



UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA ACTION ITEM

TOPIC: Approval of Board Minutes for the month of October 2023

SUBMITTED BY: Griselda Rodriguez **OF:** Secretary to Superintendent

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD: _____

DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: December 13, 2023

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 October 2023.

Special Called Meeting – October 10, 2023
Regular Board Meeting – October 18, 2023

United Independent School District
Student Activity Complex / 5208 Santa Claudia Lane / Laredo, Texas 78045

Special Called Meeting of the Board of Trustees
October 10, 2023
6:00 P.M.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Ramiro Veliz, Gilbert Aguilar, Aliza Oliveros, Francisco Castillo,
Javier Montemayor, Ricardo Rodriguez, Michelle Molina (remotely)

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Garza, Emma Leza, Laida Benavides, David Canales, Rebecca
Morales, Susan Carlson, Cordy Jackson, Adriana Ramirez, Melissa
Ramirez, Mary Arambula-Ruiz

I. Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Ramiro Veliz at 6:01 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. Public Comments:

Comments shall be limited to current Board agenda items, student recognitions, or charitable causes. 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.

Leticia Juarez: After greeting the board and the audience Ms. Juarez states that she is here to speak on the proposed termination of Mr. Gonzalez, but clarifies she is not here to speak on superintendent Gonzalez's behalf. Rather Ms. Juarez addressed the matter that the board was aware of the previous sexual harassment allegations and an investigation was conducted. She says she believes that the standards that

the board will probably use to terminate the superintendent's contract as a just cause, will be that he has failed to meet the district standards of professional conduct.

She presses the board that they too have ethical standards to abide by. One of which is "that they should promote the best interest of the district as a whole", she said. Ms. Juarez states that it seems that Mrs. Molina did not abide by these standards when motioning against holding a special election for district one but rather to appoint a member. Ms. Juarez calls this voter fraud and calls out other members of the board for voting in favor of not holding that special election. She said that by doing so, "the board denied the voting rights to the district one residents". Ms. Juarez also makes a request, that if the board terminates Mr. Gonzalez's contract, that the taxpayers have a right to know the total cost of attorney fees, severance pay and the fee from TEA (if any), and the district should disclose this information.

Lastly, it was brought to her attention that a high ranking employee made use of the Sam's district credit card for personal use and that she will submit this information to the proper authorities.

Jose Ovando: After greeting the board, Mr. Jose Ovando reads out that "a teleconference call may be held only if, there is an emergency or public necessity and it is difficult or impossible to convene a quorum of the board at one location, 551.125b" and is of the opinion that Mrs. Michelle Molina should not be attending this meeting and further asks the board to adhere to these rules.

Regarding superintendent Gonzalez; he says that he thinks the district has already spent a lot of money. Further he said, he heard that (inaudible) was kicked out of court the same day. (Inaudible), "are you going to follow the rules with him too, or not?", questioned Mr. Ovando. He says that the district has spent \$50 M, and lost \$20 M and now the district wants to retain a third party law firm for potential termination proceedings. He asks the board to just provide information on any wrongdoing, "just come out and show the proof", he said.

Legal Counsel: Addresses the board and audience to state that for the record, Texas Government Code 551.127, does allow video conference in the statute referenced for telephone calls. "So, Mrs. Molina is allowed to be in this meeting as long as we have a quorum present, at this location" states Mr. Trautmann.

Jose Ovando (returning to the podium), says that although he understands what the attorney is saying, the law is pretty clear on this. In a belligerent tone, he says the board does not need the attorney to clarify for them and that Mrs. Molina should not be present.

Legal Counsel states that they are confident in their legal decision and also states for the record that Mr. Castillo was present at 6:03 p.m.

