

No. \_\_\_\_\_



# UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA ACTION ITEM

**TOPIC** Approval to Cast All UISD Trustee votes in favor of Maria Leal as TASB Director for

Region 1, Position B

**SUBMITTED BY:** Pat Campos and Francisco Gonzalez, Jr. **OF:** Board Members

**APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:** July 25, 2007

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the United ISD Board of Trustees Approve to Cast All UISD Trustee votes in favor of Maria G. Leal as TASB Director for Region 1, Position B

**RATIONALE:**

**BUDGETARY INFORMATION**

**BOARD POLICY REFERENCE AND COMPLIANCE**

## ENDORSEMENT FORM

Date 7-25-07

Katie N. Reed, Chair  
TASB Nominations Committee  
P. O. Box 400  
Austin, Texas 78767-0400

This form to be used to endorse a nominated individual from a BOARD within your TASB Region who has completed the June 30, 2006 requirements.

**Endorsements will only be accepted if acted on from JULY 3 to AUGUST 29. Must be received in the TASB Austin office on or before AUGUST 29, 2007**

Dear Ms. Reed:

Our school board endorses the candidacy of the following individual nominated to fill a position on the TASB Board of Directors.

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION

NAME: Maria G. Leal  
SCHOOL DISTRICT: South Texas ISD  
MAILING ADDRESS: 3703 N. Stewart Rd.  
CITY: Mission, TEXAS ZIP 78573

This endorsement was approved by our school district's board of trustees at a duly called meeting on 7-25-07  
(Date)

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(BOARD PRESIDENT)

NAME: John M. Bruce  
SCHOOL DISTRICT: United ISD  
MAILING ADDRESS: 201 Lindenwood Rd.  
CITY: Laredo, TEXAS ZIP 78045

**Must be received in the TASB Austin office on or before AUGUST 29, 2007**

**RETURN TO:  
TASB, Attn: Management Services  
P.O. Box 400, Austin, Texas 78767-0400  
or FAX (512) 467-3554**



Mrs. Maria G. Leal  
3703 N. Stewart Rd.  
Mission, Texas 78573

Phone: 956/585-6339

### **Business/Professional/Civic Group Memberships**

- 2005 to present** Federal Relations Network Member (Affiliated with the National School Boards Association)
- 2004- to present** Texas Association of School Boards  
Legislative Advisory Council
- 2005 to present** Texas Association of School Boards Director  
*Facilitator – School Board Candidate Workshop (2005 & 2007)*  
*Grassroots Meeting (2006)*  
*Region One Spring Conference New Board president's Round Table (2006)*  
*Resolutions Committee (2004-2005)*  
*By-Laws Committee (2004-2005)*  
*Legislative Committee (2005-2006)*  
*Membership Committee (2005-2006)*
- 2006 to Present** Mexican Association of School Boards (MASBA)  
*Secretary – Treasurer (2006)*  
*Vice President and President Elect (2007)*
- 2003** Mission Consolidated Independent School District Key Communicator  
Committee Member
- 2002 to Present** South Texas Independent School District Board Member  
*Finance Committee Co-Chair (2004 to present)*  
*Buildings & Grounds Committee Co-Chair (2003)*  
*Buildings & Grounds Committee Member (2002)*  
*Sub-Committee Member (2002)*  
*Liaison to Education Foundation Board (2003 to present)*  
*Strategic Planning Action Team Member*
- 2002 to Present** National School Boards Association Member  
**and again from 1994-98**
- 2002 to Present and again from 1994-98** Texas Association of School Boards Member  
*TASB Leadership Team (1997-98)*  
*Legislative Action Committee Member*

- 2002** Hidalgo County Sesquicentennial Board Member
- 2001-02** Mission Consolidated Independent School District Construction & Facilities Committee Member
- 2000 to Present** Catholic Daughters of America Member
- 1997 - Present** Mission Lions' Club Member
- 1997-98** Mission Historical Preservation Committee Member
- 1995-97** Mission Consolidated Independent School District Wellness Committee Member
- 1995-97** Valley Aids Council Board Member
- 1994-98** Mission Consolidated Independent School District Board Member  
*Bond Facility Committee (2000)*  
*Bond Facility Committee (1998)*  
*Board Insurance Committee (1995-98)*  
*President (1997-98)*  
*Vice-President (1996-97)*
- 1994-95** HOSTS Volunteer
- 1992-94** Pan American Roundtable  
*Associate Director (1992)*  
*Director (1994)*
- 1990-94** Rio Grande Valley Life Underwriters Association Member
- 1986** Mission Boys & Girls Club Board Member  
*Board Vice-President (1986)*  
*Steering Committee Member (1986)*
- 1983-84** Mission Adult Education Advisory Council Board Member  
*President (1984)*  
*Advisory Council President (1984)*
- 1976-80** Mission Band Booster Club Member  
*President (1980)*

