

UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

MINUTES – REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: *Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez. Dianelle Martinez arrived at approximately 6:18 PM and Aliza F. Oliveros arrived at approximately 6:32 PM*

DISTRICT STAFF: *Dr. Gerardo Cruz, Rebecca Morales, David Canales, Laida Benavidez, Mike Garza, Rosa Cabello*

AGENDA ITEM 1: Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Call to Order

Board President calls roll. Quorum is established at 6:00 PM

AGENDA ITEM 2:

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/HONOR THE TEXAS FLAG

AGENDA ITEM 3: Recognitions

- A. United ISD MVP Parents
- B. United High School Larriettes Dance Team
 - MA Nationals
- C. J. B. Alexander High School Boys Soccer
 - District 30-6A Co-Champions
- D. J. B. Alexander High School Girls Golf
 - District 30-6A Champions
 - Regional Qualifier
- E. United South High School Power Lifting
 - THSPA State Qualifier

AGENDA ITEM 4: Public Comments

WAYO DE LA GARZA: Mr. de la Garza spoke on school consolidations, he implored a sound decision be made for the students and employees who go above and beyond for United ISD. Mr. de la Garza stated that although he agrees with school consolidation he thinks that mid and upper management positions should be consolidated instead.

SERGIO RAMIREZ: Mr. Ramirez stated that the consolidation of Matias de Llano is an emotional and rash decision. He stated that the district needs to present Board Members with other options and that they need to prioritize the educational needs of UISD students and minimize all of the extra “wants” for the meantime. He also mentioned that there was no valid reason for the selection of Matias de Llano since it isn’t the school with the lowest enrollment or the school with the lowest ten-year projected enrollment or even the school that would save the district the most money in the next five years. Mr. Ramirez suggests that the Board be presented with more alternatives that may have not been previously provided and to adopt a fiscally conservative budget for the 2026 – 2027 school year.

DAISY GOMEZ: Ms. Gomez spoke on the school consolidations, she is a parent at Finely Elementary School. Ms. Gomez started her public comment by asking the Board if they are honoring the foundation of the district or walking away from it while making this decision. Ms. Gomez additionally spoke about Joe Finley Jr., a founding United ISD Trustee who served the district for over 30 years. In 1961 alongside Mrs. Amparo Gutierrez and Mr. John Arnt, Mr. Finley led the consolidation of three districts which led to United ISD. She stated that they consolidated school districts, not schools. Ms. Gomez asked the Board if they would honor the Big Three Legacy or turn away from it. Lastly, she mentioned that once a school like Finley closes, it not just closing a building, it is losing a piece of the district that cannot be rebuilt.

DERRICK GARZA: Mr. Garza is a student at Kennedy-Zapata Elementary, he spoke on school consolidation. Mr. Garza asked the Board why they (students) had to face the consequences for the decisions that the Board made. He also stated that the staff at Kennedy-Zapata are like family because they are helpful to the students and they are nice and motivational. Finally, he asked not to close Kennedy-Zapata Elementary.

Maria del Carmen Garza: Ms. Garza spoke on the consolidation of Kennedy-Zapata Elementary. Ms. Garza began by saying that parents feel let down by the district because of all the back and forth with changes. She stated that she watched the Superintendent’s Podcast and realized that Kennedy-Zapata was back on the list of consolidations. Ms. Garza asked why other things like cutting high salaries aren’t considered before closing schools. She went on to say that students shouldn’t be held responsible for the district’s mismanagement and that if the district continues it’s plan to close down Kennedy – Zapata, the parents of El Cenizo will have no other choice but to withdraw their children from UISD and proceed with Homeschool. Ms. Garza stated that the student’s future is in the Boards hands, and asked them to vote no on school consolidations.

Jessica Lopez: Ms. Lopez spoke about school consolidations. Ms. Lopez is a parent at Kennedy – Zapata, she mentioned that parents at the school are very confused. She stated that after watching the Superintendent’s Podcast, they realized that Kennedy – Zapata was back on the list after it has been removed. Ms. Lopez said that instead of closing schools, the district should consider cutting high paying salaries such as the one for the Superintendent and the ones for district administrators. She continued to say that UISD already has a lot of problems with transportation at El Cenizo and for parents to have to fully depend on that type of transportation is not a good idea.

Edna Olmeda: Ms. Olmeda spoke on the retirement of schools. She said that the board would be making one the most important decisions that could affect the lives of some of the students, students who the board members swore to protect and advocate for. The decision would also affect the student’s parents, the same parents who entrusted their children to you (board members) and perhaps voted for you to bring positive changes to the district. Ms. Olmeda also mentioned that the board is also voting to take away stipends, contract days, wellness days, and even considering

lowering the district's insurance contribution which will place a heavier financial burden on teachers and staff. She mentioned Mrs. Oliveros once said that she had acquired a thick skin for making difficult decisions and asked her to make the one to cut at the top until the Board figures out what to do. Ms. Olmeda added that the elephant in the room which is payroll must be addressed and taken out. She stated that payroll makes up about 83% of the budget and added that Ms. Molina said that the district has luxury campuses but failed to say that it also has luxury salaries. Ms. Olmeda concluded by asking the board to think about their decision tonight.

