

Special Called Meeting Minutes – October 8, 2024

The Board of Trustees United ISD

A Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees of United ISD will be held Tuesday, October 8, 2024, beginning at 6:00 PM in the UISD Boardroom, 201 Lindenwood Dr., Laredo, TX 78045.

The subjects to be discussed or considered are as listed below. Items do not have to be taken in the order shown on this meeting notice.

I. Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Call to Order

Board Members Present: Frank Castillo, Aliza Flores Oliveros, Gilbert Aguilar and Ricardo Rodriguez
UISD Management Present: Dr. Cruz, Mrs. Morales, Mr. Garza and Mrs. Benavides

II. Pledge of Allegiance

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

III. Public Comments:

Comments shall be limited to current Board agenda items, student recognitions, or charitable causes. Public comment forms must be submitted to the Board Secretary no later than 10 minutes before the scheduled start time of the meeting by the person who will be providing public comment. Only one public comment form may be submitted per person. The public comment form must be fully completed to be considered. 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. 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 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 about 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.

Mr. Victor M. Vazquez: concerned about hiring another law firm. Wants to know why there is a need to hire additional attorneys.

Ms. Danielle Martinez: concerned about costs being paid to law firms and about current attorney fees. Hiring a new firm will raise concerns. Are tax dollars being spent wisely? The Board of Trustees needs to be transparent as to why this is needed.

Mr. Aguilar: We are moving forward in assessing what each campus needs. Management is currently working to find solutions for the campuses that need work.

IV. Items for Individual Consideration

A. Discussion and possible action regarding approval of Board Resolution pertaining to emergency repairs needed at Centeno Elementary due to unforeseen catastrophe or emergency and delegation of authority to Superintendent pursuant to Texas Education Code Sections 44.031(h) and 44.0312

Motion to approve: Gilbert Aguilar

Second: Aliza Flores Oliveros

Motion Passed

B. Discussion and possible action regarding approval of Board Resolution to approve employee compensation for emergency closure due to water being shut off on October 4, 2024, at Trautmann Elementary School

Motion to approve: Rick Rodriguez

Second: Frank Castillo and Aliza Flores Oliveros

Motion Passed

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

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

1. Consultation with legal counsel regarding retention of Thompson & Horton, LLP as Special Counsel for claims made by/against USD and its employees, agents, or representatives, and matters incident thereto

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

1. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel, regarding the nomination of candidates to the Webb County Appraisal District Board of Directors as per sections 6.03 and 6.0301 of the Texas Tax Code

6:20 PM – 6:29 PM / No action taken

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

A. Action regarding retention of Thompson & Horton, LLP as Special Counsel for claims made by/against USD and its employees, agents or representatives

Only for potential legal conflicts, no upfront fees or retainers. This firm will only be used when needed and will be paid by an hourly rate.

Motion to approve: Gilbert Aguilar

Second: Frank Castillo

B. Discussion and possible action by resolution of the United Independent School District's Board of Trustees to nominate candidates for the Webb County Appraisal District's Board of Directors as per sections 6.03 and 6.0301 of the Texas Tax Code

Board Member Nominees: Mr. Veliz, Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Aguilar, Ms. Oliveros, and Mr. Castillo.

Motion to approve: Frank Castillo

Second: Gilberto Aguilar

Motion Passed

VII. Adjournment

6:31 PM

If, during the course of the meeting covered by this Notice, the Board of Trustees should determine that a closed or executive meeting or session of the Board of Trustees is required, then such closed meeting or session as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Section 551.001 et seq., will be held by the School Board at the date, hour, and place given in this Notice or as soon after the commencement of the meeting covered by this Notice as the School Board may conveniently meet, in such closed or executive meeting or session concerning any and all purposes permitted by the Act, including, but not limited to the following sections and purposes:

Texas Government Code Section:

- 551.071 Private consultation with the board's attorney*
- 551.072 Discussing purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property*
- 551.073 Discussing negotiated contracts for prospective gifts or donations*
- 551.074 Discussing personnel or to hear complaints against personnel*
- 551.076 Considering the deployment, specific occasions for, or implementation of, security personnel or devices*
- 551.082 Considering discipline of a public school child, or complaint or charge against school student*
- 551.0821 Discussing matter that reveals personally identifiable information about public school student*
- 551.083 Considering the standards, guidelines, terms or conditions the board will follow, or will instruct its representatives to follow, in consultation with representatives of employee groups*
- 551.084 Excluding witnesses from a hearing.*

Should any final action, final decision, or final vote be required in the opinion of the School Board with regard to any matter considered in such closed or executive meeting or session, then the final action, final decision, or final vote shall be either:

- (a) in the open meeting covered by the Notice upon the reconvening of the public meeting; or*
- (b) at a subsequent public meeting of the School Board upon notice thereof; as the School Board shall determine.*

The notice for this meeting was posted in compliance with the Texas Open Meeting Act on _____, at

_____.

United Independent School District

Gerardo Cruz, Ph.D.
Superintendent

UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bill Johnson Student Activity Complex / 5208 Santa Claudia Lane / Laredo, Texas 78043

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Wednesday, October 16, 2024
6:00 P.M.