### **Accomplishments/Recognitions**

- 2003** Texas Lions Foundation Fellow Award
- 1998** Friends of Special Education Award, Mission CISD Special Education Department
- 1997-98** TASB Leadership Graduate
- 1984** Steering Committee: Leadership Mission
- 1984** Charter Member/Graduate: Leadership Mission

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Date 7-25-07

Katie N. Reed, Chair  
TASB Nominations Committee  
P. O. Box 400  
Austin, Texas 78767-0400

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**Endorsements will only be accepted if acted on from JULY 3 to AUGUST 29. Must be received in the TASB Austin office on or before AUGUST 29, 2007**

Dear Ms. Reed:

Our school board endorses the candidacy of the following individual nominated to fill a position on the TASB Board of Directors.

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION

NAME:       Ruben Cortez, Jr.        
SCHOOL DISTRICT: Brownsville ISD  
MAILING ADDRESS:       1900 E. Price Rd., Room 307        
CITY:    Brownsville                   , TEXAS ZIP    78526   

This endorsement was approved by our school district's board of trustees at a duly called meeting on 7-25-07.  
(Date)

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(BOARD PRESIDENT)

NAME:    John M. Bruce                     
SCHOOL DISTRICT:    United ISD                     
MAILING ADDRESS:    201 Lindenwood Rd.                     
CITY:           Laredo                   , TEXAS ZIP    78045   

**Must be received in the TASB Austin office on or before AUGUST 29, 2007**

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3. **Service as a TASB Director is a very rewarding experience, but is a time consuming endeavor. Please address your commitment to serve as a Director.**

As an entrepreneur, I perhaps have more time to dedicate to TASB than most. I do not have a set time commitment in operating my business. I do, however, have a time commitment to my family and church. As a Director, I will be able to serve and commit the time necessary to carry out my duties to TASB.

4. **Please provide evidence of your leadership abilities.**

The Brownsville Independent School District (BISD) passed a \$135 million school bond in May 2006. This bond enables the district to utilize State Instructional Facilities Allotment Funds to construct 2 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school and several additions, renovations and upgrades. Brownsville received the largest share of IFA funds awarded in Region I in 2006. The timeframe to build these schools is rather short. I have worked hard to ensure that bond funds, entrusted to us by the voters, are expended in an efficient and prudent manner. I have vigorously participated in the process to purchase school sites and hire the best qualified architects and contractors. I have also worked diligently with our administration and community Bond Oversight Committee to ensure that every penny of this bond allocation provides maximum educational benefit to the children of our community. In fact, BISD was able to take nine years off repayment of the bonds, shortening the timeline from 30 to 21 years for a total savings of \$40 million.

Through my leadership, we are in the process of determining the true drop-out rate and additional programs to identify a student in stress before the drop-out process occurs. I prefer to compare ninth grade enrollment with twelfth grade enrollment as a starting point. A more accurate drop-out indicator is the difference in the two student populations.

An accurate drop-out rate combined with a multifaceted qualitative data approach is essential in correcting the problem. A student in stress must be identified in the early stages of the drop-out life cycle. This can be accomplished by putting into operation software that tracks student progress with a built-in stress notification mechanism. Counselors and administrators must be able to assess, at a glance, student and teacher performance and determine student stress levels and the cause. The end result is an individualized corrective course of action in the early stages of dropping out.

5. **What are some of the unique characteristics or perspectives you bring to the board if selected?**

I view problems as projects and opportunities. In addition, I feel it is essential to review population shifts within a community and the state and prepare a plan of action to meet the needs of a growing or declining student population, whichever the cause may be. I do not have a one size fits all mentality. We must continue to ascertain the educational needs in each community and help those communities tailor programs that best suit their students.

Educational needs are a moving target. As a TASB Director, I would like to see a program clearinghouse so superintendents and administrators can easily access successful programs in other parts of the state and see if they are applicable to their district. Communication is the key to success. It is not enough to hear about a successful initiative after the fact. Today's communication resources provide us with the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge through a vast communicative network. Our job at TASB is to provide our members with the tools to access data.

