



WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
THE RIGHT CHOICE

Dr. Cris Valdez
Interim Superintendent of Schools



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

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

DRAFT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting:
Place:
Location:
Date:
Time:

Special Board Meeting
WISD Board Room/Virtual
319 W. Fourth Street
September 28, 2021
7:14 p.m.

THIS MEETING WAS POSTED ONLINE FOR AT LEAST 72 HOURS. THE MEETING WAS LIVESTREAMED AT THE FOLLOWING WEB LINK: <https://youtu.be/GRcJ2rkodVM>

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Dr. Jaime Rodriguez, Vice President.

II. Establishment of a Quorum

The following board members were present.

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

Board President Armando Cuellar was absent.

III. Public Comments

• Elvia Sandoval, P.O. Box 1191, Mercedes, Texas 78570 (Former WISD Employee)

Mrs. Sandoval addressed the Board in reference to the forensic audit. She thanked the board members who made it possible to have the forensic audit conducted and stated, "You did what was right regardless of how your political career would be affected." She continued with the following remarks, "After reading part of

the audit online I felt compelled to come tonight to express to you how one individual with power and authority was able to control who was hired in this district regardless of whether one individual was recommended by interviewing committee and the principal. My daughter was one of those individuals affected by the action of the person in charge of HR. How can the Board allow someone to affect the livelihood of another human being? As a former board member, I know what it is like to hold the position which all of you do presently. I would have been very upset to find out, even though the proper hiring steps took place, a candidate would be rejected regardless of the recommendation of the principal and the interviewing committee. During the hiring process, my daughter went through unfair and unusual treatment. Although the district audit shows only one interview, I would like the Board to be aware that this process took place twice. The second interview included an added composition portion and a different interview committee. Even after being interviewed twice by an interviewing committee, and approved by those committees and the principal, she was told she had to go through HR. After going through all the steps, my daughter's name was not presented to the Board for approval. Now that this audit has been completed and you can see the injustices that have taken place, what steps will you take to remedy the situation in particular. I will now read part of the audit that mentions my daughter in the event that you have not had a chance to read this part of the audit. 'As part of our investigation, we identified multiple instances in which candidates recommended by the interviewing committee where teacher positions were not approved or being submitted to the HR department.

A summary of these instances is provided below:

"On December 22, 2017, the HR Department posted a vacancy for an English/Language Arts teacher position at Mary Hoge Middle School to replace Antonio Arredondo. The position was closed on January 8, 2018 with 26 candidates submitting applications and 9 candidates were interviewed. On January 11, 2018, the Principal at Mary Hoge Middle School (Mr. Pablo Vallejo) submitted a recommendation for employment form to Melva Segura (HR) recommending Celinda Sandoval for the ELA teacher position to replace Antonio Arredondo. Based on discussion with Mr. Vallejo, after submitting the recommendation, Mrs. Segura notified him that a candidate recommended by the interviewing committee, Ms. Sandoval, would not be recommended to the Board and that he would need to recommend a different candidate or hire a permanent substitute teacher for the remainder of the year. In response, Mr. Vallejo submitted a memo to Mrs. Segura on January 15, 2018, outlining the basis of the interviewing committee's recommendation. Despite the interviewing committee's recommendation to hire Ms. Sandoval and subsequent to Mrs. Segura justifying the decision, Ms. Sandoval was never recommended to the Board for this position. In addition, Ms. Sandoval would have been prescreened by the HR Department when she submitted her application indicating that she met the requirements for the position and had a valid teacher certificate. I would like to thank you for your time and hope you realize what was done to my daughter was an injustice, and that you will find a way to fix it."

IV. Presentation and Discussion of Corrective Action Plan for the Human Resources Department in Response to the Forensic Audit Findings and Recommendations

Dr. Cris Valdez, Interim Superintendent, made the following comments:

"First, I would like to share that Weslaco ISD is a school district built on a solid foundation of excellence. We are 100 years strong and every organization that exist strives to become better, and we are no different. Last Monday we received the Tidwell & Weaver LLC presentation of the forensic audit final findings and recommendations based on report of Investigation #1 Human Resources. That's a powerful tool. It's a tool that can be used in positive ways to refine systems and to enhance processes. It's a tool of evaluation. It's not necessarily seen as something negative; it's positive because every organization exist to become better and we have as educators, as executive leaders of this school system, carefully examined the reports. Like I said, it serves as a powerful tool to move forward and to make Weslaco ISD better. District administration

has developed a living document and it is dynamic! It is a corrective action plan. It's like a district improvement plan that takes place on an annual basis, and its purpose is to remedy or mitigate the deficiencies within a department, and it's also to just simply refine our systems and strengthen our internal controls."

Mr. Daniel Budimir and Ms. Dora Lisa Zavala, Human Resources Directors, reviewed the recommendations and presented the action plan for the Human Resources Department.

