

STATE OF TEXAS

(Minutes conducted via electronic voting)

COUNTY OF CAMERON

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the **17th day of July, 2026**, the Board of Trustees of the Brownsville Independent School District met in a **Special Called Board Meeting** at the Administration Building, 1900 Price Road, Brownsville, Texas, for the purpose of transacting any and all business that came before the Board and with the following to wit:

PRESENT:

Daniella Lopez Valdez	President (Via Zoom)
Frank Ortiz	Vice-President
Minerva Pena	Secretary
Carlos Elizondo	Board Member
Denise Garza	Member
Neida Ruth Grantland	Member

ABSENT:

Jessica Gonzalez	Board Member
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ALSO PRESENT:

Eden Ramirez	Attorney for the Board
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ALSO ABSENT:

Dr. Alda T. Benavides	Interim Superintendent of Schools
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WHEREUPON, a quorum being present and it appearing before the Board, it is hereby so found that notice of this **Special Called Board Meeting** has been duly given in the manner and for the length of time as prescribed by law. The meeting was called to order and declared ready for the transaction of business with the following to wit:

- I. Special Called Board Meeting called to order by Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President at 5:30 p.m.**
- II. Moment of Silence led by Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President.**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance led by Neida Ruth Grantland, Board Member.**
- IV. Roll Call. Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board Member stated, for the record Members were present, Ms. Jessica Gonzalez was absent.**
- V. Recommend approving the agenda of the Special Called Board Meeting of Friday, July 17, 2026, with any corrections/deletions.**
Ms. Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President stated I vote yes.

Motion made by Carlos Elizondo, seconded by Denise Garza, and unanimously carried to recommend approving the agenda of the Special Called Board Meeting of Friday, July 17, 2026, with no corrections/deletions, as stated by administration. (6-0-0)

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Adina Alegria - Good evening, Board President Lopez Valdez, Board of Trustees, Superintendent Benavidez, and those here with us in person, and those tuning in tonight. My name is Adina Alegria, Executive Director of Texas Valley Educators Association, affiliated with Brownsville Union Coalition. On behalf of TVEA, Texas Valley Educators Association, we would like to congratulate and welcome Dr. Timothy Cuff as Superintendent of Brownsville ISD. He's no stranger to this seat, having already served the district well as interim, and we're glad to see that experience made permanent. Which makes it all the more disappointing that the agenda item to get Dr. Cuff to work by July 20th is followed yet again by a return to reorganizing this Board, excuse me. But for what feels like the 100th time. A recent article in the San Antonio Express News by David Leash made a point that stuck with me. It said that democracies are Strongest not even when everybody agrees, but when different viewpoints collide productively through debate, through process, through respect for the outcome, rather than destructively through power grabs and personal grievance. This seems to be rational for this agenda, as it is a hundred first time appearance on this agenda. It echoes something the philosopher John Rawls spent his career on the idea of reasonable pluralism. Rawls argued that in any free society, people will inevitably hold different, sincerely held values and beliefs. The objective word being sincerely. That's not a defect to be managed away. It's the natural condition of a healthy democracy. It's the idea that someone will always be right and always be wrong. But he goes on and says that you will always be heard as long as there is a culture of mutual respect and civil discourse. The measure of a functioning institution isn't whether disagreements exist. It's about whether that disagreement is channeled into something productive rather than destructive. And why does this matter right now? Leash also warned that the broader climate right now makes this harder than it used to be. He described a political and cultural landscape strained by division and increasingly by the real risk of political violence. An atmosphere that leaves people disoriented and uneasy, which gives louder, more extreme voices room to dominate. The result in his telling more division, discord, ignorance, and disillusionment. That's not just a national problem, it happens in this boardroom month after month. It's the exact frenzy this Board risks stepping into every time a personal grievance gets dressed up as a governance concern. Here's the truth nothing has changed since the last time this came up. No wrongdoing, no law broken. Someone didn't get their way. And rather than let it go, we're reopening something that was settled, that is settled. On the same night, we're supposed to be introducing our new superintendent to this community. Every minute spent revisiting who holds which title is a minute stolen from our students. It's taxpayer money, money that belongs in a classroom burned on agreements, not governance, personal agenda. Fellow community members, this is not governance. It's a personal agenda wearing the mask of principle. Unless a president has committed an egregious act, real misconduct, an actual ethics violation, they have earned their right to a full term. That is not favor, that is how a Board is supposed to function. The day we reorganize leadership, every time someone is unhappy, we no longer have a Board. We have whoever can count votes that night and a district with no continuity for the people it serves. People have noticed. This board is the talk of Texas and you keep doing it to yourselves and I promise, I promise it is hurting you. Tonight, here we are again on the exact night we should be introducing Dr. Cuff to the community as our new Superintendent. While there is no shortage of real work, budgets that need scrutiny, facilities that need attention were losing because they don't feel supported, trust that needs to be rebuilt. Any of it is better use of tonight than round 101 of the same agenda item. Please don't mistake my belief in stability for loyalty to whoever holds this presidency. TVEA's professionalism has no bounds. We work alongside anyone who