**6. Describe the characteristics of a good board member. What are at least three or four behaviors of a good board member?**

A good board member is a person who is understanding, creative, professional, puts the good of the board before their personal agenda, communicative, open-minded, open to new ideas, keeps a positive attitude, believes from their heart, mind and soul that education is the foundation for advancement, focuses on the needs of the individual student, accepts others for who they are, graciously accepts constructive criticism, accepts responsibility for their own actions, can objectively measure their own strengths and weaknesses and gives credit to others for a job well done.

I am doing well on many of the attributes listed above. I do realize my own shortcomings and will continue to work to improve my weaknesses into strengths.

**7. Use of technology is required of a TASB Director. What skills and knowledge do you possess in using technology? (Written responses only, other materials will not be considered.)**

Technology moves faster than most individuals. At 34, my era is one of technologically advances. Not only must we as board members be technological savvy, but we must understand that as good as we are, our children will always be better, smarter and more advanced.

Computer ease is a part of my everyday language; Email, E Conferencing, ipods, iphones, video chatting, e fax, MySpace, Facebook, You Tube, etc. I receive my email via my blackberry, send and receive, and I am always looking for new advances. I do understand that the youth of today prefer Firefox over Netscape and website platforms built for one does not cross platforms succinctly.

Software interfacing is a challenge and will remain a challenge. Blu-ray, the output for High Definition and HD, as mandated by the FCC, will become the rule rather than an option. Data security will always remain a threat as will viruses, worms, and our ability to filter. We are in the new technology experimental age and I am not sure that we will ever come out of it.



8. **Describe a critical or serious challenge that you have faced on your local school board and tell us how you helped solve it.**

Our district, like many in our nation, is faced with high dropout rates and inadequate graduation rates. Two district initiatives implemented in the last couple of years, the Brownsville Learning Academy (BLA) and the Brownsville Academic Center (BAC), have shown great promise in addressing students who have already dropped out or who are at-risk. However, more must be done. I have lobbied for earlier identification of students who are at risk and for the provision of a greater array of services designed to meet their academic and social needs. This includes working with district administration to expand programs like BLA and BAC into the earlier grades.

9. **Excluding public school finance, what do you think are top issues facing public education today?**

**Elaborate on why you think they are critical issues.**

Developing a drop-out life cycle profile: There are warning signs students exhibit during the drop-out life cycle. It is therefore our responsibility to study the drop-out issues from a quantified position, and also to identify and qualify the stress factors that lead up to drop-out. There are the obvious warning signs like absenteeism, and a drop in performance. But without real time monitoring, performance does not come into play until well after the fact. Performance monitoring acts as an early warning device so that students in stress can be identified and helped.

Creating a desire for Math Science: The United States continues to fall behind many other countries in math and science. We must find new ways to encourage, stimulate and bring math and science to the forefront of our educational system. I believe in student achievement recognition especially in math and science. In our educational environment, we look for proficiencies as the standard. Either our levels of proficiencies are set too low or our method of teaching must be reviewed. I have not studied the curriculums of other nations that excel in these areas, but I am willing to undertake such a task myself.

I do believe in the ideology of "No Child Left Behind," and I believe challenging our students to achieve more. No Child Left Behind sets the bar low. We must raise that bar and sell it to the public.


We live in the information age, yet we have many students that do not have access to the internet. This puts immediate stress on that student to perform at the same level of those with internet access. The answer lies in education wireless hotspots and computer access. School districts do not have the resources to put a computer in every student's hands, but by activating the business community and appealing to the community through advertising and public relations, we can go a long way to set up education hotspots and computer access. All we have to do is ask.

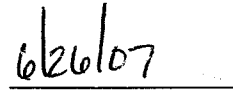
**10. Additional information.**

**What additional information would you like for us to know about you?**

As much as I am a realist, I am also an optimist. As I stated earlier, I do not see problems as problems, but rather as projects. Projects are stated in terms of opportunities and objectives, strategy and tactics and carry with them result oriented milestones and timetables. The resolution at hand to any problem may not be considered the "absolute best solution," but focusing in on a result oriented scenario creates a road map to a better way.

I believe in thinking outside the box and letting creative thought rule the day. We often confine ourselves to consider the status quo as the standard. We must not limit ourselves, our educational system, and reach for the extraordinary. We must convey to all children that they are allowed to excel.

  
Candidate Signature

  
Date