<p style="text-align: center;">Forensic Audit Report of Investigation #1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Human Resources</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Summary of Action Plan</p>
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Recommendations by Weaver & Tidwell, L.L.P., Report of Investigation #1, p. 10-11, 70-71

- #1 - *We recommend that the District consider implementing a process for documenting instances in which a candidate recommended by the Interviewing Committee is not approved, outlining the reasons why the candidate was not approved and include authorization from the Superintendent.*
- #2 - *We recommend that personnel in the HR Department be cross-trained on other duties and responsibilities within the HR department.*
- #3 - *We recommend that job postings be verified for accuracy prior to being posted. We also recommend that the calculation of annual pay increases be verified either by Personnel from the Payroll Department or by another employee within the HR Department after being processed by the HR Department.*
- #4 - *We recommend that the District consider implementing a formal process for reviewing and updating job descriptions as the majority of job descriptions have not been updated in the past five (5) years.*
- #5 - *We recommend that the District review its current methodology for implementing pay increases and ensure the methodology is consistent with objectives of the Board, as well as best practices for school districts. We also recommend that the District provide additional clarity and transparency to employees regarding the process and methodology for administering pay increases.*
- #6 - *We recommend that the Board review the District's current practices related to travel allowances for key personnel, including a review of positions eligible to receive travel allowances based on frequency of required travel, as well as travel allowance amounts per position relative to frequency of required travel in and in comparison to other school districts.*
- #7 - *We recommend that the District consider a review of the current organizational structure to ensure the functional alignment is consistent with the District's strategic vision, and goals and objectives of the Superintendent.*
- #8 - *In our review of the HR Department's processes and procedures as outlined in Section E of this Executive Summary and Report, we identified and recommend certain processes and procedures for consideration to improve the District's internal controls and risk mitigation. (Items below found on pages 70 - 71 of Report of Investigation #1 - Human Resources)*
 - a. *The District should consider implementing procedures in the candidate evaluation process for interviewing committee members and other District employees who participate in the hiring process to complete a confidentiality agreement and conflict of interest disclosure. Confidentiality agreements should be completed prior to reviewing a list of candidates, and conflict of interest disclosures should be completed once the candidate list is complete.*

- b. The HR Department should implement processes and procedures to monitor the completion of required trainings for all employees. Completing the required trainings should be part of a new hire checklist. Additionally ongoing/refresher training should be monitored by the HR Department to ensure that District employees have current compliance training and continuing education training for their professional certificates. This could be included as part of the annual employee evaluations.*
- c. The HR Department should include on a new hire checklist the verification of employee information entered into the District's systems to ensure that employee pay rates, deductions and benefit selections are complete and accurate.*
- d. The HR Department should implement procedures to track the completion of contracts once they have been sent to employees to sign and return. The HR Department should maintain a list of issued contracts and follow-up on outstanding contracts on a regular basis to ensure that contracts are in place for positions necessary for the next academic year.*
- e. As part of the process to update job profiles and descriptions, the criteria for employee performance evaluations should be updated. Both the updates to the job profile/description and the performance evaluation criteria should be submitted to District Administration for approval. The performance evaluation criteria should also be provided to employees at the same time as the job descriptions are provided.*

Below are the goals that will be implemented to remedy and mitigate the deficiencies in the Human Resources Department. Mr. Budimir said that the implementation of the plan would be critical as they move forward.

GOAL 1: Rebrand HR Department Image

Strategies:

- Build relationships with inter- and intra-office staff
 - Meet with HR department staff weekly
 - Meet with principals and directors/administrators bi-weekly
 - Publish a monthly HR newsletter
- Establish a system of transparency with recruitment, acquisition, onboarding and staff development processes
 - Identify a tool(s) to be used to facilitate the process within the district systems
 - Set procedures and timelines for systemic entering and updating of information
 - Facilitate training for required personnel

GOAL 2: Streamline Departmental Systems and Procedures

Strategies:

- Define interview and hiring process/framework and procedures for all district positions.
- Cross train all HR staff on duties and responsibilities.
- Develop and implement an electronic procedures manual for HR Department outlining duties, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Develop and implement procedures for reviewing and updating job descriptions.

Recommendation 2, 3, 4, 5, 8a, 8c, 8d, Report of Investigation #1 - Human Resources, p. 10, 11, 71

GOAL 3: Automate Recruitment, Acquisition, and Records Management

The HR Directors will be looking at the district's system of automation to ensure the department is using it effectively. This strategy should provide more transparency.

Strategies:

- Research capabilities of Alio Applicant Portal to identify whether it will meet the needs of the district or if we need to purchase a new software package.
- Utilize the district's current software database, Alio for the electronic storage and retrieval of personnel files and records.
- Implement electronic contract distribution for contract employees and electronic reasonable assurance forms for hourly employees.

Recommendation 2, 3, 8b, 8c, 8d, Report of Investigation #1 - Human Resources, p. 10, 11, 71

GOAL 4: Reform the Onboarding Process

- >Staff is doing too many things by hand/paper, which is too time consuming.
- >HR Directors want to ensure that they not only reform this process but automate it as well.

Strategies:

- Implement timeline for onboarding process from board approval to job-site report for duty.
- Implement electronic onboarding process for new hires.
- Develop/reform process for notifying approved employees after board meeting.
- Streamline coordination with other departments to expedite benefits, payroll, email address, etc.

