



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:
Place:
Location:
Date:
Time:

Special Board Meeting
Board Room/Virtual
319 W. Fourth Street
May 24, 2021
5:33 P.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/x0zZazj9DIE>

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

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

II. Establishment of a Quorum

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

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

III. Public Comments

The public had the opportunity to participate in public comments by registering no later than 5:15 p.m. at the following web link: <https://www.wisd.us/superintendentboard/new-page>.

There were no public comments.

IV. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Consider Approval to Increase Extra Duty Pay for Staff that Provides Instructional Support for Students During the Summer Recreation Program

The Superintendent recommended that the Board approve to increase the extra-duty pay for staff that works during the Summer Recreation Program effective May 31, 2021 through July 8, 2021 from \$18.00 to \$25.00 per hour.

Data shows that the pandemic has resulted in learning losses to include a mental health crisis for students. In an effort to reduce and reverse long-term negative effects, WISD's plan is to implement a strong learning recovery program during summer along with a strong and safe Summer Recreation program aimed at assisting the students with mental stress through physical activity. The goal is to hire highly qualified teachers/coaches to help provide instructional support to these programs.

The current extra-duty pay rate has been in place for approximately 16 years. The increase in pay will help principals recruit coaches from the middle schools and high schools that will supervise the activities for the summer school programs. The increase in pay will be aligned with the extra-duty pay recently approved for the summer school teachers.

Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to approve the increase for extra-duty pay for staff that works during the Summer Recreation Program to provide instructional support to students effective May 31, 2021 through July 8, 2021. Jesse Trevino seconded the motion.

Questions from the Board:

>Mr. Jesse Trevino wanted to know if the increase could be higher since the rate had been the same for the last 16 years.

Dr. Canales informed the Board that staff did an analysis of hourly rates paid throughout the neighboring school districts to staff who work during the summer recreation program and thus, recommended to increase the hourly rate from \$18.00 to \$25.00 for this year. The district draws money from state compensatory funds to fund the summer school instructional program targeted for at-risk students. The summer recreation program is funded through local funds.

> Will the district be able to use ESSER III funds for this program?

•According to Dr. Canales, ESSER III funding is for learning loss recovery programs and cannot be used to fund the summer recreation program.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion made by Andrew Gonzalez and seconded by Jesse Trevino to approve the increase for extra-duty pay for staff that works during the Summer Recreation Program to provide instructional support to students effective May 31, 2021 through July 8, 2021.

V. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Rescind the Authorization of Administration to Solicit Proposals for the Administration of the District's Self-Funded Employee Benefit Program for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

This item was requested by Mr. Marcos De Los Santos and Mr. Andrew Gonzalez.

Marcos De Los Santos made the motion to rescind the authorization of Administration to solicit proposals for the Administration of the District's Self-Funded Employee Benefit Program for fiscal year 2021-2022. Andrew Gonzalez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Consider Renewal of Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Proposal to Administer the District's Self-Funded Employee Benefit Program for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Superintendent Dr. Canales explained that the District had not received the renewal with adequate time to conduct a formal evaluation when the Board took action to solicit proposals. After additional review, the medical renewal offer was acceptable to the District. Based on a rolling 12-month average, BCBS is projecting medical claims to be \$11,117,754, which is slightly higher than current years projected claims of \$11,088,237 for the 20-21 plan year. As of April 30, current medical claims are \$4,432,566.08.

The Administration recommended that the Board approve the renewal of Blue Cross and Blue Shield's proposal to administer the District's self-funded employee benefit program for fiscal year 2021-2022.

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos made the motion to approve the BCBS's renewal proposal to administer the District's self-funded employee benefit program for fiscal year 2021-2022. Andrew Gonzalez seconded the motion.

Mr. Gonzalez mentioned that the Board went out for proposals based on the language, and asked the school attorney if it had been resolved. For informational purposes, Mr. Gonzalez shared that both he and Mr. De Los Santos requested to bring this item back because the district had come to terms with BCBS.

