



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Isidoro Nieto, President
Dr. Richard Rivera, Vice President
Andrew Gonzalez, Secretary
Erasmio Lopez
Patrick Kennedy
Dr. Jaime Rodriguez
Armando Cuellar

*Dr. Priscilla Canales,
Superintendent of Schools*



956-969-6503 319 W. Fourth Street / P.O. Box 266, Weslaco, TX 78599-0266

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting:	Special Board Meeting
Place:	Virtual Meeting
Recording Location:	319 W. Fourth Street
Date:	August 3, 2020
Time:	6:02 P.M.

Notice for this meeting was posted online for at least 72 hours as permitted by the suspended portions of the Texas Open Meetings Act as approved by Governor Abbott. The meeting was livestreamed at the following web link: <https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/c09d6b9a-dc31-43a9-94b3-338c40292ef6>

MINUTES

- I. The meeting was called to order by Isidoro Nieto, Board President.
- II. A quorum was established. The following board members participated in the meeting by video conference through the use of Google Meets:

Isidoro Nieto, President
Andrew Gonzalez, Secretary
Armando Cuellar, Trustee
Patrick Kennedy, Trustee
Erasmio Lopez, Trustee
Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Trustee

Dr. Richard Rivera was absent.

The board members took a moment of silent for Mr. Erasmio Lopez on the loss of his mother. Board President Isidoro Nieto expressed condolences on behalf of the Board and administration.

III. Public Comments

The public was provided an opportunity to sign up to address the Board through the use of Google Meets and telephone transmission.

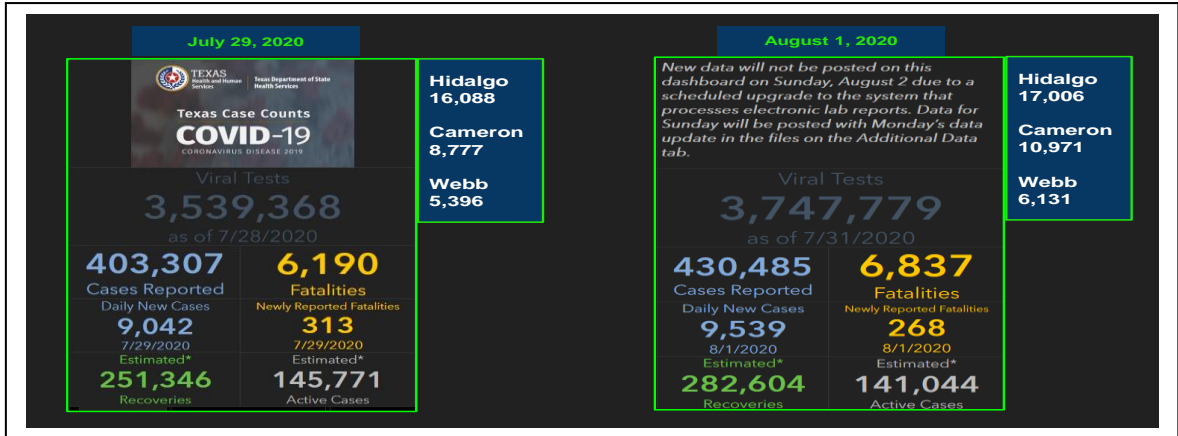
No one signed up to address the Board.

IV. Superintendent’s Report: COVID-19 Update

Superintendent Dr. Canales presented an update on COVID-19.

Below is information on the number of cases in the Rio Grande Valley.

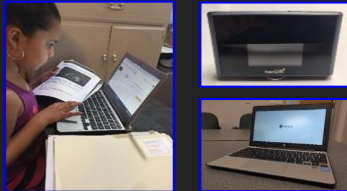
•Cases continue to increase.




- > The new school year will begin with online learning.
- > The \$4.7 million has been invested in technology resources for teachers and students over the last five years, with \$1,000,000 this summer to enhance remote learning experience.
- > The District has enough one-to-one devices with hotspots for areas with no internet providers and/or need of families.
- > Student Support Services Director Norma Brewer and her staff are working hard in the area of providing social emotional support to students as a result of all the changes that are taking place with students not being able to return to school at the start of the school year. Mrs. Brewer will share information on the board update on what they are doing to meet the needs of students and staff.
- > The district’s goal is to provide students with a complete program (music, arts, athletics, etc.) to ensure that all students receive a well-rounded education at WISD that will prepare them for college or their first job.