Recommendation 8b, 8c, 8d, Report of Investigation #1 - Human Resources, p. 71

GOAL 5: Organize the Professional Development Process

Strategies:

- Establish procedures for monitoring the completion of required employee training
 - Update checklist for required training
 - Implement tracking system for compliance and continuing education training
 - Coordinate professional development with annual employee evaluations

Recommendation 8b, Report of Investigation #1 - Human Resources, p. 71

- >The HR Directors emphasized the need to monitor and document training that is taking place.
- >HR will reinforce utilization of systems in place for documentation purposes.
- >The goal for the HR Department is to build trust within the community.

Questions/Concerns Addressed by the Board & Responses from Administration:

- >Concern with job grades of employees who are in a position and are not certified.
 - According to HR, this process is being reviewed. A TASB study of the compensation plan is underway. Since it is a lengthy process, HR expects to receive the report sometime in March.
- >Is staff looking at the positions addressed in the compensation plan?
 - Staff is closely looking at the qualifications for each employee. Once TASB completes the study, staff will ensure that they adhere to the compensation plan.
- >Customer service: Notify applicants who were not interviewed that they did not qualify for that particular position.
 - HR staff will work hard to provide good customer service to all applicants.

- Emphasize on building positive relationships.
- Not in favor of courtesy interviews because it causes influence on the hiring process and affects the validity of the process.
 - As per Mr. Budimir, “Those who are being interviewed have earned the interview and they are worthy of our community and our students.”
 - As per Ms. Zavala, HR will be meeting with principals and directors on how they will review the vetted applicants and select those who fit the profile they are looking for.
 - The interviewing process should be consistent for all positions.
- As per Mrs. Sustaita, the community needs to be aware that the Board wants to approve the best-qualified candidates for this district. The Board will be going with the recommendation of the interviewing committee.
- As per Mr. Trevino, individuals hired who were unqualified were given one, three, and even ten years to get qualified and then compensated. For future positions, he would like HR to carefully review the job descriptions and always strive to hire the best-qualified candidates.

The Board members expressed their support for the new HR Directors.

V. Presentation and Discussion of Corrective Action Plan for the Business and Operations Department in Response to the Forensic Audit Findings and Recommendations

Mr. Andres Sanchez, Assistant Superintendent of Business & Finance, reviewed the recommendations and presented the Action Plan for the Business and Operations Department.

**Forensic Audit
Report of Investigation #2
Payments to Vendors and Contractors and Procedures
Concerning
Purchasing and Procurement

Summary of Action Plan**

**Business and Operations
Recommendations**

1. **District expenditures for awards and incentives during FY2015 – FY2020 were approximately \$4.9 million, the majority of which was spent on t-shirts and apparel for students and staff. We recommend that the District review the budget for awards and incentives to ensure the use of funds is aligned with the District’s goals and objectives.**

ACTION PLAN:

One action that has already taken place is the setting of a \$25.00 limit for any and all purchases of incentives for staff per semester. We will be looking at scenarios where an employee works in multiple campuses or is a department employee that works at a school; they can only receive \$25.00 per semester of employee incentives. They cannot get an incentive from every school or from a school and their department.

The awards are given to staff members, especially teachers at schools for their hard work and as a motivational item.

The cost of awards for students have been from \$10, \$11 & \$12 and \$8, \$9 & \$10 in the last 2 or 3 years for ES, MS and HS students.

Questions/Concerns Addressed by the Board and Responses from Administration:

- Provide a report on amount budgeted for Awards & Incentives
 - Awards and Incentives encompasses end-of-year awards, trophies, certificates, jackets, etc.
 - Staff will pull data and provide an update on a historical trend.
- Possibly set an amount such as \$300,000 and work backwards to control spending.
 - The district should see a significant decrease by reducing the amount on apparel items.
- Ensure purchase orders are being done prior to making any purchases.
- Provide a copy of guidelines where it indicates the district can purchase shirts if it is under a specific amount. Is this expense allowable?
- Call other school districts to see what triggered them to stop making this expenditure after an audit.

2. **While the Board implemented controls for awards and incentives purchases in 2017 to require quotes from multiple vendors for purchases over \$3,000, in recent years the Business Office has provided authorization to the campuses to purchase holiday incentives without obtaining multiple quotes due to the short time window from the time funds are added to the campus budgets. We recommend that the District plan ahead for budgeting of holiday incentive funds to ensure that campuses are able to obtain competitive quotes from multiple vendors.**

ACTION PLAN:

For the 2021-2022 fiscal year budget, Administration will provide the budget for student incentives to the schools after the end of the first six-week period to find out the enrollment figure at the time. For future years, if funds are available at the time of budget preparation, an amount will be added to the initial budget allocation for the schools and will be earmarked for “First Semester Student Incentives”.

This process should allow for schools to have ample time to get the required three quotes from various vendors for the student incentive items needed.

Questions/Concerns Addressed by the Board and Responses from Administration:

- According to Mr. Trevino, purchases were made to favor a particular vendor which has been done for the last three years. “It was known that everything was funneled to one company.” He believes that getting quotes is the fair thing to do.
 - As per Dr. Valdez, principals choose who they want to do business with. As a former principal, she selected the vendor. Staff will need to come up with a way to control the selection of vendors at the campus level.
- As per Mr. De Los Santos, district staff needs to make sure campuses have instructional resources prior to spending money elsewhere. Too much money is spent on incentives (gifting cups, shirts, etc. to employees).
 - Where is the supervision and monitoring of items being purchased?

