

# UCISD Statement to Stakeholders

Subject: Uvalde CISD Update on School Board Terms

To Our Uvalde CISD Stakeholders,

Since the Monday, May 19th, School Board Meeting, the administration of the Uvalde CISD has been diligently researching and clarifying the historical facts regarding our election procedures. We aim to provide transparency and factual accuracy to our stakeholders. Below is a summary of events as documented, concerning the election procedures and term adjustments, to the best of our knowledge and understanding.

Summary: Uvalde CISD Desegregation Compliance and Board Governance

In 1982, in response to the United States of America/Mireles lawsuit, Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District (UCISD), entered into a consent decree agreement establishing an east/west representation structure for trustee elections. The 1982 consent decree structure was specifically created to ensure Latino community representation on the school board. The UCISD has no intention of altering this structure and is proud of the diversity and representation it fosters in board leadership.

In 2006, the Texas Legislature enacted Texas Education Code Section 11.0581, requiring independent school districts to hold trustee elections jointly with a municipality located within school district territory, or jointly with the general election for state and county officials. In 2007, the Texas Attorney General issued Opinion GA-0535, interpreting Education Code section 11.0581. The AG opinion concluded that districts must modify trustee terms as necessary in order to follow the new joint election requirement.

It is important to note that in 2007, the time of the revision, UCISD was under monitoring by The United States Western District Court, stemming from the desegregation lawsuits brought in the 1970s. The federal court cited no issue with the increased term length. At no time has any state or federal lawsuit been filed questioning the legality of the board extending term lengths, which would be necessary to make the board action invalid.

In 2017, in a final review, The United States Western District Court (Del Rio Division) determined that UCISD had "successfully fulfilled its obligation to eliminate the vestiges of segregation to the extent practicable." The court recognized UCISD's good faith commitment to and compliance with federal desegregation orders. As a result, the court granted "unitary status" to the UCISD—a significant milestone reflecting progress and equity. This is a point of pride for the Uvalde community, especially in light of the voter's continued election of trustees who represent the interests of communities previously affected by segregation. Building on this achievement, the UCISD remains solidly committed to equity throughout the district. The district actively engages in initiatives aimed at continuous growth and progress monitoring, ensuring that all students have access to quality education and resources. By involving community members in decision-making processes and focusing on inclusive curriculum development, UCISD strives to uphold and advance the principles of equity and excellence in education.

## Timeline and Key Events

### January 26, 1982

UCISD settles the lawsuit brought by The United States of America (DOJ) and Maria Mireles, and enters into an agreement (consent decree) to end the practice of electing 7 at large board members. Instead, they will abide by a system in which the district is divided into an east and west zone, as defined by the decree, and will elect two board members from each zone, along with three at large board members.

### October 9, 2007

The UCISD Board, in their regular monthly open meeting, discussed changes to Board policy BBB (Local). The Board's policy consideration was prompted by newly enacted legislation that created **Texas Education Code Section 11.0581** and the **Texas Attorney General's subsequent opinion**, which concluded that school districts should make necessary changes to their election systems in order to bring trustee terms into alignment with their joint election partner.

### November 13, 2007

The UCISD Board of Trustees in the regular monthly open meeting, conducted the second reading of board policy BBB (LOCAL), which was also approved unanimously. The effect of this vote was to adopt a Board policy establishing changes to trustee elections that remain in place



today. At the time of this change in 2007, UCISD was still under federal monitoring due to ongoing litigation. Importantly, the federal court **did not object** to the extended term lengths. At no time in the last 18 years has a lawsuit been filed contesting the legality of the board's decision to extend trustee terms. Such a challenge would be necessary to invalidate the board's action.

#### **October 4, 2017**

The United States Western District Court (Del Rio Division) granted unitary status, finding the UCISD had met its obligation to eliminate the vestiges of segregation, had shown good faith commitment to and compliance with its desegregation orders.

#### **Spring 2024**

Trustees requested a policy review by the superintendent, who arranged for this to occur in March 2025.

#### **March 2025**

As best practice, the UCISD conducted a policy review and the TASB administrator highlighted the potential discrepancy and need for board and legal review of the issue. Because the consent decree was the information at hand, that was how the update was structured.

#### **April 28, 2025**

The superintendent updated trustees on the policy review findings describing the issue with the difference in terms identified by TASB, seeking feedback.

#### **May 19, 2025**

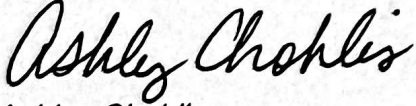
At the regularly scheduled board meeting, trustee Gonzales called into question the legitimacy of the quorum based on the consent decree from 1982. Gonzales stated that the wording of the decree negated the election of trustees and because of that there was no quorum. At that time, the chair, trustee Perez, chose to adjourn the meeting out of an abundance of caution and seek legal counsel.

#### **May 20, 2025**

After extensive research, the district found the documentation of the 2007 board meetings that increased the length of trustee terms by one year.

We are committed to resolving this matter fully transparently and in compliance with all legal requirements, and we are working with our legal counsel to do that. We can assure you that your Uvalde CISD Board of Trustees has been duly elected by the voters in our community to serve our community's schools and they will continue to do that. We appreciate your attention, understanding, and continued support as we navigate these complexities.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashley Chohlis". The script is fluid and cursive.

Ashley Chohlis

Superintendent, UCISD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Calvin Lambert". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Calvin Lambert

President of the Board, UCISD