Mrs. Jaelyn Sustaita shared that comments were made that the "New Board" wanted to get rid of BCBS and go out for proposals. She explained that the Board took action to go out for proposals because it would be beneficial for the district, as recommended by the Administration.

Board President Cuellar mentioned that the whole board voted to go out for proposals because of what was going on. The Board wants to ensure that all employees are taken care of when it comes to health insurance. Since the cost of living has increased, they do not want employees to pay more out of their pockets.

Mr. Mike De La Rosa informed the Board that there are no plans to increase employee contributions for this coming plan year.

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos commented that it is their job to represent the community and staff and that is why they ask questions and thus, able to resolve matters in a timely manner. In this case, they were able to mediate the problem and were able to provide the best product to the employees. Nonetheless, he was not happy with the timeline because it was his understanding that this item would come to the Board in March or April, and it came to the Board in May. In the future, he would like critical items to come before the Board with ample time so they can mediate any issues and avoid delays in taking proper action. He would also like staff to be surveyed and to provide feedback on upcoming products.

Mr. Jesse Trevino did not appreciate the comments made because the Board took action based on the recommendation made by the administration. He said, "When we have people within our circle here bad mouthing and saying, 'The new board wanted it, they don't know – there's no need for that, especially when we walked into, supposedly, a lot of problems and they get resolved in less than a week.'" He would appreciate if individuals approach him directly if they have something to say about him, rather than make comments to other people.

Mr. Isidoro Nieto pointed out that the whole board voted unanimously in favor to solicit proposals and to rescind the vote as well; therefore, no one should have said it was the new board.

Mrs. Sustaita made the following comments:

“We have been to trainings where it’s a team of eight, with our administration and cabinet. We have to trust each other and work together for the betterment of the community. And when I feel I have to push somebody up against the wall to do something and then things get done, it gives a sense of mistrust - or can I really trust what you’re telling me is what you’re going to do or it’s the best effort you’ve done. It creates mistrust and that is what we want to avoid. We want to build a better team but in order to do that we have to be clear and upfront and say the truth about everything, not only for ourselves but for our community because they’re the ones – our district, our staff; they’re the ones, not us, it’s not our personal gain - it’s for them. We really need to work on it together.”

Board President Cuellar mentioned that it was his responsibility to keep the Board focused on what is best for the school district. He stated, “Not that we’re going to agree on things all the time because everyone has a right to their opinion but; in essence, we’ve had time to work together and if you’ve been keeping up with what’s going on, we are really coming together as a Board. When it comes down to it, we’re the ones that are going to be making decisions for this school district and I don’t believe that anyone here is going to do anything that is not in the best interest of this school district.” Mr. Cuellar believes that anyone on the Board will come to the aid of each other when it really matters, and they will continue to do what is best for the school district. He would like everyone out there to share concerns in a respectful manner.

Dr. Canales informed the Board that the renewal offer came in on Thursday before the May 10 board meeting and required some time to review. Staff will do their best in the future to request proposals well in advance, to ensure vendors submit proposals in a timely manner to allow staff to review and avoid any delays.

Mrs. Sustaita wanted to know how many agents were working with the district’s insurance and the process for selecting these agents.

Mr. Mike De La Rosa informed the Board that last year members of the Board requested to place the item on the agenda for the selection of agents. This renewal would include the three agents selected at that time. In response to Mr. De Los Santos’ inquiry on prior concerns and the timeline for going out for health insurance proposals, Mr. De La Rosa clarified that the district went out for proposals in April/May 2020, but due to the involvement with Covid-19 procedures and guidelines, this item was placed on the back burner. As they continued with the proposals, a new school attorney was hired and it took some time for staff to brief the school attorney on the process.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion made by Mr. Marcos De Los Santos and seconded by Mr. Andrew Gonzalez to approve the BCBS’s renewal proposal to administer the District’s self-funded employee benefit program for fiscal year 2021-2022.

