



IDEA Public Schools
2115 W. Pike Blvd.
Weslaco, Texas 78596

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2025

Board Members Present: Collin Sewell, Ed Rivera, Erich Holmsten, Dr. Nanette Cocero, Theresa Barrera-Shaw, Connie Miner.

Board Members Not Present: David Dunn and Gary Lindgren.

Legal Counsel, Staff, and Consultants Present: Dr. Jeffrey Cottrill, Cody Grindle, Dolores Gonzalez, Jessica Hess, Dr. Colleen Stearns, Layne Fisher, Kathleen Zimmermann, Marlon Shears, Phillip Garza, Martin Winchester, Jennifer White, April Seidensticker, Alejandra Loya, Kaitlin McDermott, Dr. David Lee, Christopher Ruszkowski, Veronica Conforme, Javier Campos, Linda Parga, Macy Torres, Raquel Sanchez, Sandra Sotelo, Tanika Isaac, Paola Alaniz Cantu, Jennifer Meer, Lawrence Galloway, Trevor Brooks, Norma Cruz, Tanya Torres, Fidel Ozuna III, Elizabeth Valades.

Audience Present:

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Sewell at 3:33 PM CST.

Welcome and Call to Order

Board Chair Sewell welcomed the Board Members to the April 24, 2025, Board of Directors' meeting and confirmed quorum was present for the meeting in addition to members of the management team. Board Chair Sewell conducted the meeting as duly posted. He further indicated some members joined via videoconference and a phone line was available for members of the public to join in the meeting if they wish to do so.

General Comment

Jessica Hess, Chief Governance Officer, stated that there were no prior requests.

Agenda Item Comment

Presiding Officer Sewell stated that the public, employees, and staff have three (3) minutes each to comment on items that are on the agenda for this meeting if they wish to do so. No prior requests to comment on a specific agenda item were made.

TEA Conservator Report

TEA conservator Christopher Ruszkowski and Dr. David Lee presented the monthly TEA Conservator Report. No action was taken on this item.

Introduction to Governance Coach

Dr. Jeffrey Cottrill introduced IDEA's new governance coach, Veronica Conforme. Ms. Conforme shared her background and qualifications that include multiple school boards and training of school superintendents.

Committee Updates

Ed Rivera, Audit Committee Chair, presented the Audit Committee Updates. The Audit Committee met on April 8, 2025, in which Committee Chair Rivera was the presiding officer and Collin Sewell joined. The committee received general updates related to the Internal Audit team, reviewed the Budget Preparation and Amendments Audit Report, and received an overview of Grant Monitoring Reports, taking no action on these items. The Committee then moved to recommend for board approval the renewal of the contract with Blazek and Vetterling LLC for the FY2025 Annual External Audit. The committee entered Executive Session to discuss updates related to Department of Education grants, with no action taken during closed session. Committee Chair Rivera also reminded the Board to schedule time with Javier Campos to ensure 100% board participation for risk assessment interviews.

Dr. Nanette Cocero, Academic Committee Chair, presented the Academic Committee updates. The Academic Committee met on April 15, 2025, with Connie Miner, David Dunn, Gary Lindgren present, and with Committee Chair Cocero as the presiding officer. The committee received a formative review of the 24-25 District Improvement Plan, which included presentations on goals related to college matriculation, achieving an A rating, student persistence, daily attendance, and staff retention. The board received this presentation as well in earlier updates. The committee also received a presentation on the Toros Dual Enrollment Pathway. No action was taken on either of these agenda items.

Erich Holmsten, Finance Committee Chair, presented the Finance Committee Updates. The Finance Committee met on April 23, 2025. The committee received CFO updates, and recommended board approval for payment during closure for RGV, and the February 2025 financial statements. The committee also received a presentation related to several items for 25-26 and their corresponding pre-approval budget requests. The 25-26 budget presentation included pre-approval requests for IT, marketing, health benefits, agreements and stipends. While the committee recommended these for approval, these items will be reviewed with the entire board later in this meeting. The committee received a presentation related to Investment Strategy Recommendations and for the Permanent School Fund Application, which will also be presented to the full board in this meeting. The committee entered Executive Session to discuss legal and real estate matters, subsequently recommending next steps on real estate and grant agreements as discussed.

Collin Sewell, Executive Committee Chair, presented the Executive Committee Updates. The Executive Committee met on April 15, 2025, in which Committee Chair Sewell was the presiding officer, and with committee members Ed Rivera and Erich Holmsten present. The committee received the TEA Conservator Report and an update on the TEA Charter Renewal contract. The Committee then moved into Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent Evaluation Administrative Regulations and consultation with legal counsel, subsequently reconvening in Open Session with no action taken.

Organizational Updates

Dr. Jeffrey Cottrill, Superintendent and CEO, introduced the Accountability Ratings and Dolores Gonzalez, Deputy Superintendent, continued by presenting the 24-25 District Improvement Plan. The District Improvement Plan consists of 5 goals. The first goal related to College Matriculation was presented by Phillip Garza, Chief College Officer. Dr. Colleen Stearns, Chief Academic Officer, presented the next goal related to A Ratings. Next, Kaitlin McDermott, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Superintendent, presented the goal related to Student Persistence. The next goal related to Student Daily Attendance was presented by Layne Fisher, Chief

Operating Officer. The last goal related to Staff Retention was presented by Martin Winchester, Chief Human Assets Officer. Dolores Gonzalez closed the DIP presentation with upcoming engagements.

Charter Contract

Jessica Hess, Chief Governance Officer, shared the process on the Charter Contract project. The Board passed a motion to approve and ratify the Charter Contract as presented.

