

RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

MEASURE O CITIZENS' BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, September 17, 2025 at 5:30 P.M. - John W. North High School

Call Meeting to Order:

After touring the John W. North High School campus, Chair Beeman commenced the Measure O Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee meeting at 6:17PM.

Members Present:

Art Alcaraz, Chani Beeman, Nick Corbo, Lara E. Martin, Ashley Peake, Oswaldo Puerta, Richard Vandenberg

Member Absent:

H. Martin de'Campo, Douglas Kroon, Michael Osmon, Jag Patel, Matthew Stowe, Beiwei Tu

Staff Present:

Dr. Sonia Llamas, Jodi Gonzales, Orin Williams, Timothy DeLand, Renee Castro, Karyn Dowden, George Magana, Rusty Slota

Consultants Present:

Tarana Alam and Marshall Mirzada from KeyAnalytics; Jennifer Bradlee of Best, Best & Krieger; Abigail Montesinos and Brian Skajem from Tilden-Coil Constructors

Community Members Present:

None

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all committee members, staff, and guests present.

Welcome and Introduction of Members and Support Staff

All present Committee members introduced themselves, including new member Oswaldo Puerta serving as a business representative, while absent members were noted.

Chair Beeman introduced Superintendent Dr. Sonia Llamas, who then addressed the committee, expressing appreciation for their service and commitment.

Dr. Llamas proceeded to share updates and cause of delay for the Ofelia Valdez-Yeager Eastside Elementary School project due to new Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulations which require the District to collect and submit new soil samples and enter an environmental oversight program.

Dr. Llamas elaborated that recent testing identified contaminant levels that exceeded the allowable limits for breaking ground; to this point Mr. Williams added there were small amounts of lead and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) detected in the soil, likely originating from residential structures built in the 1890s and demolished in the 1950s or 1960s. Mr. Williams explained the soil will be fully mitigated to ensure safety for children, further stating that the primary challenge involves the time and administrative requirements of the remediation process under newer, stricter DTSC standards, rather than the severity of the contamination itself. Dr. Llamas further explained, as a result, the project will face a 6–8-month delay, thus pushing the school's opening from mid-year to the Fall of 2028, resulting in the overall project delay of 1 year.

Dr. Llamas spoke on the District's efforts to lobby in Sacramento to accelerate the project, which included involvement from the Governor, to shorten the timeline, but these efforts were unsuccessful. The time during the remediation delay will be used to perfect project's drawings and address other planning items. Dr. Llamas also invited recommendations from the committee on who could be of help in support of lobbying for the school.

Mr. Williams, in answer to the committee's inquiry, further elaborated that his understanding is the DTSC is not motivated to accelerate the process, as the new standards and extended timeline generate fees for this State agency.

Afterwards, Ms. Gonzales, Principal of John W. North High School, also shared her gratitude to the committee, District, and community for their support, further highlighting Rene Castro for the success of keeping the project on track.

Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda:

Public Comment Instructions were read by Chair Beeman. No public comments were received.

Staff Reports/Discussion Items:

1. Measure O Project Updates for Casa Blanca Elementary, Ophelia Valdez-Yeager (Eastside), Highgrove II Elementary, and STEM Education Center

Mr. DeLand presented an update to the opening of Casa Blanca, confirming the grand opening ceremony was held on August 5th, and proceeded to share that the project is substantially complete with small punch list repairs remaining, resulting in finishing on time and under budget. Mr. DeLand shared that there are approximately 400 students attending the new school, in answer to Chair Beeman's inquiry, and total capacity of 750 students.

Mr. DeLand then presented an update on Ofelia Valdez-Yeager Eastside Elementary School, and that the District is discussing boundary scenarios as the current Eastside area boundaries are complex, with students transported to neighboring schools. Mr. DeLand listed the six different boundary scenarios: Option 1 would have Ofelia's attendance projected at 856 students, Longfellow would have 804 and Emerson would have a net gain of 57 students; Option 2 retains a specific area at Alcott, limiting future growth; Option 3 tightens the new school's boundary by removing Areas A, B, and C to reduce enrollment to 711 students.; Option 4 reassigns Area D to Longfellow, which is closer and within walking distance but would increase enrolment with 1,000 students; Option 5 included students from the University Avenue area and was dismissed, as it would exceed the new school's capacity; Option 6 establishes a more compact square shaped boundary so Longfellow remains within capacity and Emerson gains additional students. Mr. Williams confirmed the school was named at the June Board meeting, to Ms. Martin's inquiry.

Mr. DeLand confirmed these options were presented at a Board Workshop in September for feedback and proceeded to explain that the community's feedback was shared by a QR code poll used to gather initial opinions, and a universally more accessible poll will be released to gather further feedback.