Dr. Rodriguez commented that he was concerned with the statements made which insinuated that Mr. Sanchez was funneling money to one vendor when there was nothing in the audit that showed he instructed anyone to use a particular vendor.

Mr. Nieto commented that as a former principal at WISD he was never told to go to a certain vendor to purchase items. The decision was left up to the committee and the principals.

Mr. Gonzalez said that campuses are going to go with the business who offers a good price and a timely service. The audit revealed that the principals chose their own vendors.

3. We determined that the District has a fleet of 87 school buses, including 21 spare buses (24% of total fleet). While the main fleet of buses were all purchased in the last three (3) years following the June 2018 flood, the District's 21 spare buses all range from 15-19 years of service, with 14 of 21 spare buses over 200,000 miles. We recommend that the Board consider implementing a Board policy for student bus fleet management with a framework for bus replacement, as well as a target ratio for spare buses compared to the overall fleet.

ACTION PLAN:

Administration is researching adding a regulation provision to policy CNB, Transportation Management, District Vehicles. CNB (REGULATION) is intended to ensure the safety of District students, the general public, and drivers of District vehicles. CNB (REGULATION) can also outline vehicle maintenance policy and when District vehicles can be sent to auction, i.e. "Vehicles will be sent to auction when mileage reaches 200,000 or when repair estimates are greater than the vehicles actual cash value".

Maintenance policies regarding aesthetic repairs (paint and body work) can also be added, i.e. aesthetic repairs will only be authorized if the damage is resulting from an accident or severely diminishes operational effectiveness.

Current policies and procedures can also be included to address safety, licensing, accident procedures, and other operational procedures.

Questions/Concerns Addressed by the Board and Responses from Administration:

- >Does the District have documentation that shows repairs were necessary? Who supervised the process in getting these repairs done?
 - A purchase order is generated when repairs are needed. The shop foreman sends a request to the Transportation Director for his approval and then Mr. De La Rosa approves the requisition.
- >Why is Mr. De La Rosa overseeing the Transportation Department?
 - Mr. De La Rosa oversees the Risk Management which involves evaluating accidents and operational procedures. He does not go directly to the Bus Barn to make sure the repair that is being requested is necessary since the department has a director who oversees this department.
- >How many buses are out on route?
 - About 65 (Information will be included in the weekly update)
 - In the future, staff will get quotes for the preventative maintenance program or do a request for proposals.
- >Adhere to cut-off dates (deadlines) for vendors submitting proposals. The process should not be reopened to allow certain vendors to submit proposals.
 - ›District needs to have a system in place to prevent this from happening again.
- >Why place people in positions they are not qualified?
- >Provide information on the update regarding the regulation provision added to policy CNB by Austin ISD.

4. **We recommend that the District review and potentially modify (if necessary) the procurement process for bus repair and maintenance expenditures to ensure that the process meets the District’s guidelines for obtaining multiple quotes and is also aligned with the Transportation Department’s goals for timeliness of repairs and maintenance. Currently the Transportation Department does not obtain multiple quotes due to the delay and difficulty in obtaining quotes from multiple vendors for repairs (i.e.,towing, disassembly and diagnostics).**

ACTION PLAN:

The current approved vendors have all listed “diagnostic service” in their proposal - with time permitting and if the bus or vehicle can be safely driven; we are recommending that a diagnostic assessment be done prior to creating a requisition/purchase order for the repairs.

Explore the possibility of setting a limit (cap) on bus repair costs per vendor; once that cap amount is reached, Administration will temporarily suspend work to that vendor pending a review and assessment of the repairs done.

Establish a review and monitoring program to assess the cost effectiveness of this program.

Questions/Concerns Addressed by the Board and Responses from Administration:

- Overtime: Make sure Transportation staff is working the hours submitted for payment.
 - As per Mr. De La Rosa, the District does the maintenance for the entire fleet. Several bus drivers know how to change the oil in the buses and they take care of the daily preventative maintenance of the fleet and maintenance/security vehicles. Some drivers specialize in upholstery, so they are able to replace the upholstery on the damaged seats.
 - It is more cost effective to do this work in-house than to send it out for repairs.
- How many licensed mechanics are certified and what is their hourly rate?
 - The District has two mechanics that hold various certifications, but they are not ASE certified.
 - Staff will look into the cost for two ASE mechanics and provide information in the weekly update.

5. **We recommend that the Procurement Department update the vendor monitoring process to include procedures that identify vendors with the same address as a District employee or Board member. Following identification, the vendors should be communicated with to determine the issue and removed if determined to be inappropriate.**

ACTION PLAN:

We will work with our Technology Department to create a program/process that will cross-reference and identify all vendor addresses or phone numbers that match employee records. Once identified we will confirm that all required documents and approvals are in place.

Existing vendors that match this criteria will be “Inactivated” in the Financial Management System (ALIO) until an approval from the Superintendent is obtained.

New vendors will be screened to determine whether they are owned by an employee of the district prior to including them as a vendor in ALIO.