David Perez (president of the Classroom Teachers Association, teacher at UHS, parent and taxpayer: After greeting the audience, to speak on the status of the superintendent. He says that employees, parents and taxpayers have been waiting on the results of the investigation. Mr. Perez expresses concern that the board has been under public scrutiny and that they should render a fair decision regarding this matter. Should the board decide to reinstate the superintendent, then this matter should be left in the past but should they choose to do otherwise, then the board must proceed in a manner that restores the public's trust by hiring outside legal counsel to search for a new leader. "If the board is fair and transparent in their selection process, then maybe there will be some restoration of the public's confidence," said Mr. Perez.

Dolores Medrano (taxpayer and constituent): Ms. Medrano expresses concern regarding the superintendent's status. Her thoughts are that the board is acting recklessly and irresponsibly with taxpayer money (inaudible). Ms. Medrano also expresses concern of a candidate (meaning candidate for superintendent), that the candidate is not an educator. She says the board rarely speaks about student education.

Clarisa Fraga (concerned parent, educator and student advocate): Addresses the educators standards of conduct and educator code of ethics and quotes some of the standards. Ms. Fraga claims she has been threatened before, simply for speaking as a parent, and feels that her employment is constantly being threatened. She makes the board aware that she has spoken to several USD administrators and has told them to simply "fire me".

Edna Olmeda (teacher): After greeting the audience: Says she is here to speak in support of superintendent Gonzalez. Ms. Olmeda begins by addressing the meeting setup. "I feel like I am here for court before you all, and you all are the judges and I am the criminal", stated Ms. Olmeda. She is of the opinion that the board needs to be more approachable. That the harassment going on has got to stop and reminds the board of the oath they took. "Why is this going on?", she asks.

Ms. Olmeda continues her comment reminding the board that going back eleven years (as was the investigation of alleged sexual harassment), other people should also not be here due to allegations of miss conduct including a board member, chief of police and principals and administration. (Ms. Olmeda is reminded that her 3 minutes are over.) She claims her support for superintendent Gonzalez and says that he was bringing change that the board did not agree with and reminded them that the people voted them in and will vote them out.

Melissa Castro (English teacher at LBJ & an instructor at TAMIU): To speak on the proposed termination of superintendent Gonzalez. Says she encourages the board to base their decision on objective facts, rather than subjective personal relationships. Ms. Castro states that she does not know exact details but has heard the "local talk" about circumstances that are concerning. She is hopeful for a smooth outcome and most of all beneficial for all employees of the district. "God be with you all in putting this matter to rest", said Ms. Castro and she thanked the board for their time.

No further comments.

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

A. Parent & Family Engagement Policy

Adriana Ramirez presents on the updates for the 2023 - 2024 policy and that input is taken from the committee which convenes to review and update such.

B. Monthly Parenting and Community Sessions for Fall 2023 presented by Federal & State Programs, Guidance & Counseling, and Special Education

Adriana Ramirez, Melissa Ramirez and each present on the Community Sessions and where to seek help on mental health, parental engagement, safety and special services, mostly for parent awareness. Ms. Adriana Ramirez informs/invites the community of the Parent Learning Summit on November 11th.

Javier Montemayor inquires as to whether the district is looking into students being sent to STEP and to include any sessions on Vaping.

Michelle Molina inquires if a remote link will be available for parent sessions for parents who cannot attend in person.

Melissa Ramirez replies that there is no link but that the sessions will be recorded and available on the district website.

V. Listed below are items for discussion only with recommendations for action to be made at the next Regular Board Meeting:

A. Discussion regarding Monthly Disbursements

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Sam Flores presents on the Monthly Disbursements.

B. Approval of the End of Year Outstanding Encumbrances

Sam Flores provides the outstanding encumbrances that were not received on time and informs the board that these balances will have an impact on the new budget and provides an update on the status of the order for new buses.

Michelle Molina inquires about when the buses are expected.

Sam Flores says he will find the information and send it to the board via Friday packet.

Cordy Jackson chimes in to inform the board that at the time of solicitation they were given a time frame of about a year.

Sam Flores continues to present and address board concerns.

C. Approval of Awarding Bids, Proposals and Qualifications, and Extensions

Cordy Jackson presents the RFP's and notes that they have 3 renewals for consideration.