Mr. DeLand then proceeded to share updates on the Highgrove II Elementary school project, summarizing first the history of this project, stating it is currently on hold and the Board has reviewed facility needs options in a study session on September 5th. Mr. DeLand addressed current concerns to Chair Beeman's inquiries regarding the significant number of portable classrooms remaining on the site and their current conditions (7 of which had been recently renovated over the Summer) considering the growing student population in the area, and the schools location on county line presenting risks of losing enrollment to neighboring schools if facilities are not competitive. To avoid this, Mr. DeLand explained, the District is reaching out to the community for input on what to add to this campus.

Mr. DeLand then provided an update on the STEM Education Center, beginning with the campus history, the preliminary site plan approval by the California Department of Education (CDE), and the currently drafted Lease and Options agreements, and Environmental Impact Report (EIR), pending consideration by the University of California Board of Regents at a future date. Mr. DeLand confirmed a delay in the review process being attributed to the onboarding of the new UC Riverside Chancellor, and confirmed once agreements are approved by the Regents, the School Board will consider these documents. This will not be a Measure O project. In answer to Ms. Martin's and Chair Beeman's inquiries regarding what expenditures will be paid overall by Measure O for this project, Ms. Alam confirmed what has been spent to date is tied to acceptable CEQA fees, not construction, as confirmed by Mr. DeLand. To this, Mr. Williams further added the District has allocated reserve funds within the budget for final costs associated with any potential lingering similar invoices.

2. Measure O Financial Updates Presentation

Ms. Alam presented an overview of the financial update for the Measure O \$392M bond program and financial status for all active projects – including all funds generated to date from Measure O (\$370M), what has been spent to date (\$353.8M) and what remains (\$16.5M). Ms. Alam confirmed that the remaining \$40M in authorized bonds will be issued this year, as well as the expenditures occurring since the previous committee meeting (\$14.5M).

Ms. Alam further presented an overview of the project budgets, listing Measure O fund contributions, and other contributing revenue sources such as State (SFP) Funds, Developer Fees, and Community Facilities Districts (CFD's).

Ms. Alam addressed committee inquiries to clarify the "substantial completion" means construction is completed, but project tasks remain, such as punch list items.

Ms. Martin inquired about additional expenditures presented for Arlington, as she understood this project is complete. Mr. DeLand and Mr. Williams clarified the original scope of work is complete, but there was a separate, small additional project added which included changing a sound booth, and additions to create an outdoor learning environment, which are the last expenditures shown

in this report. Ms. Martin asked if there was a process to allocate funds currently tied to "Undistributed" labeled projects, to which Ms. Alam explained that these are general costs tied to programmatic, non-project related expenses such as legal fees or audits tied to a general facilities project code (named "Undistributed") to track these expenses.

3. District Staff Report on September 4, 2025, Board Meeting Outcomes

Mr. Williams presented on the outcomes and discussions of the September 4th Board meeting, explaining that the Board is still exploring project options (such as Highgrove) as well as readjusting boundaries for growing schools. After consideration and input, five different scenarios will be studied. Mr. Williams continued to explain the Board's intent to provide clarity on the District project direction and address all questions on priorities, and needs, by developing a data-driven Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) to guide future projects and potential bond measures, with a key focus on creating a transparent project prioritization matrix to identify schools with the greatest need.

Chair Beeman emphasized the importance of the LRFP, noting that it informs the District's potential need for future bond measures as a means of funding school projects, and demonstrates how schools receive funding. Ms. Martin disagreed, stating that schools receive funding from other revenue sources and expressing concern about the appropriateness of discussing potential future bonds within the committee.

Consent Calendar:

Approval of June 10, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair Beeman asked if there was any discussion on the minutes, as there were none, asked to make a motion to approve these minutes as submitted. Mr. Alcaraz made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Peake.

A vote was taken via roll call vote per the Brown Act, and was approved unanimously.

The motion carried.

Action Items:

Selection of Annual Report Items:

The committee selected emphasizing in the report: the tour of John W. North High School, receiving an update regarding the DTSC regulations and its impact on Ofelia

Valdez-Yeager Eastside Elementary School, welcoming the new Superintendent and school Principal, and the addition of new committee member, Mr. Puerta.

Committee Member Agenda Requests

Mr. Alcaraz requested the committee receive a report on the projected cost change for the Ofelia Valdez-Yeager Eastside Elementary School project due to DTSC regulation changes. Mr. Corbo requested an update on the issuance of the remaining \$40M in Measure O bonds. Ms. Martin requested a report from Ms. Alam or Ms. Power on the financial impact and taxpayer savings from the recent bond refinancing.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be Tuesday, December 9th at Harrison Elementary School at 5:30PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.