leads this district with integrity and a sound moral compass. Districts need stability not stagnation. Students need adults who are not consumed by power struggles. Thank you. I'll go ahead and leave it with that. Have a great evening. Thank you for your attention.

Ms. Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President stated, thank you. That concludes our public comment. Before we move on, I wanted to begin by acknowledging the scheduling change regarding tonight's Special Called Board Meeting. The Board had originally agreed to hold this meeting on July 29th. However, due to requests to accelerate that date, I was required to move the meeting forward. Therefore, here we are, rescheduled for today. As a result, this meeting being held during vacation days, several members of our administrative and support staff are not present this evening because they were not originally scheduled to work. We appreciate everyone's flexibility and understanding as we conduct the business of this district. Before we proceed with this agenda, I wanted to take a moment to recognize our Interim Superintendent, Dr. Alda Benavides, and thank her for her service to Brownsville ISD. Over the past several months, Dr. Benavides has provided steady leadership during an important period of transition for our district. Under her leadership, Brownsville ISD strengthened emergency preparedness, reorganized central office operations, improved administrative structures and accountability, resolved significant compliance matters. And identify nearly \$778,000 in operational savings. She also advanced support for Career and Technology education, counseling services, teams, campus leadership, and district communications while working to improve operational efficiency and collaboration across all departments. Throughout her tenure, she remained focused on supporting our campuses, our employees, and most importantly, the success of our students. Dr. Benavides, on behalf of Brownsville ISD Board of Trustees, thank you for your professionalism, your dedication, and your commitment to serving the students, families, and employees of Brownsville ISD. We sincerely appreciate your leadership during this transition and wish you continued success in all that lies ahead. With that, we will now proceed with this agenda.

The Board may deliberate or take action regarding the following agenda items.

Board policy BE (Local) and Robert's Rules limits debate to two opportunities. A Trustee may debate a motion for three minutes on the first speaking opportunity and two minutes on the second opportunity.

VII. CLOSED MEETING: as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Sections: 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.082, and 551.084. 5:41 p.m.

A. SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT:

1. Discussion of the employment contract for new Superintendent Dr. Timothy E. Cuff, with an effective date of July 20, 2026. (Board Agenda Request Frank Ortiz/Board Support Minerva Pena)

VIII. BOARD RECONVENES - Board action on agenda items discussed in Executive Session. 6:04 p.m.

- A. Recommend approval of the employment contract for new Superintendent Dr. Timothy E. Cuff, with an effective date of July 20, 2026. (Board Agenda Request Frank Ortiz/Board Support Minerva Pena)

Ms. Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President stated, we are now back in session. Mr. Carlos Elizondo, Board Member stated, Motion to approve. Ms. Denise Garza, Board Member stated, Second.

