



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

*Dr. Priscilla Canales,  
Superintendent of Schools*



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## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting:  
Place:  
Date:  
Time:

Special Board Meeting  
Virtual Meeting  
September 24, 2020  
5:49 P.M.

Notice of 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://youtu.be/mkt6vF6cPR8>

## MINUTES

- I. The meeting was called to order by Board President Isidoro Nieto.
- II. A quorum was established. The following board members participated in this meeting via video conference.

Isidoro Nieto, President  
Dr. Richard Rivera, Vice President  
Andrew Gonzalez, Secretary  
Armando Cuellar, Trustee  
Patrick Kennedy, Trustee  
Erasmus Lopez, Trustee  
Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Trustee

Board President Isidoro Nieto shared the process used for Public Comments at this meeting:

In an attempt to provide the most up to date information and clarify any uncertainty related to any agenda items, those that have signed up for public comments will be allowed to comment *during the Board's consideration of the agenda item for which that person signed up to speak about*. So instead of having a "stand alone" public comments portion of the meeting before any information is conveyed, public comments will be heard during the discussion portion for each agenda item for which someone may have signed up to speak about.

Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to change the order of the day and convene in closed meeting. Dr. Jaime Rodriguez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Board convened in closed meeting at 5:52 p.m. to discuss the following items.

IX. Closed Meeting to Discuss:

A. Personnel Matters (Tex. Govt' Code 551.074)

1. Employment of Personnel
2. Resignations
3. Deliberation Regarding the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline, or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee (Tex. Gov't Code 551.074 and 551.071)
  - a. Deliberation of Transition to Campus Instructional Plan

B. Deliberation Regarding Acquisition of Real Property (Tx. Gov't Code 551.072)

C. Consultation with Attorney Regarding: a) Pending or Contemplated Litigation: b) a Settlement Offer: or c) a Matter in Which the Duty of the Attorney to the Weslaco ISD under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas Clearly Conflicts with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code (Tex. Gov't. Code 551.071)

The Board returned to open meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Board President Isidoro Nieto announced that Mr. Andrew Gonzalez had left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

V. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Approve the Transition to Campus Instructional Plan

Superintendent Dr. Canales acknowledged staff members involved with the development of the Transition plan. Prior to submitting the waiver the administration received feedback from principals, teachers, staff, and parents. The administration also received feedback from the District Advisory Committee (DAC) and the 2020 Teacher of the Year (TOTY) Committee.

The Administration recommended that the Board approve the Transition to Campus Instructional Plan as presented.

>The extended transition period would be from September 28 through October 23, 2020. In working with the principals, the plan is to transition back a small group of students each week of the transition period.

>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies were ordered and delivered to campuses prior to the start of the school year: teacher/student desk shields, teacher/student face shields, face masks, gloves, disinfectants, and wipes.

>TEA granted the district four weeks of remote online instruction. As per TEA, on campus instruction must be made available to students who do not have internet connectivity.

>The Board approved over \$4.7 million in technology over the last five years to ensure that every student has a device. In addition, the Board has approved a lot of money for the purchase of hotspots to allow students to have internet connectivity. The district also received a grant from T-Mobile for approximately 2,500 additional hotspots for children having connectivity issues.

Dr. Canales reviewed the Transition Plan:

>Week 5 (September 28 – October 2) Monday and Tuesday

•Setting

›On Campus - Teachers who volunteer, no students

> Week 5: Wednesday and Friday

•Setting

›Campus will open doors to students with connectivity issues.

›CTE students who are taking courses that require face-to-face instruction will be allowed on campus one day of the week.

›Students report to labs with proctors (para, teachers who volunteer, staff).

›High schools begin hybrid schedule for students with connectivity issues - Some students will attend on Monday and Tuesday and others on Wednesday and Thursday.

> Week 6 (October 5-9) Monday through Friday

•Setting

›On Campus - Only teachers who volunteer

›Add students of employees who are working on-site (paras, teachers, staff)

›Students report to labs with proctors (paras, subs, teachers who volunteer, staff)

>Week 7 (October 13-16) Tuesday through Friday

Monday, October 12 is a Staff Development Day.

•Setting

›On Campus - Only teachers who volunteer

›Student groups are the same.

›Students report to labs with proctors all week (paras, teachers who volunteer, staff, subs).

>Week 8 (October 19 - 23) Monday through Wednesday

•Setting

›On Campus - Only teachers who volunteer

›Student groups are the same.

