WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
THE RIGHT CHOICE

Board of Trustees
Armando Cuellar, Jr., President
Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Vice President
Jesse Trevino, Secretary
Marcos De Los Santos
Andrew Gonzalez
Isidoro Nieto
Jaclyn Sustaita

Dr. Priscilla Canales
Superintendent of Schools

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting:	Special Board Meeting
Place:	Board Room/Virtual
Location:	319 W. Fourth Street
Date:	August 5, 2021
Time:	5:34P.M.

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/2wghXqTO_7U***

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Armando Cuellar, Board President.

II. Establishment of a Quorum

Armando Cuellar, President
Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Vice President
Jesse Trevino, Secretary
Marcos De Los Santos, Trustee
Andrew Gonzalez, Trustee
Isidoro Nieto, Trustee

Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita joined the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

III. Public Comments

The public had the opportunity to participate in public comments by registering no later than 5:00 p.m. at the following web link: ***https://www.wisd.us/superintendentboard/new-page***.

There were no public comments.

IV. Closed Session to Discuss:

The Board convened in closed meeting at 5:35 p.m. to discuss the following items:

A. Consultation with Attorney Regarding Voluntary Retirement Agreement with the Superintendent, Dr. Priscilla Canales

B. Consultation with Attorney to Release a Request for Qualifications for a Superintendent Search Firm

C. Deliberation Regarding the Naming of an Acting Superintendent

V. Reconvene in Open Meeting:

The Board returned to open meeting at 6:21 pm.

A. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Approval of Voluntary Retirement Agreement with the Superintendent, Dr. Priscilla Canales

Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita made the motion to approve the voluntary retirement agreement with Superintendent Dr. Priscilla Canales as presented. Mr. Marcos De Los Santos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B. Discussion and Possible Action to Release a Request for Qualifications for a Superintendent Search Firm

Mr. Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to release a Request for Qualifications for a Superintendent Search Firm. Marcos De Los Santos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

C. Discussion and Possible Action to Name an Acting Superintendent

Mr. Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to approve Mr. Abel Aguilar as Interim Superintendent. Mr. Isidoro Nieto seconded the motion.

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos commented that Mr. Aguilar is one of the highest caliber individuals in the district who has taken on a lot of work in the district. He pointed out that the Board has to be responsible and look at the situation on hand, the structure, and the gaps at the executive level that have not been filled. The individuals that will fill these gaps will need to be mentored and caught up to speed. These positions include an Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, and a Human Resources Director. To date, Mr. Aguilar has been filling in for these three (3) capacities and, if approved, he would also be taking on the position of Acting Superintendent. Mr. De Los Santos stated, "Mr. Aguilar is probably one of the hardest working people I have ever seen, but he's human. He has expressed that he is willing to work with any decision that the Board makes and he knows the critical component that he is, and the communication and the resources and the support that he offers to the campuses, to the principals, and the departments. Knowing that, as much as I would love to put him in that situation, I don't want to set him up for failure. We need to listen to that and I know you all have already heard him, but I think we need to be responsible here and look at the fact that there's just so many critical components that are empty, and you're gonna have one individual right before the start of the year take on all those responsibilities. Some of you don't know what those responsibilities are, some do and some don't, but I'll tell you this; just one of those jobs is difficult enough for one person. I don't want to set someone up for failure, and I think it's highly irresponsible for the Board to move in that direction and do that, when we have someone that is an option that is from WISD and has a lot of experience as an Assistant Superintendent in a district of 15,000 students, that has experience as an Assistant Superintendent in a district of almost 56,000

students, and that has been an Interim Superintendent who is well respected in our community just like Mr. Aguilar. He mentioned that this individual has a doctorate degree and has a lot of experience and he is confident that this individual can work well with Mr. Aguilar.

Mr. Andrew Gonzalez called the question.

A vote was called on the motion made by Mr. Andrew Gonzalez and seconded by Mr. Isidoro Nieto to approve Mr. Abel Aguilar as Acting Superintendent. Voting in favor of the motion were Isidoro Nieto, Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, and Andrew Gonzalez. Voting against the motion were Mrs. Jaclyn Sustiata, Mr. Jesse Trevino, and Mr. Marcos De Los Santos. The Board President voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried with a 4 to 3 vote.

Dr. Canales made the following comments:

"To the entire Weslaco ISD family, there comes a time when there is a season and there's changes in life, and I've been blessed to have many changes in my life. One of the most memorable ones is going to be my time here in Weslaco ISD. To our teachers and administrators, all faculty and staff, to our parents and to our students – Thank you for letting me be part of Weslaco ISD's legacy for almost five years. The children of Weslaco ISD stole my heart from day one. I want to thank our current board members and former board members for believing in our goals and for working collaboratively to make sure that everybody had what they needed so that the children soared. And then finally, to our boys and girls, you have my heart, you'll be my memories forever, and I ask that you keep on reading every single day for 20 minutes minimum, because when you do that - you gift your brain with 1.8 million words. Weslaco ISD, I love you, God bless you and thank you!"

Mr. Abel Aguilar thanked Dr. Canales for her contributions to Weslaco ISD. He stated, "I have had the pleasure of working closely with you and all our staff members here in the district. I'm blessed to have worked with you and I've learned a lot from you." He asked the Board to re-consider their vote. He stated, "My passion is for the students, the staff, and the Weslaco ISD community. I want to do what is in the best interest of the school district. I am humble, I am thankful that you even considered my name and I say it wholeheartedly from the bottom of my heart – I respect your decisions but I want to make sure we are doing what's best for the district and what's gonna be best for our students. I am here to support anyone that the Board wishes to bring in as part of Weslaco ISD because my passion is our students, staff, and the Weslaco ISD community. I respectfully decline the offer."

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos made the motion to recommend Dr. Criselda Valdez as the Interim Superintendent. Mr. Jesse Trevino seconded the motion.

Mr. De Los Santos addressed Mr. Aguilar and stated, "Thank you, you have been a true professional and like I said, you have been very analytical about the whole situation. We're lucky to have you here in our district and the community should feel lucky as well. You really care about this district and you care about these students."

Mrs. Jacklyn Sustaita made the following comments, "We've worked together for so long, and I know you would never step down from a challenge. Whatever comes to you, you will take and you are very driven. I know the position that you're in right now is going to help us as a district to be successful 100%. You have our support for anything. Keeping you where you are at right now is going to be a success for Weslaco and I know you are going to work with whoever comes and you are going to make it successful. Thank you for your humbleness."

Mr. Nieto thanked Dr. Canales for a wonderful job during the last five (5) years with the district. He said, "We improved quite a bit from when you first got here, in being one of the first 6A schools to get all the accolades." He thanked Mr. Aguilar for his work and knows that Mr. Aguilar will play a major role in supporting the individual selected by the Board.

A vote was called on the motion made by Mr. Marcos De Los Santos and seconded by Mr. Jesse Trevino to recommend Dr. Criselda Valdez as the Interim Superintendent. Voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Isidoro Nieto, Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita, Mr. Jesse Trevino, Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Mr. Marcos De Los Santos, and Mr. Andrew Gonzalez.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.