D. 2022-2023 Bilingual Department Annual Program Evaluation

Maria Arambula-Ruiz presents on the annual progress of emergent Bilingual students and compares scores to that of regular student population. She informs the board that the District will

be recognized at the Summit K-12 for being the Top ESL District in the Region. “All this means is that our bilingual students are being successful here at United ISD” said Ms. Arambula-Ruiz. (See presentation attached).

E. Requests from Board Members in re: Use of Board Discretionary Funds for various projects/campuses

No additional requests at this time.

VI. Closed Session: The Board will adjourn into closed session pursuant to the following sections Of the Texas Open Meetings Act.

The board adjourns into closed session at **6:51 p.m.**

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

- 1. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel and third-party law firm Schuman, Lopez, Hoffer & Adelstein, LLP, to receive update and findings of DIA (Local) Harassment Investigation related to Superintendent David Gonzazlez, and matters incident thereto**
- 2. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel, regarding review of possible options for employment action related to employment contract with Superintendent David Gonzalez, and matters incident thereto**

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

The board reconvenes from closed session at **9:38 p.m.**

A. Discussion and possible action regarding employment status of Superintendent David Gonzalez, including but not limited to adoption of reasons for proposed termination of Superintendent David Gonzalez’ employment contract, authorization to Board President to send notice of same, and retention of third-party law firm as Board counsel for potential Chapter 21 termination proceedings

On a motion by Ramiro Veliz, to propose the termination of superintendent David Gonzalez’s employment contract for “good cause” according to the Texas Education Code Section 21.211 and sections 36 and 39 of Mr. Gonzalez’s employment contract, to adopt the reasons for proposed termination as discussed in closed session, to authorize the Board President to send notice of same to Mr. Gonzalez, and to retain the law firm of Thompson

and Horton LLP as Board counsel for a potential Education Code Subchapter F termination proceeding in the event Mr. Gonzalez appeals the proposed termination of his employment contract, motion seconded by Gilbert Aguilar and passes on a vote of 6-Yeas, 1-Nea.

B. Discussion and possible action regarding duties and responsibilities of Administrator(s)-in-Charge

The recommendation is to keep the Administrator(s)-in-Charge as is, as discussed in closed session and until further board action.

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

VI. Adjournment

With a motion made by Aliza Oliveros, seconded by Francisco Castillo and Michelle Molina and unanimously passed, this meeting was adjourned.

There being no further business of the UISD Board of Trustees this Special Called meeting was adjourned at **9:40 P.M.**

Ramiro Veliz, III
Board President

Michelle Molina
Board Secretary

These board minutes were completed by Griselda Rodriguez, secretary and presented for approval at the December 2023 Regular Board Meeting.

Approved 12/13/2023

UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bill Johnson Student Activity Complex Auditorium / 5208 Santa Claudia Lane / Laredo, TX. 78043

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

6:00 P.M.

TRUSTEE PRESENT: Aliza Oliveros, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar,
Francisco Castillo

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Garza, Laida Benavides, Rebecca Morales, David Canales, Emma
Leza, Hector Perez, Sam Flores, Susan Carlson, Enrique Rangel, Marta
Stahl, Cordy Jackson, Manuel Menchaca, Adriana Ramirez,
Karina Mendoza, Bobby Cruz, Cynthia Rodriguez, Melissa Cruz

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

Aliza Oliveros, board president calls this meeting to order at **6:33 pm**

II. Pledge of Allegiance

A. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United State of America and to the Republic for which it stands one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all.

III. Recognitions:

A. COL. SANTOS BENAVIDES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LAREDO AND WEBB COUNTY FIRST INTERNATIONAL MODEL

B. LYNDON B. JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL - PAWS OF JOHNSON

C. NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARS SEMI-FINALISTS

***UNITED HIGH SCHOOL**

***JOHN B. ALEXANDER HIGH SCHOOL**

D. LAREDO INTERNATIONAL FAIR AND EXPOSITION (L.I.F.E.) - LAREDO FAIR AWARDS

***JOHN B. ALEXANDER**
***UNITED SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL**

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.

