



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

## **Regular Board Meeting Minutes January 20, 2026**

**Board Members Present:** Collin Sewell, Ed Rivera, Theresa Barrera-Shaw, David Dunn, Gary Lindgren, Connie Miner, Dr. Nanette Cocero, Lilya Matos

**Board Members Not Present:** Erich Holmsten

**Legal Counsel, Staff, and Consultants Present:** Dr. Jeffrey Cottrill, Cody Grindle, Dolores Gonzalez, Jessica Hess, Dr. Colleen Stearns, Martin Winchester, Layne Fisher, Kathleen Zimmermann, Mike Higgins, Tony Kingman, Genevieve Cheng, Kaitlin McDermott, Alejandra Loya, Robyn Birkla, April Seidensticker, Greg Rackett, Jennifer Meer, Abe Barela, Carlos Castaneda, Felida Villarreal, Macy Torres, Raquel Sanchez, Sandra Sotelo, Joe Hoffer, Dr. David Lee, Fidel Ozuna III, Elizabeth Valades.

### **Audience Present:**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Sewell at 5:01 PM CST.

### **Welcome and Call to Order**

Board Chair Sewell welcomed the Board Members to the January 20, 2026 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 were prior requests. The first public comment was from Bionca Pulley, the second public comment was from Joanna Wilson, and the third public comment was from Mimi Klagge.

### **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.

### **CEO/Organizational Updates**

Dr. Jeffrey Cottrill, Superintendent and CEO, presented the CEO/Organizational Update, including Org-Wide Goals, 25-26 Enrollment, Recruitment, Overall Persistence and Current Kinder-3rd Grade Persistence, and January Recruitment Pushes. No action was taken on this item.

### **Board Appreciation**

Dr. Cottrill continued presenting by sharing notable stats and highlights of the past year in regards to the Board of Directors for Board Appreciation Month, as well as a special video honoring Board Chair Collin

Sewell. No action was taken on this item.

### **TEA Conservator Report**

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

### **Committee Updates**

Collin Sewell, Board Chair, presented the Executive Committee and Governance Committee Updates. The Executive Committee met on December 16, 2025, with committee members Ed Rivera, Erich Holmsten and Collin Sewell present. The committee received a presentation from TEA Conservator Christopher Ruzzkowski, as well as presentations regarding the Charter School Performance Framework Update and RGV Performance Pay – ADA Goal, with no action recommended on these items. The committee also received a presentation regarding Exhibit A – Stipends, Special Education, which was recommended for approval and is on the consent agenda for this meeting, and next steps related to Senate Bill 11, which will be presented later in this meeting. The next Executive Committee meeting is January 27, 2026.

The Governance Committee met on January 13, 2026, with committee members Ed Rivera, Gary Lindgren, Dr. Nanette Cocero and Collin Sewell present. The committee received Chief Governance Officer updates including TEA governance forms deadline, new board member candidates, and spring board retreat, as well as presentations regarding 25-26 Board Training Completion and the proposed 26-27 Board of Directors Calendar, with no action recommended on any of these items. The committee also received a presentation regarding Senate Bill 1882 Performance Goals IDEA Travis, Midland ISD, which was recommended for approval and is on tonight's consent agenda. After entering into and subsequently returning from Executive Session, the committee recommended for approval New Board Members and Committee Assignments, Completion of the Probationary First Year of Service for Director David Dunn, Non-Expansion Amendment and Resolution for the 25-26 Org Chart, and CEO/Superintendent Contract Amendment, all of which are on the agenda for tonight's Executive Session. No action was recommended on 25-26 CEO/Superintendent Evaluation Metrics. The next Governance Committee meeting is March 12, 2026.

Dr. Nanette Cocero, Academic Committee Chair, presented the Academic Committee Updates. The Academic Committee met on December 4, 2025, with David Dunn, Theresa Barrera-Shaw, Gary Lindgren, and Dr. Nanette Cocero present. The committee received presentations regarding an update on Instructional Staffing for 25-26, a progress update on IDEA Hardy, and an overview of College Success metrics and performance, with no action recommended on any of these items. The committee also received presentations regarding 26-27 Academic Calendars, and 25-26 Targeted Improvement Plan and Local Improvement Plans for designated schools. Both of these items were recommended for approval and are on tonight's consent agenda. There is an Academic Board Workshop on January 30, 2026, and the next Academic Committee meeting is February 12, 2026.

Ed Rivera, Audit Committee Chair, presented the Audit Committee Updates. The Audit Committee met on December 9, 2025, with members Erich Holmsten, Lilya Matos, Thersa Barrera-Shaw and Ed Rivera present. The committee received presentations regarding Quality Assurance and Improvement Program Internal Results and the Corporate Card Report, with no action recommended on these items. The committee also received a presentation regarding the 25-26 Internal Audit Plan Amendment #1, which was recommended for approval and is on the consent agenda for tonight.