BOARD PRESENT: Ramiro Veliz, Aliza Oliveros, Gilbert Aguilar, Javier Montemayor
Francisco Castillo (6:10 pm) and Michele Molina (6:19 pm) arrived during recognitions

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Gerardo Cruz, Mike Garza, Laida Benavides, Rebecca Morales, Sam Flores, Hector Perez, Monica Madrigal, Martha Stahl, David Canales, Laura De Los Santos, Susan Carlson, Emma Leza, Cynthia Rodriguez, Cynthia Ramirez

Unless removed from the consent agenda, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted on at one time.

I. Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Call to Order

Board president Ramiro Veliz, establishes quorum and calls to order at **6:06 P.M.**

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. UNITED ISD ADMINISTRATORS IN CHARGE - SERVICE RECOGNITION

- Laida P. Benavides, Chief Financial Officer
- Rebecca Coss-Morales, Associate Superintendent for District Administration and Student Services
- Mike Garza, Associate Superintendent for Administration/Operation Services

B. TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY (TEA) 2024-2025 PURPLE STAR DISTINCTION

- Antonio Gonzalez Middle School

- Lamar Bruni Vergara Middle School
- Los Obispos Middle School
- Salvador Garcia Middle School
- United High School
- United South High School

C. JOHN B. ALEXANDER HIGH SCHOOL HONORS WIND ENSEMBLE - The Foundations For Music Education, Mark of Excellence - Commended Winner

IV. Public Comments:

Public comment forms must be submitted to the Board Secretary no later than 10 minutes before the scheduled start time of the meeting by the person who will be providing public comment. Only one public comment form may be submitted per person. The public comment form must be fully completed to be considered. 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.

Clarissa Fraga: Ms. Fraga claims issues being ignored and that she has felt threatened and retaliated against. Ms. Fraga also reminds the board of their duties and responsibilities and states that they are there to "govern".

Leticia Juarez: Ms. Juarez states that she has made open records purchasing requests and suggests that the district provide such requests in excel format and that items should include a description and purpose. Ms. Juarez says that by doing so the district will be more transparent by making it easier for taxpayers to see how monies are being spent. Lastly, Ms. Juarez suggests that the district provide a monthly budget expenditure report "as a regular agenda item" and has provided samples from other districts.

Victor Vazquez: Mr. Vazquez addresses the board and questions why agenda item "Superintendent's Report" would have very little to no information (referring to an informational item).

Keila Sanchez: Ms. Sanchez makes the board members aware how disappointed she was at the new media recording location regulation implementation and states the public

recording from their seats were not causing any disruption but rather that the disruption came from the board (accusing Ms. Oliveros) when attempting to enforce the new guideline. Furthermore, Ms. Sanchez addressed Ms. Oliveros and requested that she stop hiding behind board president Veliz.

Ms. Oliveros replied in disbelief that a member of the community disagreed with the district enforcing this implementation when the person in question has been known to carry weapons on district property. She reminds the public that this facility is a student activity complex. Lastly, Ms. Oliveros stated that she would stand up for herself and students of this District.

Yredh Felizardo addresses the board to express her concern of a No Re-entry policy set in place by the district's athletics department. Ms. Felizardo kindly requests if this can be reconsidered. She says she has many kids and that she would be charged up to three times due to this policy. Ms. Felizardo also informs the board that she has collected parent signatures to show their support to fix this issue.

Ramiro Veliz responds to Ms. Felizardo and assures her that the board will look into this concern.

Edna Olmeda: Ms. Olmeda is here to express her concern of the new policy implementation. She said she was "caught off guard". She reminds the board of the scene that transpired at the last meeting in which a fellow community member was escorted out. Ms. Olmeda says she is very disappointed at Mrs. Oliveros and even disappointed with the superintendent for implementing this. Ms. Olmeda now addresses Dr. Cruz and says she has learned that he moved to implement this policy. A policy that according to Ms. Olmeda "is not necessary". Lastly, she addressed Ms. Oliveros to remind her she had voted and campaigned for her.