›Students report to labs with proctors (paras, subs, teachers who volunteer, staff)

October 22 - 23: Thursday and Friday (Subject to TEA and Board Approval for Additional 4-week Transition Waiver)

•Setting

›All teachers report to set up rooms and prepare for students.

›Teachers continue to teach virtually from campus.

If the waiver is not approved for an additional 4-week waiver staff has to be ready to receive students.

>Week 9 (October 26-30) Monday through Friday

•Setting

›Any student who wishes to attend school reports to campus per parent preference survey.

Dr. Canales explained that the district must allow students who have connectivity issues on campus. The district will have to look for proctors if there are not enough teacher volunteers.

**Comments/Concerns addressed by the Board:**

>Mr. Lopez suggested that the district look at the possibility of adding extra pay to the teachers who are willing to volunteer and thus eliminate the need to pay proctors.

•Dr. Canales replied that the Board would have to take action at a future board meeting.

>Mr. Armando Cuellar commented that the Board is looking at all options to ensure every employee has a fair opportunity.

>Mr. Kennedy said that the teachers have the flexibility to work from home for the next three (3) weeks but other employees (paras, CIF's, counselors etc.) are required to be on campus. Because these employees are putting their lives on the line, he suggested that they rotate staff so that the same employees are not always on the line.

Mr. Abel Aguilar provided clarification on what the district needs to do to request a waiver for an additional four-week extension beyond the eight weeks. As per TEA, school systems that need more than the additional four-week extended transition window should email [waivers@tea.texas.gov](mailto:waivers@tea.texas.gov) for information on requesting additional days. Any additional transition window extension plan would have to include increasing level of allowed on campus instruction. Note: Governor Abbott's Executive Order 30 describes certain areas of the state where certain business occupancy levels are raised to 75% and others that remain at 50%. The agency will take into consideration whether school systems are located in whole or in part in areas that remain at the 50% threshold when determining additional transition day waiver approval.

Dr. Canales explained that the administration would start working on the submission of a waiver for an additional four-week extension and have ready by week 7. The waiver will be submitted in a timely manner.

Dr. Rivera was concerned about using proctors because parents might not feel comfortable having a substitute teach their child after they have missed school since March. He felt that every boy and girl deserved to have a certified degreed teacher, so he would rather find a way to pay the teacher volunteers more money or find a way to have a certified degreed teacher in the classroom every single day.

Mr. Kennedy wanted to know how the PPE supplies were distributed to the campuses.

•Dr. Canales explained that the Warehouse staff delivers the supplies to the school nurse at each campus and the supplies are distributed to staff through the Nurses Department. The teacher desk shields will soon be delivered to the campuses. Staff will need to order more items throughout the year in order to have supplies in stock and available when needed.

Mr. Abel Aguilar presented a list of supplies the district has received and items that are still pending. Mr. Kennedy asked that a copy of the inventory sheet be included in their board update.

Dr. Rivera asked administration to be sensitive to all employees and not just the teachers because there are many employees who have health conditions. He would like staff to study every case on an individual basis.

Mr. Kennedy wanted to know how an employee should proceed in notifying an administrator about an underlying health condition that might affect their ability to report to work on October 22.

As per Mrs. Melva Segura, Human Resources Administrator, employees with underlying health conditions who are asking for consideration may email their principal, supervisor, Mr. Mike De La Rosa, and herself with details of their request. The HR Department has posted flowcharts on the district's website that provide pertinent information on COVID-19 and explains the process employees should follow when communicating exposure to the virus and requesting FFCRA leave.

Mr. Armando Cuellar assured everyone that the Board is considering all options and would never compromise the safety of anyone.

Dr. Richard Rivera made the motion to approve the Transition Plan as long as administration follows what the Board discussed at this meeting. Mr. Armando Cuellar seconded the motion.

The board members thanked Dr. Canales and staff for all their work in coming up with a plan. They stressed the importance of having PPE supplies on hand for the protection of students and staff. In addition, they would like staff to try to solve the issues with connectivity because it would minimize the number of students and staff that need to be on campus and exposed to the virus.

Dr. Rivera commended all staff for working hard in implementing this plan. He also thanked Carlos Martinez, Technology Director, and his staff for all their work assisting with technology issues during these times and said, "Together as a team we will hurdle this obstacle".

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion made by Dr. Richard Rivera and Mr. Armando Cuellar to approve the Transition Plan as long as administration follows what the Board discussed at this meeting.