ERICA RENDON: Ms. Rendon read a statement on behalf of her colleague who was not able to attend the Board Meeting. The statement mentioned that school closures are being presented as the only option available, yet the district is lacking sacrificial leadership with a readiness to endure personal hardship and relinquish personal advantages such as salaries to foster a sustainable high trust environment. It also mentioned that herself and other advocates had been addressing the wasteful spending and mismanagement of funds for years. The warnings and concerns that were brought up were dismissed then and today we are all being asked to pay for that lack of action. The statement also asked how many administrative roles are absolutely necessary and how many could be consolidated, restructured or eliminated and what the district plans to do to retain and recruit better enrollment.

FELIPE J. RODRIGUEZ: Mr. Rodriguez spoke on the discussion with legal regarding the probationary contract classroom teacher at the conclusion of the 2025 – 2026 school year. Mr. Rodriguez is an English teacher at John B. Alexander High School. Mr. Rodriguez began by stating that the board would vote tonight on school consolidation and to terminate his contract. He stated that although the reasons for his proposed termination were brought up to the Board, his many attempts to reach a compromise with campus administration were not. Mr. Rodriguez mentioned that a lot of it stemmed from pedagogical differences, differences about ways to enhance and deliver the curriculum. He states that all he did was supplement the curriculum just as plenty of other teachers do. He also mentions that he was willing to look past harassment from school resource officers, from being asked to withdraw grievances, and from past lame attempts to defame him by placing him on administrative leave as retaliation for refusal to resign. Mr. Rodriguez said he wouldn't go into further detail and said that his only interest was to enhance the education he offers to further everyone's interest, to give children a better chance at a future. He stated that he wanted to teach students the value of literature from a different perspective than they are used to, but now the lesson has become what happens when you go against the grain. Mr. Rodriguez persisted against these hostilities to show students that not every adult is a coward. Finally, he said that he wants to keep teaching and to strive to do it well.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Informational Items

A. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cruz stated that as the District celebrates student's and staff's hard work with STAAR assessments underway, it must also confront the financial realities shaping the District's future. A combination of declining enrollment and stagnant state funding has created a structural imbalance that requires decisive action.

The Superintendent mentioned that a recommendation to consolidate two elementary campuses is on this evening's agenda. The District understands that schools are the heart of their neighborhoods. However, he states that maintaining under-utilized facilities is no longer sustainable. Consolidation is only one part of a broader, strategic financial plan as the District

has already implemented several cost-saving measures. Such as, early-exit incentives to employees, reducing operational expenses, and freezing hiring for non-essential positions.

Additionally, he stated that these decisions are difficult, especially during STAAR testing preparations, but they are necessary in order to safeguard the long-time stability of the District.

Lastly, Dr. Cruz said that despite the obstacles, United ISD will pull through. The District's history is defined by resilience, community strength, and an unwavering commitment to students. Together, the District will overcome this moment and emerge stronger, more efficient, and better prepared to serve every student who walks through its doors.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Consent Agenda

- A. Monthly Disbursements
- B. Awarding Bids, Proposals, Qualifications, and Extensions
- C. Resolution of the Board of Trustees of United Independent School District Regarding School Bus Seat Belt Requirements
- D. Low Attendance Day Waiver for United High School and United South High School
- E. First and final reading of UISD Board Policy DEC (Local)

Legal Counsel stated that Board Policy DEC (Local) needed a slight change in the language and advised the Board that David Canales would explain the reason for it.

David Canales explained that since there is a handful of retirees that will not qualify if the Board enacts it today. We are asking if it is approved today with the idea that it will begin July the 1st of 2026. By doing this we can capture those two or three people that just recently submitted their retirement.

Dianelle Martinez asked Mr. Canales if this was for the exit incentive and he clarified that this was for the accumulation, where they can buy back their days. To make sure that we don't penalize them for this new policy since there is still a few months left in the current employment year.

Jaime Garcia from Legal Counsel advised that the revisions will be made in consultation with him and it will still be first and final reading.

Dianelle Martinez clarifies that this is different than the exit incentive and David Canales agrees and mentioned that it is the benefit that the district had for employees for years.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda items A-E made by Gilbert Aguilar, second by Aliza F. Oliveros

Discussion by Dianelle Martinez on agenda items A and C

Dianelle Martinez questioned an expense by the Department of Communications for BH Photo. Rosa Cabello explained that it is for paper for printed photos for district wide events.