Danielle Martinez: Ms. Martinez questions the board regarding a K-9 "Xanti" that had been retired (transfer of ownership) and reinstated. She claims that the K-9 had been retired to her handler when that person retired as well. Ms. Martinez says she has the documents to prove this and that animal advocates and Texas Rangers will be involved.

Lamcy Rincon: Ms. Rincon begins by speaking on her academic accomplishments and how her parents have instilled that God is first and secondly the importance of their first amendment rights. She states that her father strongly believes in his rights and thus has been arrested nine times in the past 4 years and has prevailed in each case. Ms. Rincon says that her dad received a letter from the superintendent banning him from the district without due process and thus cannot attend this meeting. Lastly, she stated how her dad is her hero and he sets a great example for her and her family.

Valentin Ruiz: Mr. Ruiz addresses his prior request of allowing public comments for Ms. Keila Sanchez went after him, and accused "Jr." (legal counsel) for not allowing that to happen and thus Ms. Sanchez had to "wing it", and also accused the board for having no empathy for Ms. Sanchez. Mr. Ruiz continues to address the board and expresses his opposition to the board hiring another million dollar law firm and says that those million dollars could be used for "a living wage for teachers, paras, custodians, food service and transportation" personnel. Lastly, he addresses Ms. Oliveros and accuses her for being responsible for last month's disturbance and said "an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us".

End of Public Comments.

V. Listed below are items to be reviewed by the Board for information only:

A. Announcement of Board Training Credit

Board president Ramiro Veliz announces the required Board Training Credit report and states that each board member has fully complied with their requirements and no trustee is deficient in their TASB Continuing Education training hours.

Areas covered are as follows:

Local District Orientation, Texas Education Code, School Safety, Evaluating and Improving Student Outcomes (EISO), Post Legislative Update to Texas Education Code, Child Abuse Prevention, Team Building and Additional Continuing Education.

(See Report Attached)

B. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Gerardo Cruz presents an update on his participation at the recent Texas Association School Board (TASB) Conference and also elaborates on legislative planning regarding a visit with state representative Richard Raymond and TEA Commissioner Mike Morath discussing potential funding opportunities and solutions to district concerns. Dr. Cruz states that UISD culture continues to grow positively regarding student achievement as well as district response to emergencies.

The visit with TEA included addressing seeking and implementing initiatives to improve teacher retention and recruitment, advocating for increased state funding for public education and resources, and explored policies related to mental health and social & emotional learning among other important topics.

Dr. Cruz also congratulates Kazen Elementary faculty, staff, students and parents for being awarded a 2024 National Blue Ribbon School. Lastly Dr. Cruz, provides an update on the implementation of the "United Cares" program and congratulates the staff recognized for their dedication in creating a positive and supportive environment for students, staff and parents. In addition, he recognizes the Shipping and Receiving department for the long hours and hard work in the distribution of cases and cases of bottled waters provided to our campuses and departments. In closing, Dr. Cruz thanks all administrators, board members and management team on Boss's Day and recognizes their commitment and unwavering dedication to our district and community.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

A. Monthly Disbursements

B. Budget Amendments

C. End of Year Outstanding Encumbrances

D. Property Tax Refunds for the Month of September 2024

E. Awarding Bids, Proposals, Qualifications, and Extensions

F. Update Teacher Service Record Designees

On a motion moved by Aliza Oliveros and seconded by Francisco Castillo, the board passed motion with 4 votes for, 1 abstention by Javier Montemayor, and none against.

VII. Items for Individual Consideration

A. Approval of Donations

The following donations are over \$1,000.00 were received by the Athletics Department and will be used towards the 2024 UISD Golf Tournament:

- *A donation of \$2,000.00 by Bricks and Tile International
- *A donation of \$2,000.00 by Cavazos and Associates Architects, PLLC
- *A donation of \$2,000.00 by Texas Community Bank
- *A donation of \$1,000.00 by Solid IT Networks
- *A donation of \$1,000.00 Sunbelt Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Services

For a grand total of: \$8,000.00

On a motion so moved by Aliza Oliveros and seconded by Michelle Molina and Ramiro Veliz and unanimously passed.

B. Approval of Board Minutes for the month of August 2024

On a motion moved by Aliza Oliveros and seconded by Francisco Castillo, the board unanimously approved.