Patricia Gonzalez: Speaking on behalf of her husband, superintendent Gonzalez. Mrs. Gonzalez argues the point of sexual harassment allegations by reminded the board of the outcome in 2011. "There was no evidence to corroborate the allegations", said Mrs. Gonzalez. She goes on to state for the record, that the most recent investigation has also been concluded and that the board chose to propose termination for the superintendent. Mrs. Gonzalez further states that they received a letter informing them that the results were that the third-party law firm found no evidence to disturb the 2011 decision.

Carlos Carranco: Speaks on the character of superintendent Gonzalez. Mr. Carranco briefly elaborates that he has known Mr. Gonzalez for a very long time (since 1990) and has worked alongside of him and has never seen a side of him other than outstanding. "I am here to show my support, love and confidence in Mr. Gonzalez", said Mr. Carranco.

Leticia Juarez: After greeting the audience, Ms. Letty Juarez is here to speak on fiscal Transparency and uses the disinfecting case as an example and refers to statements made about the lack of custodial staff available, security guards etc. Ms. Juarez argues the point of why the district had to pay out to the disinfecting company and insinuated that district staff were "enabling him". Ms. Juarez asks the board to request an audit be conducted for transparency.

Jose Ovando: Mr. Ovando speaks on the duties and responsibilities of the administrators in charge. After greeting the audience, Mr. Jose Ovando informs the board members that "they" receive a lot of "private information" constantly, and that they forward this information to the proper authorities. Mr. Ovando is referring to a grievance regarding an illegal creation of a K-9 supervisor position. "I hope that you judge this case with the same ethics and morals as done with Mr. Gonzalez"? Mr.

Ovando asked with sarcasm. He states other cases related to UISD's Police Department and asks the board to bring back superintendent Gonzalez.

Daniel Martinez: To speak on the issue of transportation and thanks board member Castillo for being involved. Ms. Martinez says that parents are upset at the fact that the bus arrives either too early or very late and that the bus is too crowded (3/seat). The parents request is to bus students from Borchers elementary to Herrera middle school arguing that the route is a high traffic area and urges the board to take action.

Elsa Jasso: Speaks on support of Mr. and Mrs. Gonzalez and scolds the board for taking action to propose termination of the superintendent's contract. Ms. Jasso also comments on the administrators in charge and said "they do not care". Ms. Jasso expresses her disagreement with the board and the administration and says she is very disappointed.

End of Public Comments.

VII. Consent Agenda Items:

A. Monthly Disbursements

B. End of Year Outstanding Encumbrances

C. Awarding Bids, Proposals, Qualifications and Extensions

D. 2022-2023 Bilingual Department Annual Program Evaluation

With a motion by Michelle Molina to approve items A-D as presented and seconded by Francisco Castillo, this motion is passed unanimously.

VIII. Items for Individual Consideration:

A. Approval of Donations

It is recommended that the UISD Board graciously accept the following donations which will be attached to the minutes:

*A donation for Clark Elementary, in the amount of \$1,500.00 for the Dance Team

*The following donations are towards the 2023-24 Golf Tournament:

Imperial Bag and Paper Co. LLC - \$1,000.00

Limitless Learning Education - \$1,500.00

Trautmann & Garcia - \$3,000.00

Joe R. Sanchez Jr. & Cynthia Sanchez - \$1,000.00

Laredo Azure Hotel Management Co. - \$2,000.00

Christian Cabello Pediatric Dentistry PLLC - \$3,000.00
Bricks N Tile International - \$2,000.00
Cavazos and Associates Architects PLLC - \$2,000.00
Laurel Insurance Agency & Associates - \$1,000.00
RC Food Services and Produce Inc. - \$1,000.00
Forde Ferrier Educational Svcs. - \$1,000.00
KCI Technologies Incorporated - \$2,000.00

*The following are donations under \$1,000.00:

Sub Belt Air Conditioning - \$500.00
Humberto Zapata III - \$100.00

For a Grand Total of \$22,600.00

On a motion by Francisco Castillo and seconded by Michelle Molina the board approves unanimously to accept these donations.