Mrs. Martinez also questioned one for Loading Business and Laredo Morning Times. Rebecca Morales explained by saying that it is called Loading and it is the provider for maintenance and supplies for printing. The Laredo Morning Times was for an ad for Law Enforcement Week and for Board Recognition. Mrs. Martinez questioned the expense for entertainment as well to which Mrs. Morales explained that it was for the League of Legends event. She also mentioned that the district collected over \$18,000 in revenue for that event so none of it came from the district's General Fund.

Lastly, Mrs. Martinez asked if the fee for legal counsel was broken down for several months or if it was just for the month of February. Rosa Cabello explained that it was their monthly fees for February.

For Agenda Item C Dianelle Martinez asked for clarification on the resolution. Mike Garza explained to Mrs. Martinez that any new busses that are purchased are required to have seat belts, therefore the district's new busses do have seat belts. Mrs. Martinez asked Mr. Garza if the district would be applying for any available grants. Mr. Garza explained that the reason that this data is being gathered is to hopefully have the state provide funding for this in the future. Additionally, he mentioned that this is a resolution that the State has allowed for every school district in lieu of purchasing new buses.

In favor: All 7

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

AGENDA ITEM 7: Items for Individual Consideration

A. Discussion and possible action regarding the retirement of Matias De Llano Elementary and corresponding boundary adjustments for Borchers Elementary, Colonel Santos Benavides Elementary, Malakoff Elementary, and Trautmann Elementary as recommended by the District's Administration

Motion for purpose of discussion made by Aliza F. Oliveros, second by Ramiro Veliz

Discussion by Dianelle Martinez

Mrs. Martinez referenced a previous presentation where it said that an estimated \$2 million would be saved in payroll and benefits for Matias de Llano Elementary, but in the last Weekly Update the Board was provided with information that only 1 position is retiring from Matias de Llano. Dr. Gerardo Cruz explained that this saving would be through reduction of force through attrition. As a campus is consolidated, other campuses will absorb those teachers and those teachers who are not vacancies will be transferred to other positions. Instead of hiring, the district is transferring the position therefor that position is taken off the budget. Mrs. Martinez also mentioned that she noticed that there are 3 employees that still don't have a position to transfer to, to which David Canales explained that since it is still early, more employees would be turning in their retirements and those employees from Matias de Llano will have a position to go to. Lastly Mrs. Martinez stated that if the district would start diving into payroll, there would not be a need to close down campuses this year.

In favor: 6 – Ramiro Veliz, Aliza F. Oliveros, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar, Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: 1- Dianelle Martinez

Motion Passes with a 6 to 1 vote.

B. Discussion and possible action regarding the retirement of Amparo Gutierrez Elementary and corresponding boundary adjustments for Clark Elementary, Newman Elementary, and Nye Elementary as recommended by the District's Administration

The recommendation by Dr. Gerardo Cruz is to retire Amparo Gutierrez Elementary due to declining enrollment and the districts analysis indicates a cost saving of approximately \$2 million through attrition and ensuring that we have good stability moving forward and ensuring that we are good stewards and finances and that we have a sound deficit in the coming years. Dr. Cruz mentions that this consolidation also includes other cost saving measures that will be presented and shared with the public. At this time, the Superintendent has a strong recommendation to retire Amparo Gutierrez Elementary.

Motion for discussion for approval made by Gilbert Aguilar, second by Ramiro Veliz

Discussion by Aliza F. Oliveros

Mrs. Oliveros states that she was a parent at Amparo Gutierrez for over twelve years and that her heart is with the school. She added that it is a difficult decision to make and that it hasn't been made solely by this Board. It has been made off of the guidance given to us by many facets, including the public's input. Mrs. Oliveros said that she had one last question. She asked if the development of the apartments that are going up by the Embassy Suites had been studied. Dr. Cruz said that it had been studied and that the Zonda report indicates a very low yield in the coming years for school aged children. Mrs. Oliveros also asks about the construction that is happening on Calle del Norte and Springfield. Laida Benavides states that they looked at all the current building permits and none indicate a future high-rise building.

In favor: 6 – Ramiro Veliz, Aliza F. Oliveros, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: 1 – Dianelle Martinez

Motion passes with a 6 to 1 vote

C. Discussion and possible action regarding implementation and exploration of additional campus and administrative building closures/consolidations beyond the 2026-2027 school year, boundary changes, future cost-saving measures in addition to or as an alternative to school closures/consolidations, and a Superintendent's report by May 2026 regarding future staffing/payroll projections and full campus comparisons/utilizations

Board President, Javier Montemayor called for a 10-minute recess at 7:05 PM. The Board returned at 7:16 PM.