Board Trustee Jesse Trevino mentioned that his wife has been providing service to the District for many years and she has always disclosed the proper documentation.

6. In addition, Procurement should also coordinate with Information Technology to determine what systematic processes exist to assist in identifying dormant, duplicate, or incomplete vendors by flagging those vendors for further review during the annual evaluation. Additionally, Procurement should explore system capabilities that would flag vendors in which their addresses match an employee address so they can be evaluated further.

ACTION PLAN:

With the assistance of our Technology Department, we will use ALIO Intelligence (AI) to run reports on vendors that have not been used in over 18 months. ALIO is a highly comprehensive report-writing tool specific to ALIO.

All vendors that are listed in the “non-used vendor report” will be placed as “Inactive”; this will not allow any purchases from that vendor until we update the vendor profile, which include various necessary documents (i.e. W9). Only after the receipt and review of these documents will we reinstate them to “active”.

(Action already in place) - a new vendor does not get setup in the ALIO System unless we have all the documentation required; furthermore, the request for a new vendor setup must be signed by the campus principal or department director. We implemented this process over a year ago but have strictly enforced it over the last several months.

(Action already in place) – all required vendor forms are scanned into our system call “Alio Scan”. They can be retrieved at any time for review. Updated forms are scanned but the old forms are not deleted. This process has been utilized since 2015-16.

Questions/Concerns Addressed by the Board and Responses from Administration:

- >Who provides training on learning how to use the features on Alio?
 - Technology staff reaches out to a consultant from Weidenhammer to assist with any issues. The district pays for this service.
 - Purchasing has all documentation uploaded using this system (purchase orders, requisitions, etc.)
 - Payroll Director will meet with HR directors to discuss the process for setting up personnel documentation in Alio.
- >What is being done on the process of not having a purchase order prior to buying?
 - A purchase order should be done in advance when purchasing items.
 - In the event of an emergency and items are needed immediately, a payment request is submitted to Business Office, along with an invoice for payment.
 - Purchasing staff has always enforced the process of doing a purchase order prior to buying items.
 - Staff will be asked to do a purchase order for the whole semester and closely monitor the balance.
- >Business Office needs to tighten controls allowing expenditures without having a purchase order.
- >Campus staff, etc., need to walk the purchase order through when items are needed immediately.

Dr. Valdez referenced the Audit Report and informed the public that the District spent a large amount of money on benefits (\$8.3 million) and to pay numerous utility bills: MP2 Energy Texas (\$6.4 million), Magic Valley Direct Coop (\$5 million), etc. This amount is the majority of the \$58 million that was referenced in the auditor’s report. These vendors were paid without a purchase order which was allowable. However, the district will be closely looking at the process to be used in the future so that no one will question the operations in the future. District staff also needs to follow all internal controls.

Mr. Sanchez will be meeting with the respective departments to do purchase orders on a monthly basis with estimated amounts, in order to have on hand and be able to pay the invoices as they come in.

Board Trustee Jesse Trevino pointed out that \$1 million was paid to special ed. consultants without a purchase order, money that has not been accounted for. Mr. Sanchez will be meeting with the Director to address this issue.

Mr. Nieto asked Dr. Valdez to follow up with training for all secretaries and principals on purchase order procedures.

7. **We recommend that the Procurement Department develop a formal process to ensure consistent notification of solicitations to approved vendors. Procurement personnel should be trained on the process to ensure the appropriate vendors are notified, which can include those vendors with the same category code, vendors previously utilized, and/or recommended by the end user.**

ACTION PLAN:

(Action already in place) – The Purchasing Department maintains a Bidder’s List on the email system. This list is set up by categories that correspond to our bids and proposals (i.e. athletic supplies, HVAC filters, etc.). We have utilized this process since 2014-15.

(Action already in place) – All bids & proposals are assigned to a purchasing staff member (buyer). Each buyer maintains the bid folder and will also update the Bid List from either the vendors that participated on the previous year or from new vendors wanting to be on the bidder’s list. We have utilized this process since 2008-09.

(Action already in place) – All bids & proposals are posted on our website along with any other files, documents and drawings that are part of the solicitation. All current and awarded proposals are listed in our website under <https://www.wisd.us/resources/bids-and-proposals>. We have utilized this process since around 2014-15.

Purchasing Department is recommending the purchase of an electronic bid system. This system would give vendors the ability to directly access all bids & proposals and to electronically submit their bid/proposal package. Furthermore, vendors will have the ability to revise their vendor information such as: the contact name, mailing & “remit to” address, email address and phone number for purposes of receiving the RFPs.

We will explore the possibility of placing a 12-month calendar listing all of the proposals starting and ending dates. This will help potential vendors plan accordingly if they are interested in any of them.

8. We recommend that the Procurement Department identify all the areas in which end user training should be provided by considering those areas in which frequent questions or informal training is required to ensure procurement processes are followed. From the identification of training areas, Procurement should design and implement a Procurement training program for end users that covers those activities that are most common. The training program should consider on-demand training, in-person training, or webinars. Specific training programs to consider include instructional procedures for budget availability, submitting requisitions, requisition approvals and purchase orders, evaluating bids as part of an evaluation committee, and a session that focuses on procurement ethics, responsibilities, and expectations for department purchases. Also, the training program should be mandatory for those that routinely process purchase requisitions as part of their normal duties and completed at least annually.