Motion by: Ed Rivera
Second by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
All in favor: All
All opposed None
Motion passed unanimously.

25-26 Budget Planning

Before the 25-26 Budget Pre-Approval presentations, Board Chair Sewell explained that these items were reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee on April 23rd, and the presentations would be abridged.

Lawrence Galloway, Vice President of Finance, presented the 25-26 Budget Pre-Approval related to IST and Marketing. The Board passed a motion to approve the 25-26 Information Technology and Marketing Budget Pre-Approvals not to exceed the amounts as presented.

Motion by: Erich Holmsten
Second by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
All in favor: All
All opposed None
Motion passed unanimously.

Norma Cruz, Managing Director of Staff Benefits and Wellness, shared an update on the 25-26 Health Benefits. This presentation included an overview of the current plans, minimizing cost impact, employer contributions, and recommendations. The Board passed a motion to approve in one action the 25-26 Health Benefits Budget Pre-Approvals related to the 25-26 Health Benefits Updates, not to exceed the amount as presented.

Motion by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
Second by: Ed Rivera
All in favor: All
All opposed None
Motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the 25-26 Stipends, Agreements and Transformational Transfer Stipends. Jennifer Meer, Senior Vice President of Compensation and Benefits, began this presentation by sharing the Stipend updates for 25-26, and the transformational transfer process. The Board passed a motion to approve the 25-26 Exhibit A Agreements and Stipends and Transformational Transfer Stipend as presented and the related budget Pre-Approvals for the agreements and stipends not to exceed amounts provided, subject to legal review and with intent to ratify in June 2025.

Motion by: Erich Holmsten
Second by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
All in favor: All

All opposed None
Motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Meer continued by sharing an update on the 25-26 Pay Increases. The Board passed a motion to approve the 25-26 Employee Compensation Merit Plans as presented and the associated budget pre-approvals for the compensation merit plans not to exceed the amounts provided.

Motion by: Ed Rivera
Second by: Erich Holmsten
All in favor: All
All opposed None
Motion passed unanimously.

Investment Strategy Recommendation

The Investment Strategy Recommendation was presented by Trevor Brooks, Vice President of Treasury and Grant Finance. This presentation included an investable cash summary, investment alternatives, strategy comparison matrix, and the next steps related to Investment Strategy. The Board passed a motion to approve the Investment Strategy Recommendation as presented.

Motion by: Ed Rivera
Second by: Erich Holmsten
All in favor: All
All opposed None
Motion passed unanimously.

Permanent School Fund (PSF) Application Resolution

Board Chair Sewell proposed to move the Permanent School Fund Application Resolution item into Executive Session to consult with legal counsel ahead of any action.

Consent Agenda

The board passed a motion to approve the Consent Agenda in one board action.

Motion by: Ed Rivera
Second by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
All in favor: All
All opposed None
Motion passed unanimously.

Districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Findings

Jorge Chipres Castaneda, Managing Director of Safety and Security, presented an update regarding the districtwide intruder detection audit report. No action was taken on this item.

Executive Session

Considering the nature of the rest of the safety information, Board Chair Sewell called for a motion to move into Executive Session pursuant to Texas Govt. Code 551.076 Security Personnel and/or Security Audit. Further, considering the remaining items on the agenda, Board Chair Sewell proposed to continue in Executive Session pursuant to Texas Govt. Code 551.074 Personnel Matters, Texas Govt. Code 551.071 Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding pending legal matters, Texas Govt. Code 551.082 School Children,

School District Employees, Disciplinary matter, or Complaint, Texas Govt. Code 551.074 Superintendent Performance Review, and Texas Govt. Code 551.072 Real Estate Matters (purchase, lease, or sale of real property).

Executive Session

The Board passed a motion to move to Executive Session pursuant to Texas Govt. Code 551.076, Texas Govt. Code 551.074, Texas Govt. Code 551.071 and Texas Govt. Code 551.082, and Texas Govt. Code 551.072.

Motion by: Dr. Nannette Cocero
Second by: Erich Holmsten
All in favor: All
All opposed: None
Motion passed unanimously.

The Board moved into Executive Session at 5:11 PM CST.

Open Session

The Board passed a motion to reconvene in Open Session.

Motion by: Ed Rivera
Second by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
All in favor: All
All opposed: None
Motion passed unanimously.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:25 PM CST. No action was taken during Executive Session.

Votes on Executive Session Items

The Board passed a motion to approve next steps related to the settlement agreement as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: Erich Holmsten
Second by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
All in favor: All
All opposed: None
Motion passed unanimously

The Board passed a motion to approve next steps related to real estate as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: Ed Rivera
Second by: Erich Holmsten
All in favor: All
All opposed: None
Motion passed unanimously

The Board passed a motion to approve the resolution of Board of Directors Requesting PSF Guarantee of

bonds and authorizing the administration to pursue bond financing to finance educational facilities as directed and discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
Second by: Erich Holmsten
All in favor: All
All opposed: None
Motion passed unanimously

The Board passed a motion to approve next steps related to grant agreements as discussed in Executive Session.

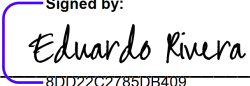
Motion by: Erich Holmsten
Second by: Ed Rivera
All in favor: All
All opposed: None
Motion passed unanimously

Adjourn

The Board passed a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 PM CST.

Motion by: Dr. Nanette Cocero
Second by: Ed Rivera
All in favor: All
All opposed: None
Motion passed unanimously.

I certify that the foregoing are the true and correct minutes of the regular meeting of the Board Meeting of IDEA Public Schools held on April 24, 2025.

Signed by:

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Ed Rivera, Board Secretary
5/27/2025

Date