B. Approval of Board Minutes for the months of August and September 2023

On a motion by Michelle Molina and seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, this motion is unanimously passed.

C. Discussion and possible action to approve the retirement of United Independent School District Police K-9's "Kyra and Xanti" and to authorize the transfer of ownership of K-9's "Kyra and Xanti" to Ben Bondoc

With a motion made by Aliza Oliveros and seconded by Michelle Molina, the board discusses; Aliza Oliveros asks if indeed it is customary for other law enforcement entities to do the same and that this would not be unusual.

Mike Garza agrees and says that the district has done this in the past.

Legal council chimes in quoting Chapter 614 of the government code, allowing such action to occur.

Michelle Molina inquires about the length period that these K-9's have been with their handlers.

Aliza Oliveros states that as a dog lover, she feels that it would be right for the dogs to be with the person they are familiar with.

Francisco Castillo inquires on whether or not Mr. Bondoc has any business relationship with the district at this time. To which the answer was no.

On a motion by Aliz Oliveros and seconded by Michelle Molina, the board unanimously passes this motion.

D. Discussion and possible action to approve the retirement of United Independent School District Police K-9 “Sony” and to authorize transfer of ownership of K-9 “Sony” to Sandra Carmona

On a motion made by Michelle Molina, seconded by Francisco Castillo for discussion:

Mr. Castillo again inquires about the Handler Ms. Carmona having any business relationship with the district?

Mike Garza replies, this is the same case except Ms. Carmona is currently employed with UISD.

Motion passes unanimously.

E. Discussion and possible action to approve a resolution regarding whether to adopt a policy authorizing a campus of UISD to employ or accept as a volunteer a chaplain under Chapter 23 of the Texas Education Code, due to requirements of Senate Bill 763 that Board action must be taken by March 1, 2024

The recommendation is not to proceed with the resolution. On a motion moved by Michelle Molina and seconded by Aliza Oliveros and after discussion the board does not pass the motion.

Michelle Molina now makes a motion to table this item. Seconded by Francisco Castillo and unanimously approved. Motion is tabled.

F. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Requests from Board Members in regards to the Use of Board Discretionary Funds for various projects/campuses

Mike Garza reads three additional requests:

*From Kennedy Zapata, sponsored by Mr. Aguilar the amount of \$3,930.58 for busses for student out of town trips, printers and student/staff recognitions.

*Salvador Garcia Middle School, a total of \$4,580.70 sponsored by Gilbert Aguilar for student gym equipment

*Juarez Lincoln Elementary in the amount of \$200.00 for student incentives sponsored by Gilbert Aguilar

With a motion made by Francisco Castillo and seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, this motion is unanimously approved.

IX. 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 7:09 p.m.

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

- 1. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel, regarding Duties and Responsibilities of Administrators in Charge**

**B. TGC 551.071 Consultation with Board’s Arroney; 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”) 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, Pages 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**

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

The board reconvenes at **8:27 p.m.**

- A. Possible action with respect to the lawsuit filed by Potential Holdings, LLC against the United Independent School District (“UISD”) regarding the UISD Student Activity Complex / Educational Support Center Plat filed of record in Volume 21, Pages 43-44 of 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**

The recommendation is to authorize legal counsel to proceed as discussed in closed session. On a motion by Michelle Molina and seconded by Francisco Castillo, this motion is unanimously passed.

XI. Adjournment

With a motion to adjourn moved by Michelle Molina, and seconded by Francisco Castillo this motion was passed.

There being no further business of the UISD Board of Trustees, this Regular Board meeting on October 18, 2023 is adjourned **8:29 p.m.**

Ramiro Veliz, Board President

Michelle Molina, Board Secretary

These board minutes were completed by Griselda Rodriguez, secretary and will be brought up for approval at the next regular board meeting.

Approved on 12/13/2023