

UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Aliza Oliveros, Ramiro Veliz, Gilbert Aguilar, Dianelle Martinez, Rodolfo “Rudy” Gonzalez, Michelle Molina

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Gerardo Cruz, Rebecca Morales, Laida Benavides, Sam Flores, David Canales, Cordy Jackson, Martha Stahl, Monica Madrigal, Gerry Rodriguez

I. Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Call to Order

Mrs. Aliza Oliveros calls Roll, establishes a quorum, and Calls to Order at **6:16 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. BOARD RECOGNITION — UISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

B. UNITED ISD MVP PARENTS

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.

Maria Del Carmen Garza: Ms. Garza expresses her concern regarding the consolidation of Kennedy-Zapata Elementary School. She states that this is the only school in El Cenizo, Texas and asks the Board to take into account that this is one of the most secluded areas in the district. Lastly, she asks the Board to please keep parents informed of the planning and actions about the consolidation of campuses.

Juan Valadez: Mr. Valadez, a community member of El Cenizo, says that he is here to express his concerns and says that he sees mothers walking their children to school and daycare and urges the Board not to consolidate Kennedy-Zapata Elementary School.

Valentin Ruiz: Mr. Ruiz says he is here as a Veteran and a community advocate for Parents United (social media outlet) and that he is here in representation of those parents who reach out to them to voice their concerns. He states that many of these families are immigrants and that they are silent due to fear. "They report bullying", he says and he also states that parents are withdrawing their kids because they do not believe their kids to be safe at school. He further states that even the perception of deportation threats in a school setting violates federal protection and urges the Board to reaffirm that 1- immigration status has no place in schools, 2- create a confidential anti-retaliation reporting system, 3- review unresolved complaints involving staff, and 4- ensure equal accountability without exceptions.

V. Items for Information Only

A. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cruz presents the current status of the district. He states that the district is enthusiastic about the upcoming 2026-2027 school year. He states that STAAR end of year assessments for students provide a clear and encouraging account of progress and growth across our high schools and that this is pivotal in preparing students for the upcoming TELPAS and spring STAAR assessment scheduled for April. Dr. Cruz says that although the data looks promising, the district will present on more specific student outcomes at the February 2026 meeting.

January being Board Recognition month, Dr. Cruz takes the opportunity to thank the Board for their unwavering service. "Leadership is the foundation of our partnership in creating a conducive workplace for our staff, and an innovative world class learning environment for our students", he said.

Furthermore, he mentions they will be holding meetings on the financial standing of the district and the budgeting process. He adds that there being a continued decline in enrollment there is need for serious discussion on the possibility of school closures and ensures the community and staff that he plans to navigate this matter with extreme care. He hopes to have reached a decision by May 2026 in collaboration with the School Board to remain fiscally responsible while prioritizing student needs.

Dr. Cruz thanks the entire UISD staff for their steadfast support while navigating these tough decisions. He adds that "this is only possible because of the resilience you all demonstrate every day. Thank you for your commitment to our mission and for standing united as we work to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for every student we serve."

Lastly, he informs the community that Open Enrollment begins Monday, February 2nd for both new and returning students and announces the new ConnectEd, a virtual hybrid learning framework, established under Senate Bill 569.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

A. Monthly Disbursements

B. Budget Amendment

C. Awarding Bids, Proposals, Qualifications, and Extensions

D. CSP 003-2025 United Middle School Renovations Phase II

E. Amendment of Wellness Days Resolution for the 2025-2026 School Year

F. T-TESS Appraiser for the 2025-2026 School Year

G. Second and Final Reading of TASB Update 126 (LOCAL) Policies

On a motion moved by Rudy Gonzalez, seconded by Michelle Molina, for discussion.

Discussion by Dianelle Martinez regarding the Monthly expenses and states she continues to see charges for food and to prioritize the safety and security aspect.

Michelle Molina states the safety and security has not been compromised. Mr. Mike Garza confirms that safety and security services have not been denied to any campus.

Discussion regarding Amendment of Wellness Days Resolution for the 2025-2026 School Year. Mrs. Martinez disagrees with this resolution.

Dr. Cruz interjects to state that the Wellness Days will continue to roll over. Mr. David Canales adds, that the reason for this resolution is that should no action be taken, the employees will lose these days. Rather the long term fix, is to allow the days to roll over and have the employees use as needed.

After discussion, the motion is to approve items VI. A, through G, with the exception of VI.E. Motion so moved, by Rudy Gonzalez, seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, and unanimously approved, motion carries.

For the record from Item VI.G – TASB Update 126 (Local), policies BED Local, DGBA Local, FNG Local and GF have been pulled out for Individual Consideration under Closed Session with potential action under Open Session.

On a motion to approve item VI.E, motion moved by Michelle Molina, seconded by Rudy Gonzalez, and Gilbert Aguilar, for discussion.

Mr. Aguilar states that the confusion is whether or not employees will continue to attain additional Wellness Days.

Mr. David Canales states that the Board will need to bring this item again.

Mr. Veliz adds that this item will be addressed on a yearly basis.

On a vote of 5 for and 1 against (Dianelle Martinez), motion carries.