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

Mr. Mike Garza reads in additional requests:

- *A request by John B. Alexander HS, principal Elvira Gaona the amount of \$6,300.00, sponsored by Francisco Castillo for magnet students travel, meals lodging and transportation to attend 1 week internship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Tx.
- *A request by Freedom Elem., principal Stephanie Garcia, the amount of \$2,000.00, sponsored by Ramiro Veliz for Pre-K classroom equipment and teacher incentives.
- *A request by Salvador Garcia MS, principal Dr. Jonathan Martinez the amount of \$750.00, sponsored by Gilbert Aguilar, Jr. and will be used towards student incentives.
- *A request by Lyndon B. Johnson HS, principal Armando Salazar, the amount of \$900.00, sponsored by Gilbert Aguilar, Jr. to be used towards campus improvements and beautification.

*An amendment for a prior request for Lyndon B. Johnson HS. the amount of \$1,300.00 for TAFE, \$6,700.00 for Improvements, \$2,000.00 for attendance and \$3,000.00 for staff incentives.

On a motion by Aliza Oliveros and seconded by Ramiro Veliz, the board unanimously approved these requests.

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

The Board adjourns into closed session at 7:00 P.M. No action was taken.

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

1. Superintendent's Duties and Responsibilities

**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.

**C. TGC 551.071 Consultation with Board's Attorney; Closed Meeting
TGC 551.076 Deliberation regarding Security Devices or Security Audits**

1. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel regarding the District Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan

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

The Board reconvenes at 8:12 p.m. No action was taken during closed session.

A. 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.

It is recommended that the board allow legal counsel to proceed as discussed in closed session.

On a motion moved by Javier Montemayor, second by Michelle Molina, and unanimously approved to pass.

B. Possible action with respect to the District Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)

Mr. Mike Garza announces the Emergency Operations Plan, for the record.

With a motion moved by Javier Montemayor to take action on the District's Multi Hazard Emergency Operations Plan, second by Aliza Oliveros, and unanimously passed.

X. Adjournment

On a motion moved by Javier Montemayor and seconded by Aliza Oliveros, the board unanimously approved adjournment.

There being no further business to come before the UISD Board of Trustees, this Regular Board Meeting of October 16, 2024 was adjourned at **8:15 PM.**

Ramiro Veliz, Board President

Michelle Molina, Board Secretary

Annual Announcement on Continuing Education of Board Members

United ISD

November 2023 through October 2024 - Report run on 9/28/2024

NEW / EXPERIENCED TRUSTEES	Local District Orientation	Introduction to Texas Education Code	School Safety	Evaluating & Improving Outcomes	Post Legislative Update to TEC	Child Abuse Prevention	Team Building Session	Continuing Education	Completed Exceeded Incomplete
	(3 hours for new Trustees, within 1st 120 days)	(3 hours for new Trustees, within 1st 120 days)	(2 hour every 2 years for all trustees) (Within 1st 120 days for new trustees)	(3 hours every 2 years for all trustees) (Within 1st 120 days for new trustees)	(2 hours for experienced Trustees after each Legislative Session) (New Trustees - N/A)	((1 hour every 2 years) (Within 1st 120 days for new trustees)	(3 hours for all Trustees)	(10 hours for new trustees; 5 hours for experienced Trustees)	
Aliza Flores Oliveros	N/A	N/A	Complete	Complete	N/A	Complete	Complete	21.5 hrs	Exceeds
Francisco Castillo	N/A	N/A	Complete	Complete	N/A	Complete	Complete	28 hrs	Exceeds
Gilberto Aguilar	N/A	N/A	Complete	Complete	N/A	Complete	Complete	14.5 hrs	Exceeds
Javier Montemayor	N/A	N/A	Complete	Complete	N/A	Complete	Complete	20.5 hrs	Exceeds
Michelle Molina	N/A	N/A	Complete	Complete	N/A	Complete	Complete	11.5 hrs	Exceeds
Ramiro Veliz	N/A	N/A	Complete	Complete	N/A	Complete	Complete	7.5 hrs	Exceeds
Ricardo Rodriguez	N/A	N/A	Complete	Complete	N/A	Complete	Complete	6.5 hrs	Exceeds

(N) = New Trustee

School board members must complete training that is required by the State Board of Education (SBOE), and the board president must publicly announce whether each board member has met the SBOE training requirements. Board members must receive continuing education training in the areas reflected in this table, according to Tex. Educ. Code §11.159; 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1, 61.3.

The annual announcement does not cover open government and cybersecurity training required for trustees under other law. Tex. Gov't Code §§ 551.005, 552.012, and 2054.5191. OMA and PIA training is required of all elected officials within 90 days of election or appointment. PIA training may be delegated by district policy. Cybersecurity training is required of all school board members annually.



This report is provided as a TASB member service. Official recordkeeping of Board Member continuing education credit is the responsibility of the district.