Day 1: Online Strong


1:1 Devices & Hotspots




SEL (Known, Valued, Inspired)



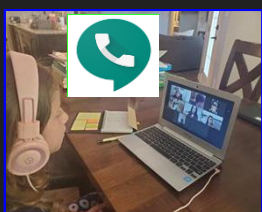
Advanced Tech Training



Complete Program



Board investment of \$4.7m in tech in 5 years & \$1M this summer for new year



- Mr. Scott Amdahl shared that over 800 educators participated on three levels of training on the core aspects of online instruction, which included Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Screencastify.
 - The 9-12 additional hours of staff development will lay a good foundation for continued success with remote learning.
 - Training will continue throughout the fall as needed.

In response to Mr. Nieto's inquiry on the use of Google Meet, Mr. Amdahl shared that Google Meet can be used by any teacher who wants to connect directly live with students. However, Region One has offered the district licensing for the Zoom platform and therefore the district will be transitioning to this program. The Zoom platform provides a breakout session where it allows a teacher to meet with a group of teachers while a tutor is able to breakout and assist with a smaller group of students in another virtual classroom and then return to the larger group.


Dr. Rodriguez wanted to know if staff had tested the hotspots to make sure students will receive good streaming and if different carriers were being used. Mr. Amdahl has had the opportunity to use the hotspots due to the power outage last week and has been able to do his work from a hotspot at home. The new hotspots will have unlimited high-speed data and should provide sufficient connectivity; nonetheless, the hotspots will be tested to ensure they are working properly. Mr. Amdahl informed the Board that Sprint and T-Mobile are together in the same network and therefore all hotspots will be running in the combined network.




Mr. Lopez wanted to know if the hotspots would be curtailed to a certain device or would other devices at home be able to connect to it, thus slowing connectivity down for the students. Mr. Amdahl pointed out that the devices come with a built-in internet filter that is CIPA compliance to ensure students are not getting into inappropriate content. Currently, there is no way of locking them down to a specific device; however, staff will inform all parents that the primary use of the devices is for student education and any additional use could impair that.

Mr. Lopez asked staff to look at the possibility of putting up a wall that would limit students to work with only WISD devices.

Strong Online Educators

Over 800 educators so far this summer have completed a foundational series of trainings on the core aspects of online instruction with further PD planned to enhance the teaching and learning experience.



-  **Google Classroom:** The current hub of online learning for our district. This is where teachers manage online coursework/communication.
-  **Google Meet:** This is the primary means of direct communications for web meetings.
-  **Screencastify:** Screencasting allows teachers to pre-record videos of themselves delivering instruction for students to view.

➤Dr. Canales provided information on the use of uniforms.

- Staff will send out a message to parents letting them know that the district will be relaxing the uniform requirement during the 2020-2021 school year. While wearing uniforms is still welcome and encouraged, district administration understands that this requirement may be additional burden due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Hanna. If a student will not be wearing a uniform, make sure student is wearing school appropriate attire during class time, whether it be remote or in person.

Uniforms

- Preferred, but waived for 2020-2021
- Appropriate school attire during remote learning
- Dress code in Student Handbook

Supplies

To provide families relief from the expenses of **school supplies at the elementary level**, Weslaco ISD administration is working on securing some **basic materials** for students. Middle and High Schools will also provide a few supplies as needed. Please expect more information about the basic supplies that will be provided in the near future.

➤The district will provide devices for all students.

➤The district will provide hotspots for families who do not have internet connectivity.

➤The district will provide supplies for students as needed.

School Start Date: August 31, 2020

- Feedback from District Advisory Committee & Principals
- Changes Instructional Year for Students Only
 - August 31, 2020 through May 27, 2021
 - Enrichment week becomes instructional week
 - Changes six weeks period
 - Does not impact teacher and staff work calendars
 - Dual enrollment students and staff begin classes according to STC & UTRGV calendars
- Extra Time for Collaboration, Communication & Connections
 - Day 1: Online Strong Training and Teacher Planning
 - Teacher online relationship, community, and expectation building with students
 - Dissemination of technology resources and school supplies to students

➤The start date for students changed from August 24 to August 31.

➤Staff is working diligently to disseminate all resources (computer devices, headsets, school supplies) to students by Day 1.

Board President Isidoro Nieto mentioned that the extra week would allow teachers more time to prepare for virtual learning. He reminded the public that the district would be waiving the uniform for the 2020-2021 school year and be providing supplies to students, which would greatly assist parents who might be having financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19 or Hurricane Hanna.

Mr. Kennedy questioned the dress code for teachers. Dr. Canales will be discussing the dress code with the principals this week and will share information with the Board via the weekly update or at the August 10 Regular Board Meeting.

