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Armando Cuellar, Trustee
Marcos De Los Santos, Trustee
Jesse Treviño, Trustee

WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, DR. DINO CORONADO

Meeting:	Special Meeting
Place:	WISD Board Room/Virtual
Location:	319 W. 4th Street
Date:	December 20, 2022
Time:	5:36 p.m.

THIS MEETING WAS POSTED ONLINE FOR AT LEAST 72 HOURS. THE MEETING WAS LIVESTREAMED AT THE FOLLOWING WEB LINK: ***https://youtu.be/AyccjQEvo3s***

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita, Board President.

II. Establishment of a Quorum

A full quorum was established. The following board members were present:

Jaclyn Sustaita, President
Isidoro Nieto, Vice President
Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Secretary
Benjamin Castillo, Trustee
Armando Cuellar, Trustee
Jesse Trevino, Trustee

III. Public Comments

>Diana Garza, 1011 E. 10th Street - Mercedes, Texas

Mrs. Garza addressed the following comments pertaining to Item IV – 2.
"First of all, this specific individual has had the same repetitive history of incompetence, degrading and abusive verbal statements made specifically to women. This is not hearsay, it is not gossip; it is a matter of record, recorded in multiple school districts. He threatened school districts and gets away with being paid off with taxpayers money. The financial records of filing bankruptcy through this same unethical behavioral time and time again, he had no regard with…

The board president informed Mrs. Garza that she needed to refrain from making personal attacks as per legal counsel.

Mrs. Garza continued saying, "He had no regard for people's livelihoods and pushed hard-working people out, dividing the community. I hope that the person that is named interim this evening takes a look at the disaster that was left behind in 8 short months and picks up the pieces and begins rebuilding this once amazing district with the best interest of students and all staff at heart, and will also respect all staff regardless of education level or titles. Not too long ago, we had a superintendent that during the audit was allowed to leave and got away with all that was allowed to transpire during the audit finding. Only you know if she got paid off or not, but enough of allowing superintendents to come destroy our district at taxpayers' expense – wash their hands and take off. On your next superintendent search, please do the taxpayers and children of this District a favor and do your homework diligently so that you are not faced again with destruction left behind. Thank you. Happy holiday to all and to Dr. Coronado, Feliz Navidad and remember to be kind."

> Julie Ann Valdez, 1103 Stone Street, Weslaco, Texas

"Good evening, I'm here to talk about the issues pertaining to superintendent employment. I'm gonna try to be as broad and vague as possible because I'm not here to target anyone. I'm not here to specifically name people but I do have a concern as a tax and community member and that is accountability and fiscal responsibility. What accountability measure is being like – what evaluation system is the superintendent held by, by the Board, because there's rumors going around that, you know, superintendents are getting paid off. At one point, three superintendents were all receiving a paycheck from the school district. Fiscally, that is irresponsible, not when you guys were here, before. At one point in WISD history, there were three superintendents and they were all receiving a paycheck. So, my thing here, you have classes without teachers - you have real, real issues, and what's going on here is someone decides, or a group of you decide to get rid of the superintendent; whatever, and he's released early from his duties. The question is, 'Is he being paid off?' If he's being paid off, that's fiscally irresponsible because that's money that could be sent to the classrooms. That's money that could be given to teachers, that's money that can be used for something better than paying off somebody because whatever issues, you know, whatever transpired. One school board member at one point said we don't pay people to not work. I'm paraphrasing, he didn't exactly say that but it's a paraphrase to we don't pay people to not work, but it seems to me we pay superintendents to not work time and time again. Not just this one; other ones have gotten away with getting a paycheck or getting paid off or a settlement or whatever, and going away. That's fiscally irresponsible and that goes to the question of why is this going on. Why are they getting paid time and time again? Is there no evaluation system, nothing to hold these people accountable, no documentation to where you could actually dismiss these individuals if they're getting paid without getting paid? I'm not sure if that's like a legality of their contracts or something but this nonsense has to stop. I divert to Mrs. Diana Garza where she says, 'Please do your due diligence, research, and hire a superintendent that's gonna instill confidence in the community again' because right now, me as a former educator and a taxpayer and community member, I have no faith. I have no expectations that things are going to get better for this District. I have a niece and nephew that go to this school district. I'm not gonna say their names, but honestly I shutter – like to think that they're going into this district, and honestly, like with everything that's going on and all this stuff, just do your research, please. I know you guys try to do your best. I know you guys have a difficult position and a difficult job, but please research your due diligence and let's break this cycle, this toxic cycle of getting superintendent after superintendent after superintendent. Thank you."

IV. Closed Meeting to Discuss:

The Board convened in closed meeting at 5:48 p.m. to discuss the following information:

1. Discussion Regarding the Superintendent's Employment Including a Possible Voluntary Resignation Agreement (Texas Government Code 551.074)

2. Consultation with Attorney Regarding Legal Issues Pertaining to the Superintendent's Employment Including Possible Resignation Agreement (Texas Government Code 551.071)

3. Discussion Regarding the Possibility of Naming an Acting/Interim Superintendent (Texas Government Code 551.074)

V. Reconvene in Open Meeting:

The Board returned to open meeting at 6:26 p.m.

1. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Superintendent's Employment Including a Possible Voluntary Resignation Agreement

Mr. Ben Castillo made the motion to approve the superintendent's voluntary resignation agreement. Mr. Marcos De Los Santos seconded the motion.

Comments from the Board Members:

> Dr. Jaime Rodriguez

"In regards to this, it's not an easy decision. I get it; you know sometimes agreements don't work out and parties have to go separate ways, but I do feel like it's something that should have been handled a little differently. I don't feel that as a district we should be held liable for any agreements that might be out there. You know, and if there is some wrongdoing in either party, you know I think, in my opinion, that should come to light and we shouldn't have to be held liable for anything that might come out of this agreement and that's my two cents on it there. I know it's gonna get defended there and that's all I have to say about it at this point in time."

> Armando Cuellar

"The timing for this is not right in my opinion. I believe that Dr. Coronado has done his very best to move this district forward. He's invested into personnel, bringing people from the outside to move this district forward. He's done a lot of positive things that I'm very pleased with and I just want to say that having worked there and still working with him has been an honor and a privilege. Until everybody decides, he's still my superintendent and he's done, in my opinion, he's done an outstanding job."

> Ben Castillo

"I agree with Dr. Rodriguez as far as his comments that it is a hard decision and it is tough to be up here and to try and make these types of calls. I think, with respect to the decision of whether to enter into a resolution agreement or to move forward with a termination process, I think that decision comes down to cost, time, and length because a termination process although in my opinion, I'm not the lawyer for the district, but I do think that we would meet that threshold of just cause if we were to pursue it; but going down that route, that process by statute is just complicated and lawyers are involved and it's just a very lengthy process and by entering into an agreement like this, it saves everybody the time and effort to go through something like this and at the end of the day I think even the cost when you kind of do a cost-benefit analysis it washes out. Even to the point where it's just a length thing. Because as long as this is pending – well it's pending, and we've got to deal with it and the community has to deal with it. If we go this route, if the Board decides to go this route and approve an agreement, it's done after tonight and we can move forward. That's kind of where I stand."

> Jesse Trevino

"For me, there's no reason to hold on to something. We need to move forward and the community needs to, or hopefully, the community will trust us that we did keep everything in mind and we voted on what's best for the community. I think we've all sat up here and we've seen and we witnessed things that were not to our liking and not, you know something that I'm going to stand behind so that's why I decided to move in this direction."

> Isidoro Nieto

"I think if we would have done it in a little bit more professional and ethical way, this situation would have never been where it is right now. Dr. Coronado did a good job, but again, we're gonna spend taxpayers money for a reasonable amount, right? Had he been evaluated like everybody gets evaluated whether it's a principal, a counselor, whoever. They get evaluated first before you proceed or before they resign. Everybody is entitled to that, each person, each of you. That was my concern. Whatever the Board decides, we'll move forward and hire an interim, and go forward and eventually get a superintendent that will benefit all seven that are up here, and we can move forward and get this district back to where it was. That's all I have to say."

> Marcos De Los Santos

"Being a board member there's something that I realize. I've only been an elected official for two years but what I've learned very quickly is that there is policies and regulations and things in place that really prevent officials from being transparent from the community and even the media from seeing the true story and seeing some of the true actions and things that happen here. I will say that I do believe that we need to go in a different direction in the best interests of our students, our parents, our staff, and our taxpayers. I am in disagreement in some of the settlements here, but I understand the cost breakdown and analysis that Trustee Castillo broke down. There's some truth to it because we could have easily gone a different direction but this is probably in the best interest of, like I said, all parties involved. Every decision, like I said since the beginning, that I make is in the best interest of students and our community and so I'll end there with that."

> Jaclyn Sustaita

"We are expected to work together as a team of eight and we're expected to have trust and honesty and transparency between us. What we do here is a trickle effect down to the rest of our schools in the district, so when something is a little broken I think all of us as educators try to find a solution to how can we fix what's broken, and sometimes it's not an easy one. Sometimes people might agree, might not agree, but the best decision for us at this time was to do this."

A vote was called on the motion made by Ben Castillo and seconded by Marcos De Los Santos motion to approve the superintendent's voluntary resignation agreement. Voting in favor of the motion were Ben Castillo, Jesse Trevino, Marcos De Los Santos, and Board President Jaclyn Sustaita. Voting against the motion were Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Armando Cuellar, and Isidoro Nieto. Motion carried with a 4/3 vote.

2. Discussion and Possible Action to Appoint an Acting/Interim Superintendent

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos made the motion to appoint Dr. Richard Rivera as Acting/Interim Superintendent for the Weslaco Independent School District and for the Board to authorize the President to enter into contract negotiations as discussed in executive session. Mr. Jesse Trevino seconded the motion.

Voting in favor of the motion were Armando Cuellar, Ben Castillo, Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Jesse Trevino, Marcos De Los Santos, Isidoro Nieto, and Board President Jaclyn Sustaita. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.