Motion made by Carlos Elizondo, seconded by Denise Garza, and unanimously carried to recommend approval of the employment contract for new Superintendent Dr. Timothy E. Cuff, with an effective date of July 20, 2026. (6-0-0)

Mr. Carlos Elizondo, Board Member stated, sir you can take your seat now, Mr. Cuff, Dr. Cuff, I'm sorry, you can take your seat now. We're trying to keep it warm, but... Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, congratulations Dr. Cuff. **Dr. Timothy E. Cuff, Superintendent stated, thank you.** Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, I will be there soon to shake your hand in person. I wish you the best in this tenure of BISD, and we're all here to help you succeed. **Dr. Cuff stated, thank you, ma'am. I really appreciate that, and when I see you, I'll give you a hug. Okay.** *Mr. Eden Ramirez, Board Attorney stated, okay just real quick, yeah, I was going to say, y'all want to say anything?* Mr. Elizondo stated, first and foremost, I want to thank you for accepting this great opportunity. I think BISD is going to be in great hands under your leadership. I think the community and the staff are very, very happy to have you on Board. That also includes all of us here sitting next to you. By all means, anything that I can be of service, I'll speak for myself, please don't hesitate to ask. I know that you won't. I'm very abrasive, as my colleague to the right says, but it's for good reasons. You know, and don't take anything that I say with any bad intentions. I just speak for the community, the kids, and the staff. And I want to congratulate you. Once again, this is a blessing for the school district. This is a blessing for the city of Brownsville and this is a blessing for Brownsville. Our kids are well on their way to see new futures under your leadership, and I'm so excited to be a part of that. Thank you so much, Dr. Cuff. **Dr. Cuff replied, thank you, Mr. Elizondo, thank you from the bottom of my heart.** Ms. Minerva Pena, Board Member stated, if I may, Ms. Danila? Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, go ahead, Ms. Pena. Ms. Pena continued, yes, I want to also thank you very much. I am looking forward for you going out there and making the district shine. The community is very, very positive and I've heard a lot of comments of how great they are. You're well known in the community. You're a good person. You work wonderful with children because I've seen that over the many, many years and today I just ask God to bless you and to meet your needs daily in everything you're going to do. And that nothing makes you stumble. And please forgive me, some people don't like this, but I say let no weapon form against you, prosper in any way, shape, or form. And we're here for whatever you need because if we do things positive, we're shaping our future for tomorrow so we can all grow old into our nighties and cross the street without getting run over because they know to stop. So thank you and God bless you. I'm very excited for you. **Dr. Cuff stated, thank you, Ms. Pena.** Ms. Neida Ruth Grantland, Board Member stated, Madam Chair may I. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated yes, Ms. Grantland. Ms. Grantland stated Dr. Cuff and I go back to the days of Mr. Besteiro, right? **Dr. Cuff stated yes.** Ms. Grantland stated, yeah, so that's over 40 years. I know this man very well. I know how he works, and I've always marveled at how he could go into any assignment he had with energy and build a team, a fun-loving team, an energetic and productive team. So I'm glad that you bring that to us because I know that that's going to be the very first step in us moving forward. I feel that as a Board and as a community, we're at the brink of something special. I really feel that we are going to move forward, that we're going to move forward with speed, with energy, and with focus, with a single purpose, because all of us here have the same intention. We want to do right by our kids. All of us here want to give of our time, and we give of lots of our time, to be here so that we can be supportive of everything that goes on in our district. It has saddened me that we've been having to put out so many fires, but I'm through putting out fires. We're going to, those fires aren't going to keep coming up at us. We're going to move forward, and under Dr. Cuff's leadership, I'm sure we're going to do very, very well. Dr. Cuff, I did ask Daniela if she would take you upstate and introduce you to all the people she knows, because I've seen her networking. She's really good at