V. Discussion and Possible Action to Amend the 2020-2021 Academic Calendar Previously Approved by the Board on April 20, 2020

Virtual meetings were held on July 28, 2020 with the District Advisory Committee and the Principals to discuss the revisions made to the Academic Calendar and to receive feedback and input. Both groups agreed to start school on August 31, 2020 instead of August 24, 2020 in order to organize and disseminate any technology that students and teachers are lacking. Both groups expressed that during the week of August 24-28, 2020, teachers could begin familiarizing with students and orienting parents with how their respective classrooms will be set up online. The extra week will ensure a smoother transition to the 2020-2021 remote learning model.

Below are the changes to the District Calendar for 2020-2021

	Official District Calendar	Amended District Calendar
Start Date for Students	August 24, 2020	August 31, 2020
Start Date for Teachers	August 12, 2020	August 12, 2020
August Staff Development Days	5 days	9 days
August Staff Workdays	3 days	4 days
First Six Weeks	Aug. 24-Sept 30 27 days	Aug. 31-Oct. 2 24 days
Second Six Weeks	Oct. 1-Nov. 6 26 days	Oct. 5-Nov. 6 24 days
Third Six Weeks	Nov. 9-Dec. 17 24 days	Nov. 9-Dec. 17 24 days
Fourth Six Weeks	Jan. 5-Feb. 17 31 days	Jan. 5-Feb. 19 33 days
Fifth Six Weeks	Feb. 18-April 9 30 days	Feb. 22-April 16 33 days
Sixth Six Weeks	April 12-May 21 30 days	April 19-May 27 29 days
Testing Window	April 6-16, 2021 May 4-21, 2021	April 6-30, 2021 gain 8 days May 4-21, 2021
Enrichment Week	May 24-27, 2021	None
Total Instructional Days	168	167
Total Teacher Days	187	187
Last Day of School	May 27, 2021	May 27, 2021
Last Teacher Workday	May 28, 2021	May 28, 2021

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, if the Texas Education Agency mandates or provides direction on adjustments to the 2020-2021 school calendar, administration will initiate another amendment to the approved calendar and seek board ratification at a later date.

Patrick Kennedy made the motion to amend the 2020-2021 Academic Calendar previously approved by the Board on April 20, 2020. Dr. Jaime Rodriguez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Legal Counsel clarified that the start date for students would be August 31, 2020.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Consider Approval to Purchase Additional Internet Hotspots to Be Used By Students for On-Line Learning

The Superintendent recommended that the Board approve the purchase of up to 1,500 additional Internet Hotspots with a 1-year subscription from T-Mobile from Bellevue, Washington to be used for online instruction.

On July 6, 2020, the Board approved the purchase of 700 internet hotspots that include unlimited data with filtered internet access on a 12-month subscription. However, after evaluating the surveys conducted by the principals, it was determined that an additional 800 hotspots were needed. Staff requested to purchase up to 1,500 additional hotspots in order to have prior approval in the event that more hotspots were needed. Due to the high demand for internet hotspots at this time, staff did not want to delay any future orders.

Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to purchase up to 1,500 additional Internet Hotspots with a 1-year subscription from T-Mobile from Bellevue, Washington to be used for online instruction. Armando Cuellar seconded the motion.

Dr. Jaime Rodriguez pointed out that some carriers might not service certain parts of the city and therefore some students might not be able to access the internet or have a good connection. He asked staff to be prepared in case students residing in certain areas were not getting a good signal from Sprint or T-Mobile.

Mr. Abel Aguilar and the principals have had discussion on the possibility of the bandwidth not being sufficient for multiple families and will be following up in case it becomes a problem.

For informational purposes, Mr. Nieto asked Mr. Sanchez to provide the cost of this purchase so that parents are aware of what the district is paying for hotspots this year. He stated, "As long as students can log on and do their work, it is money well spent."

- Cost for 800 Additional hotspots: \$192,000
- If the district purchases the additional 700 hotspots, the total cost will be \$360,000.
- A total of \$528,000 will be spent on the purchase of hotspots. This amount also includes the 700 hotspots approved in July.

Mr. Lopez asked staff to make sure the devices are stream lined to where students use the internet specifically for schoolwork and not for other personal devices (games, etc.) that could slow down and impede the learning process for other kids who are trying to learn.

Mr. Kennedy wanted to know the life of the warranty and the shelve life. According to Mr. Carlos Martinez, Technology Director, the warranty is good for one year. The district does not own the equipment so if the district does not continue with the contract, the product would be returned.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion made by Andrew Gonzalez and seconded by Armando Cuellar to purchase up to 1,500 additional Internet Hotspots with a 1-year subscription from T-Mobile from Bellevue, Washington to be used for online instruction.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.