VII. Discussion and Possible Action on Local Clinic Partnerships (RGV VACS, Curative, Local Pharmacies) for the Vaccination of Children 12 Years and Over to be Provided on District Property and/or Other Sites

This item was requested by Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita and Mr. Jesse Trevino.

The Food and Drug Administration authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech’s coronavirus vaccine for adolescents 12 to 15 years old, enabling millions more Americans to be immunized. Dr. Sergio Garcia and Nurse Coordinator Susan Coffman have been in communication with Hidalgo County HHD, Weslaco Fire Department, Curative, and RGV Vax to establish a plan to ensure all WISD students over 12 years old have access to the COVID-19 vaccine in a timely and efficient manner.

Dr. Canales recommended for the Board to delegate their authority to her to execute contracts with local clinic partnerships (RGV VACS, Curative, local pharmacies) in an effort to provide parents access to vaccination clinics for their children. This will allow the district to proceed without having to come back for board approval at another board meeting. Legal counsel will review all contracts prior to being executed by the Superintendent.

Dr. Jaime Rodriguez made the motion to delegate the authority to the Superintendent to execute contracts with local clinic partnerships (RGV VACS, Curative, local pharmacies) in an effort to provide parents access to vaccination clinics for their children. Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita seconded the motion.

Questions from the Board:

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos:

➤Is Curative providing vaccines and are they free to the public?

- Curative approached the district to offer vaccinations.
- Mr. De La Rosa explained that any agency who provides vaccines gathers information from the individuals when they sign up. Individuals will not get a direct bill. However, the cost of the vaccine is billed to: 1) individual's insurance (if provided), 2) Medicare/Medicaid, or 3) the federal government.

Mr. Andrew Gonzalez:

➤Will the district post information online so parents can sign up their children for the vaccine? He stressed the need to make this information available for parents on the district's website.

- Dr. Canales shared that staff surveyed the parents to see if they were interested in getting their children vaccinated. Dr. Sergio Garcia and Mrs. Susan Coffman have met with Mr. Carlos Robledo from KWES to discuss the process of getting the information out to the parents and students.

Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita requested this item be placed on the agenda because one of the agencies had reached out to offer their service to provide vaccines, but there was no follow up by the District. She felt it was very important to get all kids vaccinated during this pandemic and therefore asked the Superintendent to work with agencies who are willing to provide this service to the District.

Dr. Sergio Garcia informed the Board that he met with RGV VACS on Friday to discuss the services available to the district.

➤Board President Cuellar pointed out that students who do not have the proper vaccinations are not allowed to enroll in school. Therefore, in planning for the new school year, he wanted to know if this would be an issue for students who have not received their COVID vaccine.

According to Mr. De La Rosa, COVID vaccines are on an emergency authorization from the FDA and therefore the district cannot mandate or require it. Mrs. Coffman shared that Senate Bill 1669 is in committee and discussions are being held as to whether there will be no passport needed for any type of immunizations.

Mr. Nieto shared that during a conference session a discussion took place on whether staff could return to work if they had not received the vaccine. However, TEA has not set any guidelines or made this a requirement.

Mrs. Coffman replied that about 75-80% of staff members have been vaccinated. OSHA just passed a law that an employer who mandates the COVID vaccine as part of employment requirements is responsible for any medical (side effects) or problems arising from getting the vaccination. According to Mrs. Coffman, individuals who have received the vaccine are experiencing side effects such as cardiac issues, stomach issues, and systems are increasing in persons who have immune issues.

Mr. De Los Santos requested a presentation from a medical professional who could provide information on actual studies done showing how the vaccine is affecting the youth.

Mrs. Coffman shared that RGV VACS held a vaccine clinic last week and only 165 students showed up. Many people are leery in getting their children vaccinated but according to the CDC, the vaccines are safe for children. Dr. Oakes (Pediatrician) recommends that children be vaccinated if they have problems with a compromised immune system.