ACTION PLAN:

(Action already in place) – over the last 12+ years (excluding the prior 2 years) we have conducted yearly purchasing training to staff. During this training, we cover a variety of areas directly related to purchasing. We will improve on this by having purchasing trainings throughout the year on specific topics instead of a “cover all” training approach.

ACTION PLAN:

We will utilize a virtual platform through Google Meets for our Procurement Training. This will facilitate the attendance for all employees.

Purchasing Trainings will be specific to certain topics. We will have shorter multiple trainings throughout the year which will allow staff to attend without being away from their campus or department.

We will explore the possibility of recording these training sessions and post them online which will allow staff to go back and review them, if needed.

We will mandate that all new employees associated with the purchasing function complete a training course before they are granted access to the ALIO Purchasing Module. This will ensure that they understand basic purchasing rules and processes.

We will explore the opportunity of contracting with TASBO (Texas Association of School Business Officials) or another entity to provide a course on Ethics to all employees associated with the purchasing function.

Questions/Concerns Addressed by the Board and Responses from Administration:

➤Mr. Baldemar Garcia, Purchasing Director, provides training to staff on purchasing procedures.

- Training was not held last year due Covid. Training was optional.
 - Training can be made mandatory to ensure all employees are familiar with purchasing procedures.
- Staff will videotape the training so it can be viewed by employees as needed and made available to new employees as well.
- Training will be provided in shorter sessions.
- Purchasing department has always told staff not to purchase items without a purchase order.

➤Mr. Garcia made the following remarks in reference to the Purchasing Department:

- Words used by the Board (funneled, magic numbers, facilitate purchases) are making WISD look bad.
- As per Mr. Garcia, “Business Office staff facilitates the purchase, but not to any one vendor - never have and never will. Staff does not does not facilitate, create numbers, fabricate, or funnel business to anyone.”

Mr. Trevino commented that the purchasing process was broken. WISD paid a lot of money to one company when there were five others listed. He wanted to know who was supposed to be held accountable for allowing the purchases to this vendor.

Mr. Garcia agreed that the process was somewhat broken; however, Business Office staff needs to be given authority from the Board to put a stop to purchases in order to fix the problem. He shared that during his interview with the auditors he told them that the principals and teachers are going to spend any amount of money that is given to them for their students and staff, regardless of which vendor they utilize. However, in order to fix this problem, the district has to cut the budget for Awards & Incentives

even though the money is being spent for the right reasons. Mr. Garcia further stated that he sends numerous emails to principals in which he questions their purchases. He reiterated that the Business Office did not facilitate purchases to any one vendor.

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos thanked Mr. Garcia for his honesty and agreed that accountability starts with the team of eight. He said that the Board should be able to give the Superintendent the authority without restraining her to do her job and, in turn, she can allow her staff to follow policy guidelines and controls and enforce them without getting a phone call from a board member asking why they are doing this and that, etc. This would fully empower staff to fulfill their jobs and duties.

Mrs. Sustaita preferred that the training for employees be mandatory because it is very important for all staff to become educated in the purchasing procedures.

9. We recommend the District consider implementing an anonymous reporting hotline to assist the District with the identification of improper activity, including fraud, waste and abuse.

ACTION PLAN:

Administration will be evaluating this recommendation for input to the Board of Trustees in the near future.

As per Mr. Sanchez, Business Office staff will work to earn the Board's trust.

- VI. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Consider Approval of a Budget Amendment for the Purchase of 200 New Band Uniforms for the Weslaco East High School Band

Staff presented a budget amendment for the purchase of 200 new band uniforms for the Weslaco East High School band members. The amount of the budget amendment is \$117,738.00. Purchase of uniforms for the two high schools is on a rotation basis of 10 years.

The band director requested 250 uniforms to ensure they have enough sizes available because some of the male students are having to wear female uniforms and vice versa. He also allocated uniforms for the drum majors because in the past they would have to purchase their own uniforms due to the lack of sizes available. The new uniforms will be ordered based on the current sizes. The turn over time to receive the uniforms is 180 days. Mr. Cuellar displayed a sample of the uniform that will be ordered for the next school year.

Mr. Sanchez clarified that the amount of the budget amendment would be \$146,607.00 for the 250 uniforms. Mr. Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to increase the purchase to 250 band uniforms for the Weslaco East High School. Mr. Marcos De Los Santos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- VII. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Consider Approval of Substantial Completion for the Bus Drive and Teacher Parking Lot Repaving Project at Weslaco High School (CSP #21-12-18)

On December 14, 2020, the Board approved Gonzalez Enterprises, LLC for the construction of this project. The primary scope of work consisted of the replacement of the concrete bus drive and the teacher parking lot. The project was determined to be substantially complete on September 20, 2021.

Questions/Concerns Addressed by the Board:

- >Water ponds in the same areas.
- >Make sure water is flowing correctly in these areas.

According to Mr. Americo Garza, the district is facing issues with the planarity of the asphalt. This concern has been addressed to the contractor and is on the punch list; therefore, the contractor will have to fix the problem. This problem occurred prior to staff using the parking lot so it was not due to the weight of heavy machinery or vehicles on the parking lot.