it. And I know you are too, but we can always mentor each other. But I really am excited about this. I think that having worked side by side with Dr. Cuff many, many years and many years ago, I'm excited to work on projects along with Dr. Cuff again. So, congratulations my friend. **Dr. Cuff stated, thank you ma'am. And we have some projects to do. We'll do them together and we'll get the job done because there's no turning back. We're moving forward and like I think Ms. Pena said, we're going to shine. That's all we're going to do. We're going to shine for BISD. Okay? Good.** Mr. Frank Ortiz, Board Member stated, Dr. Cuff, on my behalf congratulations. Dr. Cuff and I also go back many, many years, okay, and I'm very, very proud of the work that he's done in the past. He just said a little while ago, we have some projects to do. We're going to do them together, and that's going to happen, sir, under your leadership. I know that our district community is very, very excited to have you on Board and being the leader of this great district. The best choice is, of course, BISD, and I think that you're even going to make it greater. Okay, so once again, I congratulate you. We look forward to the successful events and things that are going to happen under your leadership, and as we said a little while ago, there's no turning back anymore. You know, we're going to move forward and we're going to work together. And anything that I can do to support you, as long as it's in the best interest of the students and our employees and this district, you will have my support 100 percent. So, welcome on board, and we're going to move forward, sir. And it's going to be successful, yes, sir. **Dr. Cuff stated, thank you, Mr. Ortiz. And yes, we have shirts that we made, Dr. Castro, that says, I am BISD. But if you heard what I said the other day, we are BISD because this is we. We're all together and we all are going to make BISD shine. Yes, I am the superintendent, but I've got a lot of help and I've got a lot of people behind me and we're going to move forward. Okay? Thank you, Mr. Ortiz.** Ms. Denise Garza, Board Member stated, Dr. Cuff, what can I say that my colleagues have not said? Everything has been so positive from the moment we approved you as the alone finalists I think a lot of us receive those messages of thank you, thank you. I've heard many wonderful things about you pretty much my entire life. You got to work with my mom, you got to work with my dad, and now I get to work with you. So, I am very excited. I know you're going to do great things for our district. You know, just seeing you walk in, even when you came in to interview, I think that's what kind of like took me was because you were just so natural. You didn't come in scripted. You were just yourself. And I think this is what our district needs right now. And so, we do have a lot of work. We have many projects. And we are here for you to support you. And I'm very excited for the future of BISD. **Dr. Cuff stated, Thank you, Ms. Garza, I really appreciate your kind words. Thank you.**

IX. BOARD MEMBER REQUEST(S):

A. Action Item(s):

- 1. Restructuring/reorganization of school Board President seat. (Board Agenda Request Minerva Pena/Board Support Carlos Elizondo.**

Ms. Minerva Pena, Board Member stated, I'd like to make a motion that we restructure the president position at this point and I'd like to nominate Mr. Carlos Elizondo as president. Mr. Frank Ortiz, Board Member stated, Second. (Inaudible) Mr. Elizondo stated, unless you say no, I'll accept the nomination. Ms. Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President stated, I vote no.

Motion made by Minerva Pena, seconded by Frank Ortiz, to recommend approval to restructure the President position and nominate Mr. Carlos Elizondo as Board President.

The following vote was recorded:

Yea: Mr. Elizondo, Mr. Ortiz, Ms. Pena, Ms. Grantland

Nay: Ms. Garza, Ms. Lopez Valdez

Abstain:

Motion Carried: 4-2-0

Mr. Elizondo stated, just want to tell my colleagues thank you so much for your support. Ms. Pena stated, and if I may comment? I just wondered where my vote went because I voted yes. It's a yes. Okay. (inaudible). Ms. Lopez Valdez stated I just wanted to make a very quick thank you to the community. It has truly been an honor to serve as president of Brownsville ISD Board of Trustees. I'm grateful for the trust my fellow trustees placed in me and for the opportunity to serve our students, families, educators, and this community. Throughout my tenure, I have done my best with one guiding principle to do what is best in the interest of our children. While leadership roles may change, the mission does not. My commitment to public education, to our teachers and staff, and to more than our 35,000 students who depend on us remains unwavering. I want to thank our district employees for the incredible work you do every day, often under challenging circumstances. You are the heart of Brownsville ISD, and our students are better because of your dedication. Serving as Board president has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I leave this role with gratitude, with my head held high, and with every intention of continuing to serve this community as a trustee. Thank you, and may God continue to bless Brownsville ISD. Thank you. Ms. Pena stated, and if I may thank you for your service, Daniela. I'm sorry, if I may, thank you for your service. It's a hard thing to do, and I appreciate all you've done because it takes a lot of work. This is something that people don't realize what it takes until you get into the position. So I thank you for your services as the president with the BISD. Ms. Grantland stated, Ms. Daniela, I just would like to say that for every hour that the rest of us spend working on this Board, you spend probably four more because I know you attended other meetings and had other duties as the president. I want to thank you for being professional. I want to thank you for the service you've given. And I just want to thank you because I got to see you up in Austin at the conference and actively engaged with the legislative people and all. And I was very impressed with you. Thank you very much for all you do. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, thank you all. And I guess now I hand it off to Mr. Elizondo and we can adjourn. Mr. Elizondo stated, thank you. So, I want to thank everybody. I really appreciate the support. I also appreciate that we have a new leadership at the helm, and it's going to make the school district shine. Again, I cannot express the gratitude that this Board currently has on your behalf, Dr. Cuff. The children of the school district are in better hands, and we appreciate you. And I know that you're going to come here and work as hard as Danielle as president, and as hard as every other individual that's here. We do again appreciate you. Again, I think your job already started, so you don't have to wait till Monday. **Dr. Cuff stated, I didn't have any intention of waiting until Monday, sir. I've got something going tomorrow that I think I'm going to be doing. So, it's full steam ahead, okay?** Mr. Elizondo stated, I knew that. Thank you so much. **Dr. Cuff stated, just try to stay with me.** Mr. Elizondo stated, we're going to have to get some skates to keep up with you. Is that what you're saying? **Dr. Cuff stated, you will need skates and maybe a turbo charger or something. So let's go.** Mr. Elizondo stated, I appreciate that. Anything else that we have pending? Ms. Garza stated, may I say a few words?

Mr. Elizondo stated, yes, of course. Ms. Garza stated, I want to congratulate you. We are ready to work and we are a team as Dr. Cuff stated. So let's unite and let's get this district rolling and as you know, Board of Trustees, we can all agree to disagree, but our main goal is our students and staff. So, congratulations, Mr. Elizondo, and we're ready to work. Mr. Elizondo stated, thank you, ma'am. Yes, Mr. Ortiz. Mr. Ortiz stated, once again, Mr. Elizondo congratulations. Ms. Valdez, I do want to thank you for the time that you spent as Board President and all the hard work that you have done. And I know that we are all going to continue working just as hard. So, Mr. Elizondo, once again, congratulations. I know, as my colleague said just a little while ago, we have a new leader at the helm, and I think that together, working together, there is no way that we could ever go back. Okay, this is just moving forward with the new leadership under your leadership for the Board as well. So, we're looking for just fantastic things in the very, very near future. Mr. Elizondo stated, 100% thank you, Ms. Ortiz. Ms. Pena stated and congratulations I want to congratulate you. We've been working together for a while and we agree to disagree like a brother and sister. And what I love. (inaudible). Ms. Pena continued, yeah, we do. If anybody's been here before, they say we fight like brother and sister. I think we were raised, you know, with the same mentality and we just didn't know it until we met here. But my thing is, you love children, you fight for children, and you have the mentality that I have. With adults, I fight with, come with me, let's go fight. For children, I fight for and I stand in front of them and I will fight and give everything I've got because I was raised, that children are our future and it's up to us to make sure and I've always said it and I'll say it again. You know where the fountain of youth is? Serve God's children. He doesn't let you get old. Because look at all our teachers and administrators, there's some in their 70s, 80s and they don't look a day over 50. So the evidence is you want to keep young, serve children. And I know you do a great job and I really appreciate it and we're here to help you and to serve you and I appreciate your patience and with everything you do and everything that you love because what you do for our children it's going to make a big difference for the city of Brownsville because we need people like that and Dr. Cuff I am so looking forward to you guys working together moving the district forward. It's going to happen. We're going to be the best district in the Rio Grande Valley. Thank you. Ms. Garza stated, we are the best. Ms. Pena stated, we are going to be even better.