Mrs. Sustaita mentioned that she was not aware of the clinic. She recommended that the district find ways to get this information out to parents letting them know that the vaccine is available for their child because there are many parents who want their children vaccinated.

Mrs. Coffman replied that WISD and the City of Weslaco advertised the clinic on their websites, but as they collaborate with other agencies, district staff will be doing phone calls and sending emails because many people do not have Facebook. Dr. Garcia shared that staff is going to promote the information through different resources.

Dr. Canales informed the Board that staff could set up a link so parents could connect and receive information from the CDC to allow parents to make informed decisions for their children.

Mr. Trevino mentioned that there are so many resources available but staff needs to bring them to the Board for approval in order to make them available to the community. He wanted to know if the survey was made available in Spanish as well as any other information going out pertaining to the vaccine. He also asked if the board meetings were available in Spanish.

Dr. Garcia responded that the survey/information that goes out to the employees and the community is made available in both languages. In reference to the board meetings, Dr. Canales said that it would be a challenge to translate the meetings because they are lengthy. However, staff could identify important points from the minutes and translate them in Spanish, but this would occur after the fact. Staff could also post highlights of pertinent information discussed during the meeting on social media for the Spanish speaking community.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion made by Dr. Jaime Rodriguez and seconded by Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita to delegate the authority to the Superintendent to execute contracts with local clinic partnerships (RGV VACS, Curative, local pharmacies) in an effort to provide parents access to vaccination clinics for their children.

VIII. Closed Meeting to Discuss:

The Board convened in closed meeting at 6:18 p.m. to discussion the following items:

A. Personnel Matters (Tex. Gov't Code 551.074)

1. Employment of Personnel – Certified Professional & Non-Contractual 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)

B. 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)

IX. Reconvene in Open Meeting:

The Board returned to open meeting at 7:34 p.m. to take action on the following items:

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

1. Discussion and Possible Action on New Employment – Certified Professional & Non-Contractual Personnel

The Superintendent recommended that the Board approve the recommendation of certified professional and non-contractual personnel as presented.

| CERTIFIED PERSONNEL | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Name | Position | Location |
| 1. Juan Davila | BIM Teacher | Weslaco High School |
| ADDENDUM – CERTIFIED PERSONNEL | | |
| 1. Daniel Zuniga | BIM/Acct Teacher | Weslaco East High School |
| NON-CONTRACTUAL PERSONNEL | | |
| 1. Cecilia J. Ramirez | From: Office Clerk Weslaco East High School | To: Secretary Weslaco High School |

Dr. Jaime Rodriguez made the motion to approve the certified professional and non-contractual personnel as discussed in closed session. Mr. Marcos De Los Santos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and Possible Action on Resignations

The Superintendent recommended that the Board approve the retirements/resignations as presented.

| RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name | Position/Location | Reason/Effective Date |
| 1. Khristopher Hirschmann | Science Teacher Weslaco East High School | Khristopher Hirschmann is relocating to Arizona. His resignation is effective May 28, 2021. |
| 2. Jacqueline S. Padilla | Principal Rico Elementary School | Jacqueline S. Padilla is relocating with her family. Her resignation is effective June 30, 2021. |
| ADDENDUM | | |
| 1. Francisca Aguirre | 2 nd Grade Teacher Gonzalez Elementary School | Francisca Aguirre is retiring after 37 years of service at Weslaco ISD. Her retirement is effective May 28, 2021. |
| 2. Miguel Cerda | CATE Teacher B. Garza Middle School | Miguel Cerda is resigning due to certification issues. His resignation is effective May 28, 2021. |

| | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 3. Cynthia Jimenez | Educational Diagnostician Special Education Department | Cynthia Jimenez is retiring after 30 years in education, with all 30 years of service at Weslaco ISD. Her retirement is effective June 11, 2021. |
|--------------------|---|--|

Mr. Jesse Trevino made the motion to approve the resignations/retirements of certified professional personnel as discussed in closed session. Mr. Isidoro Nieto seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.