The Audit Committee also met on January 15, 2026, with members Erich Holmsten, Lilya Matos, Theresa Barrera-Shaw and Ed Rivera present. The committee received presentations regarding Internal Audit Strategy Overview, Internal Audit Disclosures and Attestations, Student Recruitment and Enrollment Audit FY22 Follow-Up, and Whistleblower and Investigation Update, with no action recommended on any of these

items. The next Audit Committee meeting is February 10, 2026.

Ed Rivera also presented the Finance Committee Updates. The Finance Committee met on December 12, 2025, with David Dunn and Erich Holmsten present. The committee received presentations regarding CFO updates, including personnel updates, audit updates, exit criteria and goal progress measures, as well as the liquidity update, budget variance, and quarterly corporate card report, with no action recommended on these items. The committee also received presentations regarding October 2025 Financial Statements and Purchasing and Travel Exceptions to Policy. These items were recommended for board approval and are on tonight's consent agenda. After entering into and subsequently returning from Executive Session, the committee passed a motion to recommend next steps related to real estate.

The Finance Committee also met on January 16, 2026, with David Dunn, Collin Sewell and Lilya Matos present. The committee received presentations regarding CFO updates, including FY27 Budget Update and Goal Progress Measures, as well as the Liquidity Update and Budget Variance, with no action recommended on these items. The committee received a presentation regarding SB546 School Seat Belt Costs Update, which is on the agenda for tonight, and Purchasing and Travel Exceptions to Policy, which were recommended for approval and are on the consent agenda tonight. The committee also received presentations on budget amendments, and action was deferred until after Executive Session. After entering into and subsequently returning from Executive Session, the committee passed a motion to recommend IDEA Henry Gift Deed and Conveyance to Hexagon Foundation and the budget amendments, both of which are on tonight's consent agenda. The next Finance Committee meeting is February 20, 2026.

#### **Senate Bill 546: Required Reporting on School Bus Seat Belt Costs**

Layne Fisher, Chief Operating Officer, presented SB 546: Required Reporting on School Bus Seat Belt Costs. No action was taken on this item.

#### **Senate Bill 11**

Dr. Cottrill presented an update to SB 11, which permits open-enrollment charter schools to adopt a policy offering a daily period for voluntary prayer or reading the Bible or other religious texts in their schools, subject to parental consent. Dr. Cottrill explained that adoption is not recommended, due to current IDEA practices that align with staff and students' right to pray during the school day. The Board passed a motion to approve that the governing body of IDEA Public Schools NOT adopt a resolution or corresponding policy that would require a period of prayer and reading of the Bible or other religious text, as permitted by Senate Bill 11 from the 89th Texas legislative session, which took effect September 1, 2025. Further, this record vote of the governing body is taking place within six months of the bill becoming effective, as required by the law.

Motion by: Ed Rivera  
Second by: Gary Lindgren  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Consent Agenda**

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

Motion by: David Dunn  
Second by: Lilya Matos  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None

*Motion passed unanimously.*

### **Districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Findings**

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

### **District Vulnerability Assessment Report**

Mr. Chipres continued presenting for the District Vulnerability Assessment 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 551.074 Superintendent Performance Review, Texas Govt. Code 551.072 Real Estate Matters (purchase, lease, or sale of real property), and Texas Govt. Code 551.061 Deliberation Regarding Critical Infrastructure-Cybersecurity Measures.

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 551.072, and Texas Govt. Code 551.061.

Motion by: Dr. Nanette Cocero  
Second by: Connie Miner  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board moved into Executive Session at 6:25 PM CST.

### **Open Session**

The Board passed a motion to reconvene in Open Session.

Motion by: Dr. Nanette Cocero  
Second by: Connie Miner  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 8:29 PM CST. No action was taken during Executive Session.

### **Votes on Executive Session Items**

The Board passed a motion to approve next steps allowing delegation to CEO/Superintendent related to document management system as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: David Dunn  
Second by: Gary Lindgren  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None

*Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board passed a motion to approve the two confidential cybersecurity contracts as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: Dr. Nanette Cocero  
Second by: Lilya Matos  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board passed a motion to approve the non-expansion amendment and resolution for 25-26 Organization Chart as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: David Dunn  
Second by: Gary Lindgren  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board passed a motion to approve the new Board of Directors' members and committee assignments as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: Connie Miner  
Second by: Dr. Nanette Cocero  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board passed a motion to approve the completion of the probationary first year of service for Director David Dunn as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: Dr. Nanette Cocero  
Second by: Connie Miner  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board passed a motion to approve the CEO/Superintendent Contract Amendment as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: Gary Lindgren  
Second by: Theresa Barrera-Shaw  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

The Board passed a motion to approve the personnel agreement as discussed in Executive Session.

Motion by: Theresa Barrera-Shaw  
Second by: Ed Rivera  
All in favor: All  
All opposed: None  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

**Adjourn**

Board Chair Sewell adjourned the meeting at 8:32 PM CST.

Motion by: Connie Miner  
Second by: Dr. Nanette Cocero  
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 January 20, 2026.

Signed by:  
  
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Ed Rivera, Board Secretary  
2/27/2026

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Date