IV. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Approve Submission of A Second Four-Week Waiver to TEA Pertaining to Reopening

The Superintendent recommended that the Board approve the submission of a second four-week waiver to TEA pertaining to the reopening. Due to the recent public health conditions in Hidalgo County, it is in the best interest of students and staff to continue to restrict access to on campus instruction beyond the first four-weeks of the instructional calendar. As per TEA requirements, the Board must take action to authorize this waiver by specific vote and cannot otherwise delegate the waiver action to the superintendent.

Patrick Kennedy made the motion to approve the submission of a second four-week waiver to the Texas Education Agency pertaining to reopening. Dr. Jaime Rodriguez seconded the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The public had the opportunity to participate in public comments by registering no later than 5:30 p.m. at the following web link: <https://www.wisd.us/superintendentboard/new-page>. Board President Isidoro Nieto announced the procedures for addressing public comments.

The following individuals addressed the Board:

➤ *Rosa Lopez, 1306 Turtle Creek Drive, Brownsville, Texas*

Ms. Lopez commended the Board for taking action on submitting the waiver. She felt it was good for the benefit of the teachers. According to Mrs. Lopez, teachers were fearful of returning to work.

She read the following comments that she had prepared prior to the Board taking action:

"I hope that you take note of the increasing numbers of COVID positive cases in our area and approve this additional four-week waiver until the valley is in the shape it needs to be in order for us to go back to campus. Please think about the teachers who are pouring their life into virtual learning. WISD teachers are being innovative and are doing great things to keep their students engaged. We got trained over the summer to work from home, so at this moment I am very happy we do not have to go to school and expose ourselves needlessly. I do feel for our students that are having connectivity issues and know that our district is doing the best they can to fix those issues. In that aspect, I feel good that our students are getting an education even through these hard times. Also, I want to point out that teachers are certified and the students

will be in front of certified teachers even if it's virtual. Teachers have instructional support built-in to their schedules so students are not left hanging. Teachers are there for their students."

She made reference to the transition plan on how it was set up by one-week phases and suggested that in order to minimize the spread of COVID on campuses it would be better to phase it out by at least two weeks. This would allow employees to be tested and get their results back without having to expose others.

➤ Brenda Gutierrez, 2623 Honolulu Drive, Weslaco, Texas

Ms. Gutierrez is a parent and has children attending schools at WISD. She made the following comments:

"I am extremely proud of being a parent of my children that are in Weslaco. I speak very highly of all the decisions that the board members and teachers make. I love my children's teachers and their principals. They have been very attentive and very respectful of everything." She mentioned that she and her husband work full-time Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:00, and had to continue working since they are essential workers. Ms. Gutierrez is concerned because she has a 5-year old child at home who needs care because the daycare centers are not providing childcare at this time, and therefore she would have to stay home and care for her child or pay additional money to have someone watch him. She further commented that she has a lot of respect for teachers but did not think of them any more highly than a cafeteria worker, custodian, or an employee at H.E.B. working during this time. Mrs. Gutierrez shared that she herself works at an office with 100 employees and they all take the necessary precautions. Ms. Gutierrez had to take 2 weeks off from work when one of her close family member became ill and she is currently taking time off from work to care for her child so this has affected her family financially. She is grateful for the teachers who are working with her children but her children have told her that they want to go back to school. She stated, "I am grateful for the teachers but I am also grateful for all the other employees." She would like the board members to take into consideration that parents should be allowed to send their children to school if they want to go.

➤ Julie Valdez-Perez, 1113 Stone Street, Weslaco, Texas

This individual was given the opportunity to address the Board but was unable to log on.

Patrick Kennedy made the motion to approve the submission of a second four-week waiver to the Texas Education Agency pertaining to reopening. Dr. Jaime Rodriguez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Ratify Approval of the Purchase of Student Desk Shields

The District received six (6) quotes: four (4) were from purchasing cooperative vendors and two (2) from local non-cooperative vendors. The Superintendent recommended that the Board ratify approval of the purchase of 6000 student desk shields from Print Works of McAllen, Texas. Print Works is not a cooperative vendor; however, the purchase did not exceed \$50,000.00. The desk shields were ordered for the protection of students and staff.

Erasmio Lopez made the motion to ratify approval of the purchase of 6000 student desk shields from Print Works of McAllen, Texas. Patrick Kennedy seconded the motion.

In response to board member inquires, Mr. Sanchez shared that the district had already received 3,750 desk shields and should be receiving more the following day. The shields are made of 4 ml corrugated plastic and can be sanitized using antibacterial solution.

Mr. Orlando Pena, Warehouse Director, informed the Board that warehouse staff would be delivering the shields the following day.

Mr. Armando Cuellar pointed out that staff needs to be observant of objects/things hidden behind the shields.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion made by Erasmo Lopez and seconded by Patrick Kennedy to ratify approval of the purchase of 6000 student desk shields from Print Works of McAllen, Texas.