The final completion of this project will be approved until the work has been completed and staff is satisfied with the work. At this time, the Board is approving the substantial completion to determine the cut-off date of the actual contractual time and to see if the project will incur liquidated damages for any delay days, etc.

Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to approve the substantial completion for the Bus Drive and Teacher Parking Lot repaving project at Weslaco High School as recommended by Mr. Americo Garza. Mr. Marcos De Los Santos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VIII. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Consider the Selection of One or More Architect Firms(s) for Future District Projects (RFQ #21-06-32)

During the April 12, 2021 Regular Board Meeting the Board approved the Administration to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from Architect Firms. Administration received nine (9) qualifications statement responses on Thursday, May 20, 2021.

A Board Workshop was held prior to this meeting to hear presentations from nine (9) architect firms.

Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita commented that she would prefer to see references on all the firms. She thought all presentations were good but she would like to see more information in order to make a sound decision. She wanted to know if they could wait to take action, pending additional information.

Mr. Sanchez informed the Board that the access controls project at the four middle schools needs to be complete by May 31, 2022, so staff would like to have an architect on hand to draw the plans for this project. Another project that will require an architect is the repairs for the Warehouse Facility. Staff will need an architect to draw up a different layout for this project.

Mr. Jesse Trevino preferred to take action tonight since the firms who presented drove a long way to be here. He asked staff to provide references on future items to assist them on their selection.

The Board took some time to rank the firms and allowed Mr. Sanchez time to calculate the results of the ranking. They proceeded to Items IX and X and then returned to take action on Item VIII.

Mr. Trevino made the motion to select the top three firms based on the rankings. Mrs. Jacky Sustaita seconded the motion. The top three firms ranked as follows:

1. Gignac & Associates, LLP – McAllen, Texas
2. The Warren Group Architects, Inc. – McAllen, Texas
3. Amtech Solutions, Inc.- Corpus Christi, Texas

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion made by Mr. Trevino and seconded by Mrs. Sustaita to approve the top three firms as presented.

IX. Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to Consider Approval of a Resolution of the Board Regarding a Local Remote Learning Program for the 2021-2022 School Year

Dr. Valdez recommended that the Board approve a resolution for Weslaco ISD to offer a remote learning program for the 2021-2022 school year. Pursuant to Education Code 25,9091(c), a district offering a local remote learning program may provide a virtual course through remote synchronous instruction, asynchronous instruction, or a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction, and proposed amendments to the Student Attendance Handbook, provide that a board-approved local policy determines which instructional methods and attendance-taking methods the district will use.

Weslaco ISD will use a combination of remote synchronous and asynchronous, with a daily attendance for synchronous instruction taken at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Isidoro Nieto made the motion to approve the resolution regarding a local remote learning program for the 2021-2022 school year. Mr. Andrew Gonzalez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

X. Discussion on Policy BEC (Legal)

This item was requested by Trustee Jaclyn Sustaita.

BEC (Legal) Policy references Closed Meetings.

Mrs. Sustaita would prefer to keep a recording of the closed meeting discussion rather than having a certified agenda. The recording would assist the Board in keeping a true record of what was said in closed meeting, except for private consultation with a district attorney. Furthermore, a recording of a closed meeting is available for public inspection and copying only under a court order issued as a result of litigation involving an alleged violation of the Open Meetings Act. Gov't Code 551.104(a). She wanted to address the Board to see how they felt about changing the procedure for future meetings.

Vice President Jaime Rodriguez and Trustee Marcos De Los Santos expressed their support of changing the procedure for accountability and transparency purposes.

Non-action item.

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos made the motion to change the order of the day and go to closed session to discuss Item XI and other closed meeting items. Mr. Isidoro Nieto seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. De Los Santos rescinded his motion of modifying the agenda to go into closed meeting in order to go back to the regular open meeting to discuss and address Item VIII. Mr. Nieto seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Board returned to Item VIII. Action and vote is noted on Item VIII.

Mr. Marcos De Los Santos made the motion to change the order of the day and go into closed meeting to discuss Item XI and other closed meeting items. Andrew Gonzalez seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- XI. Discussion and Consideration of Policy Amendments and Amendments to the 2021-2022 Employee and Student Handbook, with Regard to Dress Code to Address Health Issues Regarding the Public Health Pandemic

This item was discussed in closed meeting.

XII. Closed Meeting to Discuss:

The Board convened in closed meeting at 10:06 p.m. to discuss the following items:

- XI. Discussion and Consideration of Policy Amendments and Amendments to the 2021-2022 Employee and Student Handbook, with Regard to Dress Code to Address Health Issues Regarding the Public Health Pandemic

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)

XII. Reconvene in Open Meeting:

- A. The Board returned to open meeting at 10:52 p.m. to take action on the following items discussed in closed meeting.

- XI. Discussion and Consideration of Policy Amendments and Amendments to the 2021-2022 Employee and Student Handbook, with Regard to Dress Code to Address Health Issues Regarding the Public Health Pandemic

No action was taken on this item as recommended by the Administration.