Javier Montemayor made a motion to Table Agenda Item C, second by Gilbert Aguilar

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

D. Approval of Donations

Motion to approve the donations, as presented made by Ramiro Veliz, second by Javier Montemayor

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

E. Approval of Board Minutes for the months of December 2025 and January 2026

Motion to approve the Board minutes, as presented made by Javier Montemayor, second by Ramiro Veliz

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

F. Request from Board Members in re: Use of Board of Trustees Discretionary Funds for various campuses and departments

Mike Garza reads a change/addition that was made to the Discretionary Request by Rudy Gonzalez.

Motion to approve the requested discretionary funds, as presented made by Ramiro Veliz, second by Javier Montemayor

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

AGENDA ITEM 8: The Board will adjourn into Closed Session pursuant to the following sections of the Texas Open Meetings Act

The Board adjourned into Closed Session at 7:19 PM

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 BOB (Local)

3. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel, regarding Board Policy DC (Local)

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 sale of two UISD tracts of real property totaling approximately 165 acres of land wrapping the northwest corner of Las Tiendas Road and Rancho Peñitas Road, 2.5 miles north of Mines Road, and 7.5 miles northwest of Loop 20, and described in deed filed of record in Vol. 3121, page 193, and deed filed in Vol. 3121, page 174 of the Official Public Records of Webb County Texas

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

1. Discussion regarding Internal Auditor's Annual Evaluation and modification of employment contract.

2. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel, regarding termination of probationary contract of Classroom Teacher at the conclusion of the 2025-2026 school year

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

1. Student Activity Fund Audits: Col. Santos Benavides Elementary, Trautmann Elementary, Ramirez Middle, Garcia Middle, and STEP Academy
2. Status of Ongoing Audits
3. Discussion, including consultation with legal counsel, regarding the Intruder Detection Audit (IDA) Report

AGENDA ITEM 9: 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 8:02PM.
For the record, no action was taken during Closed Session.*

AGENDA ITEM 9A: Possible action regarding revisions to Board Policy BDB (Local)

Recommendation by Legal Counsel is to revise Board Policy BDB (Local) as discussed in Closed Session relating to Board Subcommittees.

Motion to approve made by Gilbert Aguilar, second by Javier Montemayor

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

AGENDA ITEM 9B: Possible action regarding revisions to Board Policy DC (Local)

Recommendation by Legal Counsel is to table the item.

Motion to table made by Gilbert Aguilar, second by Javier Montemayor

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

AGENDA ITEM 9C: Possible action with respect to the sale of the two USD tracts of real property totaling approximately 165 acres of land wrapping the northwest corner of Las Tiendas Road and Rancho Peñitas Road, 2.5 miles north of Mines Road and 7.5 miles

northwest of Loop 20, and described in deed filed of record in Vol. 3121, page 193, and deed filed in Vol. 3121, page 174 of the Official Public Records of Webb County

Recommendation by Legal Counsel on that sale is to approve the surface use agreement as discussed in Closed Session.

Motion to approve made by Javier Montemayor, second by Rudy Gonzalez

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

AGENDA ITEM 9D: Possible action regarding Internal Auditor's Annual Evaluation and modification of employment contract

The recommendation by Legal Counsel is to approve the Internal Auditor's Annual Evaluation and modification of employment contract as discussed in Closed Session.

Motion to approve made by Javier Montemayor, second by Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

AGENDA ITEM 9E: Possible action regarding termination of probationary contract of Classroom Teacher at the conclusion of the 2025-2026 school year and authorize Superintendent to send notice of same to affected employee

Dr. Gerardo Cruz's recommendation is for the Board to take action to terminate classroom teacher Felipe Rodriguez's probationary contract of employment in the best interest of the district at the conclusion of the 2025 – 2026 school year and to authorize the Superintendent to send notice of the same to the affected employee, Felipe Rodriguez.

Motion to approve made by Javier Montemayor, second by Gilbert Aguilar

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

AGENDA ITEM 9F: Discussion regarding the Intruder Detection Audit (IDA) Report

Agenda Item was read into the record by Mike Garza.

AGENDA ITEM 10: Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Javier Montemayor, second by Gilbert Aguilar

Discussion: None

In favor: 5 – Ramiro Veliz, Javier Montemayor, Michelle Molina, Gilbert Aguilar and Rudy Gonzalez

Opposed: None

Motion Passes

There being no further business before the Board of Trustees, the Regular Board Meeting of April 22, 2026 was adjourned at 8:06 P.M.

Javier Montemayor, Jr., President

Michelle Molina, Secretary

Amended Board Minutes presented for approval on 06/17/2026.

Minutes submitted by: Maribel Vazquez, Secretary to Superintendent