VII. Items for Individual Consideration

A. Approval of Donations

- A donation from UHS Lady Longhorn Basketball Booster, in the amount of \$9,243.98 to go towards the UHS Lady Longhorn Basketball Program.
- A donation from UHS Baseball Booster Club in the amount of \$4,825.59 to go towards equipment for UHS Baseball Club/Organization.
- A few donations were received from: Stephen Trautmann in the amount of \$500, Abel City for \$1,000, Kenneth Valls for \$500, South Laredo Family Clinic for \$500, and Modern Machine for \$350, for a total of \$2,850.00 received by the UJISD McKinney Vento and Migrant Programs.
- A donation from Texican Cattle Women Association, in the amount of \$2,370 to go towards UHS FFA.
- A donation by the UHS Baseball Booster in the amount of \$2,250, for the UHS Senior Scholarships and equipment needed.
- A donation by Leyendecker Construction of Texas, Inc. in the amount of \$2,050, for the Central Office Christmas Luncheon.
- A donation by Borchers PTC Booster Club, in the amount of \$1,869.08 for Charles Borchers Elementary School expenses and student incentives.

Additionally there were 7 donations of under \$1,00.00.

Grand Total: \$28,308.65

On a motion so moved, moved by Michelle Molina, to approve the Donations as presented, seconded by Gilbert Aguilar and unanimously approved, motion carries.

B. Approval of Board Minutes for the months of October and November 2025

On a motion moved by Michelle Molina, seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, and unanimously approved, motion carries.

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

On a motion so moved to approve as presented, motion moved by Michelle Molina, seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, and unanimously approved, motion carries.

D. Independent Audit Report for the Year Ended August 31, 2025

Mr. Alfred Vera presents the financial statements of the Independent Audit Report. He asks the Board Members to follow his presentation with a paper copy provided to them. The second page, he says contains the Independent Auditor's Report. This is the opinion on how the district's policies and procedures that have been established are tested by reviewing the financial statements to ensure the district is in compliance and that the items are presented fairly in all material respects and free of material misstatements.

- UISD earned an Unmodified Opinion
- UISD is at 35 days of operation based on the unassigned balance operating at a \$1.4M/day average.
- On Compliance for Federal and State Program, UISD has earned an Unmodified Opinion.
- Regarding Internal Controls, the Auditor found no instances on non-compliance.

Mr. Vera adds that United ISD has earned the Certificate of Achievement by the Government of Finance Officers Association for the last 26 years.

On a motion so moved to approved the Independent Audit Report, moved by Rudy Gonzalez, seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, and unanimously approved, motion carries.

E. Approval of the Daktronics Scoreboard Replacement and related Lease Agreement and Sponsorship Agreement

Coach Bobby Cruz, presents the plan to replace the Scoreboard by entering a lease agreement with option to purchase the new Scoreboard, including a plan to self fund the Scoreboard through advertising and sponsorships. Coach Bobby Cruz acknowledged that the Board has received the documents for their review. The purchase consists of a lease agreement and an extended warranty on top of the standard warranty for 5 years, with a commitment to annual payments on the lease agreement of \$177,337 per year for 5 years with the option to purchase the scoreboard at the end of the lease term. After the 5 years the district has the potential to create revenues, said Coach Cruz.

On a motion to approve the Replacement of the Daktronics Scoreboard and related Lease Agreement and Sponsorship, motion moved by Rudy Gonzalez, seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, and unanimously approved by the Board, motion carries.

F. Approval of Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Laredo Police Department (LPD) and UISD relating to the LPD Drone First Responder (DFR) Program

On a motion to approve as presented, motion moved by Michelle Molina, seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, and unanimously approved, motion carries.

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 **7:05 P.M.** No action will be taken under Closed Session.

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 Policies BED (Local), DEA (Local), DGA (Local), DGBA (Local), FNG (Local), and GF (Local)

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

- 1. Student Activity Funds Audits: Elementary Schools — Arndt, Fasken, Freedom, Bonnie Garcia, Juarez-Lincoln, Prada, Salinas, San Isidro, and Veterans Memorial**
- 2. Student Activity Funds Audits: Middle Schools — Salvador Garcia, Trautmann, United South, and Washington**
- 3. Student Activity Funds Audits: High Schools — Alexander, United, United South, Johnson 9th Grade, and Alexander 9th Grade**
- 4. Random Student Drug Testing**
- 5. Substitute Teacher Hiring Practices**
- 6. Status of Ongoing Audits**

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

The Board reconvenes from Closed Session at **8:01 P.M.**

A. Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to Board Policies BED (Local), DEA (Local), DGA (Local), DGBA (Local), FNG (Local), and GF (Local)

The recommendation is to approve the revisions to Board Policies BED (Local), DEA (Local), DGA (Local), DGBA (Local), FNG (Local), and GF (Local) as discussed in Closed Session.

On a motion so moved by Gilbert Aguilar, seconded by Michelle Molina, and unanimously approved, motion carries.

X. Adjournment

On a motion moved to adjourn this meeting, motion moved by Michelle Molina, seconded by Gilbert Aguilar, motion carries.

There being no further business before the UISD Board of Trustees, this Regular Board Meeting of January 21, 2026, was adjourned at **8:02 P.M.**

Javier Montemayor
Board President

Michelle Molina
Board Secretary