VII. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Consider Approval of the Purchase of Twenty-Four (24) Aluminum Light Poles with LED Pole Light Fixtures to Be Installed at Beatriz Garza Middle School

The Administration withdrew this item from the agenda.

VIII. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Approve Whole Life Insurance

A Board Workshop was held on September 8, 2020 to discuss the pros and cons of Whole Life Insurance. This insurance is optional so it is entirely up to the employee to enroll if they wish to do so. Mr. Mike De La Rosa, Risk Management/Employee Benefits Director, explained that the Board has the option to solicit for proposals.

Mr. Erasmo Lopez asked for clarification from legal counsel on what legal options the Board had to follow.

Legal Counsel Ivan Perez clarified that the Board could authorize the Administration to solicit proposals if they wish to offer this product to district employees. At this time, the Board cannot solicit an agent or offer this product to the employees. The product has to be competitively bid out. The Board can approve it this year or give direction to the administration to offer it next year.

Mr. Erasmo Lopez commented that he would like to offer this product to the employees this year and therefore made the motion to allow administration to go out for bids on Whole Life Insurance and present back to the Board. Dr. Jaime Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Mr. Andres Sanchez asked Mr. Lopez if the motion could state, "To go out for proposals rather than for bids".

Mr. Patrick Kennedy pointed out that the district's insurance consultant Roger Garza had mentioned at the workshop that teachers had asked about this product and therefore he would support it.

Mr. Lopez amended his motion to allow administration to go out for proposals on Whole Life Insurance and present back to the Board. Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

X. Possible Action, If Necessary, on Items Discussed in Closed Meeting

A. Personnel Matters (Tex. Govt' Code 551.074)

1. Employment of Personnel

The Superintendent recommended that the Board approve the recommendation of contracts for certified professional personnel as presented.

<b>NEW HIRES</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Location</b>
1. Melissa Hernandez	Special Education Teacher	Cleckler-Heald Elementary School
2. Bryan Guzman	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher	Mary Hoge Middle School
3. Raul Medina	Culinary Arts Teacher	Weslaco East High School
4. Brenda Vela	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Teacher	Mary Hoge Middle School
<b>REASSIGNMENT</b>		
5. Omar Quintero	From: Teacher @ Weslaco East High School	To: Technology Instructional Coach @ Weslaco East High School

Dr. Jaime Rodriguez made the motion to approve the contracts for certified professional personnel as recommended by the Superintendent. Patrick Kennedy seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

## 2. Resignations

The Superintendent recommended that the Board approve the resignations/retirements of certified professional personnel as discussed in closed session.

<b>RESIGNATIONS</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Location</b>	<b>Reason/Effective Date</b>
1. Sylvia G. Banuelos	Registered Nurse Airport Elementary School	Sylvia G. Banuelos is retiring after 33 years in education with 23 years of service at Weslaco ISD. Her retirement is effective September 25, 2020.
2. Maria C. Covacevich	Speech Teacher Weslaco East High School	Maria C. Covacevich is resigning for personal reasons. Her effective date of resignation is September 28, 2020.
3. Magdalena Oliva	Marketing Teacher Weslaco East High School	Magdalena Oliva is retiring after 26 years in education, with all 26 years of service at Weslaco ISD. Her retirement is effective September 25, 2020.
4. Jesse Villarreal	Parent Specialist North Bridge Elementary School	Jesse Villarreal is retiring after 26 years in education, with 24 years of service at Weslaco ISD. His retirement is effective October 16, 2020.
5. Gladys Villarreal	Parent Specialist B. Garza Middle School	Gladys Villarreal is retiring after 28 years in education, with 9 years of service at Weslaco ISD. Her retirement is effective October 2, 2020.

Dr. Jaime Rodriguez made the motion to approve the resignations/retirements of certified professional personnel as discussed in closed session. Armando Cuellar seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.



3. Deliberation Regarding the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline, or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee (Tex. Gov't Code 551.074 and 551.071)

a. Deliberation of Transition to Campus Instructional Plan

B. Deliberation Regarding Acquisition of Real Property (Tx. Gov't Code 551.072)

No action.

C. Consultation with Attorney Regarding: a) Pending or Contemplated Litigation: b) a Settlement Offer: or c) a Matter in Which the Duty of the Attorney to the Weslaco ISD under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas Clearly Conflicts with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code (Tex. Gov't. Code 551.071)

1. Consultation Regarding Transition to Campus Instructional Plan

No action.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.