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

CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL		
Name	Position	Location
1. Paul Mata	Science Teacher	Weslaco East High School

REASSIGNMENT OF CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL		
Name	FROM:	TO:
1. Erica Guajardo	Teacher North Bridge Elementary School	Technology Instructional Coach North Bridge Elementary School

2. Emily Martinez	Gear-Up Facilitator Weslaco East High School	Campus Instructional Facilitator Mary Hoge Middle School
3. Robert A. Medrano	Teacher Weslaco High School	Advanced Academics Coach Advanced Academics Department

NON-CONTRACTUAL PERSONNEL		
Name	Position	Location
1. Cassandra L. Cantu	Medical Assistant	Sam Houston Elementary School
2. Noe T. Guevara	Bus Driver	Transportation Department
3. Lisa M. Vento	Office Clerk – Athletic Department	Weslaco High School

REASSIGNMENT OF NON-CONTRACTUAL PERSONNEL		
Name	FROM:	TO:
1. Patricia Torres	Cook 6.5 Weslaco East High School	Security Guard Cuellar Middle School

All substitutes will attend the required substitute orientation training and complete the hiring process prior to activation in the substitute system.

SUBSTITUTES		
Applicants	High School Attended	Residency
Paul Abundes	Big Springs High School	Weslaco
Juanita I. Alvarado	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Edward D. Avila	Channel Islands High School	Weslaco
Lisa M. Cantu	La Joya High School	Peñitas
Gerardo C. Cantu	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Erik Cardenas	Weslaco East High School	Weslaco
Jessica Carreon	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Fernando Castaneda	Mercedes High School	Mercedes
Linette Castaneda	PSJA High School	San Juan
Iris Cavazos	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Valeria Cavazos	South Texas High School	Mercedes
Ana Chong	Valley Grande Academy	Weslaco
Laura Colmenero	PSJA ISD	McAllen
Robyn Cuellar	South Palm Gardens HS	Weslaco
Gabriella De La Rosa	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Claudia V. Dominguez	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Monica Duran	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Sylvia Esparza	Weslaco GED	Weslaco
Sabrina A. Espinoza	Weslaco High School	Donna
Kelly Fasano	Clear Creek High School	Weslaco
Esmeralda Figueroa	Weslaco High School	Donna
Mariela Galvan	Mercedes Early College HS	Mercedes
Eva P. Garcia	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Gloria Garcia	Weslaco High School	Weslaco

Alyza Gomez	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Anthony D. Gonzalez	McAllen High School	McAllen
Kystal Lee Grein	Weslaco East High School	Weslaco
Alexis Guerra	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Aurora Guzman	James Pace High School	Weslaco
Vinnessa A. Guzman	Weslaco High School	Weslaco

SUBSTITUTES		
Applicants	High School Attended	Residency
Jessica A. Hernandez	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Tanya Hernandez	Donna High School	Weslaco
Iize Longoria	Weslaco East High School	Weslaco
Ivy L. Lopez	South Palm Gardens HS	Weslaco
Cynthia Y. Macareno	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Lauryn Marquez	Weslaco East High School	Weslaco
Nayelli Martinez	Edmond Santa Fe HS	Weslaco
Michelle C. Mata	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Humberto Munoz	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Jennifer L. Olszak	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Delia Peralez	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Ava K. Perez	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Diana L. Perez	South TX HS Health Prof.	Weslaco
Ma. Elena Ramirez	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Ma. Noemi Reyes	Rio Grande City HS	Weslaco
Lisa Robledo	Donna High School	Weslaco
Christopher Rodriguez	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Sara Ruiz	Weslaco East High School	Mercedes
Karen Saldivar	Harlingen South HS	Donna
Ashley R. Sanchez	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Ma. Del Carmen Sandoval	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Caitlyn Skalitsky	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Juan Dariel Solis	Edcouch Elsa High School	Edcouch
Jessica Valdez	Weslaco East High School	Weslaco
Velma Valdez-Morales	Edcouch Elsa High School	Monte Alto
Ana Vasquez	Edcouch Elsa High School	Edcouch
David Villarreal	HM King High School	La Feria
Daisy Ybarra	Weslaco High School	Weslaco
Ana Maria Zarazua	Progreso High School	Weslaco

Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to approve new employment of certified professional and non-contractual personnel as presented. Mr. Isidoro Nieto seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion were Isidoro Nieto, Jaclyn Sustaita, Andrew Gonzalez, and Jesse Trevino.

Mrs. Jaclyn Sustaita abstained on the approval of substitutes.

2. Discussion and Possible Action on Resignations

Dr. Valdez recommended that the Board approve the resignations/retirements of certified personnel as discussed in closed meeting.

Name	Position/Location	Reason/Effective Date
1. Frank De Hoyos	Health/PE Teacher Airport Elementary School	Frank De Hoyos is retiring after 32 years in education, with all 32 years of service at Weslaco ISD. His retirement is effective September 30, 2021.
ADDENDUM		
2. Elizabeth Gilliam-Douglas	English Teacher Weslaco East High School	Elizabeth Gilliam-Douglas is resigning due to health issues. Her resignation is effective September 28, 2021.

Mr. Andrew Gonzalez made the motion to approve the resignations/retirements as presented. Mr. Isidoro Nieto seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:54 p.m.