

STATE OF TEXAS

(Minutes conducted via electronic voting)

COUNTY OF CAMERON

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the **23rd day of October 2023**, the Board of Trustees of the Brownsville Independent School District met in a **Special Called Board Meeting** at the Administration Building, 1900 Price Road, Brownsville, Texas, for the purpose of transacting any and all business that came before the Board and with the following to wit:

PRESENT:

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Jessica Gonzalez | President |
| Daniella Lopez Valdez | Vice-President |
| Denise Garza | Secretary |
| Carlos Elizondo | Member |
| Eddie Garcia | Member |
| Frank Ortiz | Member |
| Minerva Peña | Member |

ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Dr. Rene Gutierrez | Superintendent of Schools |
| Nick Maddox | Board Attorney |

ALSO ABSENT:

None

WHEREUPON, a quorum being present and it appearing before the Board, it is hereby so found that notice of this **Special Called Board Meeting** has been duly given in the manner and for the length of time as prescribed by law. The meeting was called to order and declared ready for the transaction of business with the following to wit:

- I. Special Called Board Meeting called to order by Jessica Gonzalez, Board President at 5:30 p.m.**
- II. Moment of Silence led by Dr. Rene Gutierrez, Superintendent of Schools.**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance led by Jessica Gonzalez, Board President.**
- IV. Roll Call: Jessica Gonzalez, Board President announced that all Board Members were present.**
- V. Recommend approving the agenda of the Special Called Board Meeting of Monday, October 23, 2023, with any corrections/deletions.**

Motion made by Jessica Gonzalez, seconded by Denise Garza, and unanimously carried to recommend approving the agenda of the Special Called Board Meeting of Monday, October 23, 2023, with no corrections/deletions as stated by administration. (7-0-0)

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ezequiel Zeke Silva - Mr. Silva stated, good afternoon Board Members, Ex Superintendent. I'm here to address you guys on the agenda that's on the item, you may need to terminate the employment of this superintendent today because he's already sought work somewhere else, its already put us in a bad light again because everybody now is talking about it around the valley. After you all voted to give him an extension and an outrageous salary, if the person is no longer happy then terminate him today, you don't need him to be picking up any more of our money, our resources. And when you do elect somebody as an interim, make sure that person loves Brownsville, loves our community, wants to get involved with our community, is willing to work with the teachers and is willing to work with vendors and with the outside community. Because I for one, know for a fact that when I reached out to him, many of times, to welcome him at first, as a state director, never once did he return my call, never once did he return the state director and we wanted to help this district, BISD with JET grants. And not once did we ever get a return call, we don't need somebody that's going to be kissing up to the majority, we need somebody that's going to be working with everybody. We don't need somebody that just come over here and look at BISD as a sucker and just to make money, to make a name for themselves, to go look for work somewhere else. Because I have not seen anything but controversy throughout the tenure of this superintendent. So, whoever you do get, make sure that person loves Brownsville, cares about Brownsville and has experience of being a superintendent, not just somebody that wants the position because they want to get that stepping stone and get that salary that goes with it. But somebody that cares, genuinely cares and has experience and not only has the experience, but is willing to put the time and effort to get involved in the community because that's why BISD is losing so many students because it starts from the top, it doesn't start from the bottom, it starts from the top. And if you are going to get somebody, get somebody that loves our community, understands our community, has experience in being a superintendent and is willing to teach and not just have a whole bunch of people that's going to tell them what to do but here to lead. So, I thank you guys for the opportunity, I welcome you guys to welcome the new superintendent that's going to be and terminate the one that's already here because they don't want to be here anymore, thank you.

Veronica Borrego – Ms. Borrego stated, good evening Dr. Gutierrez, Board President Gonzalez and Board members. My name is Veronica Borrego and I am the proud president of AOB, the Association of Brownsville Educators, the largest and longest serving association in BISD. This evening I am speaking on agenda item VII A, discussion of possible steps for superintendent search and interim superintendent selection. When you go in to discuss this item behind closed doors and away from the public eye, remember that this district does not belong to you and it does not belong to the superintendent. Board Members and superintendents are here today and gone tomorrow as evident by this discussion item and by election results. We all know Board positions are elected and should be the voice of their constituents, that's who this district really belongs to, it belongs to the voters, the students and the employees. It belongs to the voters because we pay taxes here, that's our money, we have our children enrolled here. It belongs to the students while they are in our buildings being educated because they deserve for us to give them a leader that will ensure they are being educated in environments that provide AC, are free of mold and termites and that they receive the best education there is to give by using all resources and funds to make that happen. It belongs to the employees, employees who give their lives to this district, who literally give, blood, sweat and tears for our students and

our district. I myself have given 18 years of my life and will give as many as the good Lord allows me to. We have members who have given 30 plus years to this district, so, yes, this district belongs to us. So, when you are discussing this item, remember that and make sure you choose someone who is truly invested in this community, in our culture, somebody who cares about our students, their families and the employees in this district. Dr. Gutierrez, I hope that through your experience here at this amazing district, you have learned that communication with all stakeholders and an open door are essential, I hope that you have learned that transparency is key, I hope that you take all the experiences, both good and bad and take all that you have learned from BISD, our staff and our community and do great things, I wish you well. Thank you for your time and attention and have a good evening.