X. Announcement(s):

Mr. Elizondo stated, thank you, anybody else has anything to say? Okay, thank you. So, announcements, anything? I have to give you the opportunity. I know you've just been sitting there for like five minutes, but it's on the agenda. **Dr. Timothy E. Cuff stated, I have a few announcements, but they're in my backpack.** Mr. Elizondo stated, go ahead and go get them. That's okay. Just like wait for every kid to go get their stuff. Mr. Elizondo stated, take your time sir. Ms. Denise Garza, Board Member stated, it's early, it's the same day, so don't worry, we're good. Mr. Elizondo stated, I don't think he might be, I don't know are you ready for that? Ms. Minerva Pena, Board Member stated, it hasn't even been an hour that we're here. Mr. Elizondo stated, and if you don't have them, that's okay. I mean, you can always put them in the email, or if it's public, we can address them in the website. That's okay. That's okay. We understand. You might be a little nervous, everything just happened, you know? But it's okay. But it's okay. So, if there's no announcements. **Dr. Cuff stated, just to let you know, the cabinet is meeting on Monday. We've got some issues that we need to take care of concerning teacher start time, teacher ending time and all of that that goes with the regular day. There are some things that we want to iron out before the first day of school, obviously. We're working on where we're going to be, all the administrators, Dr. Rubio is taking the lead on that so that we have, we're going to have all of our central office staff here, a lot of them are going to be at the schools the very first day to help out, do whatever we can to go from there. So, we got a lot of things on the burner right now. And when we meet next, we'll**

have some good announcements for you. Mr. Elizondo stated, yes beautiful, thank you, Dr. Cuff. If anybody doesn't have anything else, we'd like to entertain a motion to adjourn. Ms. M. Pena stated, real quick, are we having a meeting on Monday? It was rescheduled? **Ms. Patricia C. Perez, Executive Assistant stated, we have a Superintendent Safety Meeting.** Ms. Pena stated, when was this? **Ms. Perez stated, for July 20th.** Ms. Pena stated, so is it still going to happen? **Ms. Perez stated, yes, ma'am.** Ms. Pena stated, that's what I'm saying. yes, so then he'll be here. Ms. Neida Ruth Grantland, Board Member stated, the agenda items that were on for the 29th, are they going to be pushed onto the next regular board meeting? **Ms. Perez replied, August 4th, yes, ma'am, Regular Board Meeting.** **Dr. Cuff stated, I would like to add what Pat said, there is a meeting Monday, a Safety Meeting.** **Ms. Perez stated, a Superintendent's Safety Meeting.** **Dr. Cuff continued, a Superintendent Meeting for Safety, so we'll be up to speed. I'll bring you up to speed on that for Monday afternoon. I think it's at 5 o'clock.** Ms. Grantland stated, I will not be able to attend. **Ms. Perez stated, may I have a second, please?** Mr. Ortiz stated, no, you don't have to attend. **Ms. Perez, stated, no, you don't have to attend, it's the President and the Safety Chair.** Mr. Elizondo stated, we have a second by Ms. Lopez. Ms. Lopez?

XI. Adjournment.

Motion was made by Carlos Elizondo, seconded by Daniella Lopez Valdez, and unanimously carried to recommend approval to adjourn the Special Called Board Meeting at 6:25 p.m. (6-0-0)

➤ **There being no further business appearing before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.**

(HANDOUTS ADDED TO OFFICIAL MINUTES)

**(AUDIO/VIDEO TAPES OF THE OPEN MEETING AND THE WRITTEN CERTIFIED AGENDA
OF THE CLOSED MEETING ARE ON FILE)**

Approved by:

Daniella Lopez Valdez, President of the Board

Date

Attested by:

Minerva Pena, Secretary of the Board

Date

Notes: Font style designation

Board of Trustees
Administration
Board Attorney
Staff Attorney
Speaker/Presenter

(Minutes presented at Regular Board Meeting held on August 4, 2026)