Trautmann stated the recommendation is to proceed as discussed in closed session.

A motion to approve the recommendation was made by Michelle Molina and seconded by Gilbert Aguilar.

Motion was unanimously approved.

F. Possible action regarding the appointment of the Teacher Incentive Allotment Director

Dr. Gerardo Cruz stated the recommendation for the Teacher Incentive Allotment Director is Vania Magallanes.

A motion to approve the recommendation was made by Michelle Molina and seconded by Gilbert Aguilar.

Motion was unanimously approved.

G. Possible action regarding the appointment of the Associate Superintendent of District Administration and Student Services

Dr. Gerardo Cruz stated th recommendation for the Associate Superintendent of District Administration and Student Services is Rebecca C. Morales.

A motion to approve his recommendation was made by Aliza F. Oliveros and seconded by

Motion was unanimously approved.

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Aliza F. Oliveros and seconded by Michelle Molina.

Motion was unanimously approved.

There being no further business before the Board of Trustees, the Regular Board Meeting of September 18, 2024 was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Ramiro Veliz, III, President

Michelle Molina, Secretary

Minutes Presented for Approval: December 18, 2024

Minutes submitted by:

Alejandra Salinas, Secretary to Associate Superintendent