Bea Maldonado – Ms. Maldonado stated, good evening Board President Gonzalez, Dr. Gutierrez and Members of the Board, my name is Bea Maldonado and I am a leader with BEST AFT, Brownsville Educators Stand Together and AFT, American Federation of Teachers. I'm also a Social Studies teacher at Homer Hanna High School, Early College. Tonight, I'm speaking on agenda item VII, BEST AFT would like the School Board to seek out and select a collaborative superintendent who is willing to work with the employees and who will work to ensure that our pay is on the top 25% of the valley for both certified and classified employees. To reduce the amount of paperwork, staff development and faculty meetings to a maximum of 2.5 hours per week and eliminate Saturday trainings. Teachers still take home their work, respect our time, reduce the amount of time on assessments and on benchmark tests to two, one in the fall one in the spring and check points to one every six weeks. Stop the duplication and redundancy of paperwork, the information is literally at everybody's fingers, fingertips. Follow student to staff ratio of 22 to 1 in Pre-K, 3 to 4th grade, this is the key to a quality education. Retain a quality teaching workforce and end the teacher turnover crisis, increase the recruitment of teachers in needed areas to include out of state recruitment. And ensure that our employees are not attacked at grievances by the Boards Superintendents attorney, we are all employees of the district and all employees should be held to the education code of ethics. We should not be belittled, attacked or lied about whom we file a grievance. Thank you for your time and have a best of the evenings.

Patrick Hammes – Mr. Hammes stated, good evening Board Chair, Chairwoman Gonzalez, Dr. Gutierrez, Members of the Board, Patrick Hammes, a leader with Brownsville Educators Stand Together, BEST and AFT, American Federation of Teachers, a union of professionals. Tonight, I'm speaking on agenda item VII A, BEST AFT is requesting to be an active participant in the selection of both the interim and the next full-time superintendent. Board Member Carlos Elizondo stated in this past Saturdays Brownsville Herald, he advocated in allowing and following input from teachers and staff in choosing the next superintendent. BEST AFT whole heartedly agrees. We have demonstrated over several years that we provide our members and you the Board, with information and data and we have continually shown that we are the union of professionals. We hope as you go back to deliberate your next steps, that you will all agree that employees should be part of the process and that BEST AFT is your best choice. Thank you for listening to the best union for BISD employees and have the best of evenings.

The Board may deliberate or take action regarding the following agenda items.

Board policy BE (Local) and Robert's Rules limits debate to two opportunities. A Trustee may debate a motion for three minutes on the first speaking opportunity and two minutes on the second opportunity.

VII. **CLOSED MEETING:** as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Sections: 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.082, and 551.084. 5:45 p.m.

A. Discussion of possible steps for Superintendent search and Interim Superintendent selection.

VIII. **BOARD RECONVENES - Board action on agenda items discussed in Executive Session. 6:51 p.m.**

A. Discussion of possible steps for Superintendent search and Interim Superintendent selection.

Motion made by Jessica Gonzalez, seconded by Denise Garza, and unanimously carried to recommend approval to appoint our law firm (O’Hanlon, Demerath & Castillo Attorneys at Law) for superintendent search at no additional expense to the district. (7-0-0)

Ms. Gonzalez asked, Mr. Maddox, can you explain the next steps to our community please? *Mr. Nick Maddox, Legal Counsel replied, yes madame President and first I would like to say thank you for the opportunity, it’s always a pleasure and an honor to serve Brownsville ISD in this capacity. So, the first thing we would like to do is for your interim, we would like to post, we will be posting early tomorrow morning, locally, for any local Brownsville applicants who would like to apply for the interim position. That will be closed Thursday at noon in time for our Thursday 5:30 p.m. anticipated meeting, we will also be bringing you some list of applicants outside of Brownsville so you have a selection of both local, community and outside the community. So, community out there, if you know anyone who would like to be interim, then please encourage them to apply. Be advised, though, that whatever interim the Board chooses, will not be eligible to apply for the permanent position of superintendent. That’s a local rule, it’s my understanding that’s the Boards wishes in this matter. I think it’s important, that way we have a clean slate going into our permanent position. A little bit about the process that we do as a law firm in terms of a search, we do believe in a wholistic approach and including your community in these matters as much as possible as they are the key stakeholders to our student’s education. We do involve town hall meetings in person and on zoom, the community will have opportunity to speak to Board Members about the type of superintendent and the type of qualifications they would like. We will be doing surveys, electronically, for both staff and for community members who wish to respond, that will be put before the Board. We will also present every single applicant before the Board without selecting or preselecting any applicants for you and then we will work with you every step of the way in order to whittle that list down to the individual who is going to serve Brownsville ISD. So, those are just a few of the ways that we involve the community and a few of the steps of the process, it’s a lengthy process, it will take several months to complete. It will involve several rounds of interviews, the interviews could potentially even involve some community members, depending on how we like to structure that. But its going to be a good process, I think it’s going to be a robust process and we are looking forward to serving you in this process. Ms. Gonzalez stated, thank you Mr. Maddox, I do appreciate the support in all of this.*

IX. **Announcement(s):**

Ms. Jessica Gonzalez, Board President stated, as a reminder, we do have a meeting already scheduled for Thursday at 5:30 here at CAB. Don’t forget, for the next two weeks, early voting is at the Board room, so, we will be here on Thursday, we do have a Special Called, thank you. We do have a Special Called meeting on Wednesday, that will be here, we are going to be here every day guys.

X. Adjournment.

Motion was made by Jessica Gonzalez, seconded by Daniella Lopez Valdez, and unanimously carried to approve to adjourn the Special Called Board Meeting at 6:55 P.M. (7-0-0)

➤ There being no further business appearing before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

(HANDOUTS ADDED TO OFFICIAL MINUTES)

(AUDIO/VIDEO TAPES OF THE OPEN MEETING AND THE WRITTEN CERTIFIED AGENDA OF THE CLOSED MEETING ARE ON FILE)

Approved by:

Jessica Gonzalez, President of the Board

Date

Attested by:

Denise Garza, Secretary of the Board

Date

Notes: Font style designation

Board of Trustees
Administration
Board Attorney
Staff Attorney
Speaker/Presenter

(Minutes presented at Rescheduled Board Meeting held on April 9, 2024)