

**IMPERIAL VALLEY REGIONAL OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAM  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
Adopted Minutes

Meeting of January 15, 2026  
Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program Main Office

**CALL TO ORDER:** Alicia Armenta called the meeting to order at 6:33 a.m. The following persons were present:

**Alicia Armenta**, Board President, Imperial County Office of Education  
**Fabiola Calderon**, Calexico Unified School District  
**Deby Ellet**, Board Member, Central Union High School District  
**Elvira Hernandez**, Imperial Unified School District  
**Larry Iten**, Holtville Unified School District  
**Gloria Santillan**, Clerk of the Board, Brawley Union High School District  
Gabriel Aguirre, Project Coordinator, Imperial Valley ROP  
Vicente Ayala, Director of Business & Human Services, Imperial Valley ROP  
Adrian Gonzales, Program Manager II, Imperial Valley ROP  
Adriana Hernandez, Project Coordinator, Imperial Valley ROP  
Edwin P. Obergfell, Superintendent, Imperial Valley ROP  
Maria Pantoja, Project Coordinator, Imperial Valley ROP  
Wendy Ramirez, Office Manager, Imperial Valley ROP  
Stephanie Sandoval, Data Manager, Imperial Valley ROP

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Alicia Armenta led the pledge of allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**INTRODUCTIONS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Alicia Armenta informed the Board of an adjustment to the agenda. Edwin P. Obergfell requested that the Board consider adding an emergency item to the agenda to update a resolution authorizing the Superintendent to enter into agreements or contracts. He advised the Board that copies of two resolution options and related Brown Act information had been provided. Edwin P. Obergfell explained that the current Resolution No. 10192023 authorizes agreements up to \$500,000. He presented Resolution No. 1152026, which would increase the authorization limit to \$1,500,000, and Resolution No. 11520261, which would set the limit at \$1,000,000. Either resolution would allow the Superintendent to enter into agreements at the respective amounts. He recommended approval of Resolution No. 1152026 to provide authority to sign current and future grant agreements. He noted that the language in both proposed resolutions is identical to the previously approved Resolution No.

10192023, with the only changes being the resolution numbers and the authorized dollar amounts. He also advised the Board that it could opt to hold a Special Meeting to further review and approve either resolution. Edwin P. Oberfell added that he had reviewed an email received that morning indicating a resolution was required for funding purposes. The Board discussed revisiting the resolution later in the year after its approval. A motion was made by Fabiola Calderon and Deby Ellett to approve adding the emergency item to the agenda. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:** A motion was made by Elvira Hernandez and seconded by Deby Ellett to approve the items on the Consent Agenda as presented. **Motion carried unanimously.**

- Minutes of December 11, 2025, Regular Meeting;
- December '25 Warrant Order #'s: 26351568-26351635; 26352528-26352622; 26353927-26354011.

**PERSONNEL:** **APPOINTMENT OF PERSONNEL.** A motion was made by Larry Iten and seconded by Fabiola Calderon to approve the appointment of personnel Elisa Marin. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**EMPLOYEE HOLIDAY CALENDAR 2026-2027.** A motion was made by Deby Ellett and seconded by Elvira Hernandez to approve the Employee Holiday Calendar 2026-2027. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**FY 2025-2026 FRINGE BENEFITS.** Vicente Ayala pointed out that the State Disability Insurance increased from 1.2% to 1.3% and the Mileage Allowance increased from \$0.70 to \$0.725. A motion was made by Gloria Santillan and seconded by Elvira Hernandez. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS:** **2026-2027 BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING CALENDAR.** Edwin P. Oberfell pointed out three board meetings were scheduled for the second Thursday of the month to meet fiscal report deadlines. A motion was made by Fabiola Calderon and seconded by Gloria Santillan to approve Board "Dark Day" for July and 2026-2027 Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**RESOLUTION NO. 10192023-1 – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO PAY AND SIGN PROPER LEGAL BILLS, BILLINGS, INVOICES, AND ORDERS UNDER SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS.** Edwin P. Oberfell informed the Board that he had provided them with a copy of an email he received from Jeff Burquist, Imperial County Workforce Development Board Business Analyst, and he read the email aloud. He noted that the Board had also been provided with a copy of Resolution No. 10192023, as well as a copy of Chapter 4 of the Brown Act, which he also read to the Board. Edwin P. Oberfell explained that the legal action being requested was approval to enter into agreements or contracts, and stated that he was identifying this matter as an emergency situation. He noted that Resolution No. 1152026 and Resolution No. 11520261 contain the same language as Resolution No. 10192023, with the only changes being the resolution numbers and the increased authorized dollar amounts. Resolution No. 1152026 authorizes up to \$1,500,000, while Resolution No. 11520261 authorizes up to \$1,000,000. Fabiola Calderon informed the Board that resolutions do not have an expiration date and stated that the proposed resolution would allow the Superintendent to sign agreements without prior Board consent. Gloria Santillan commented that the Board expects the Superintendent to secure grant funding. Edwin P. Oberfell added that it has been standard practice to bring contracts exceeding \$100,000 to the Board for approval. Fabiola Calderon requested that the resolution be brought back to the Board in February with added language requiring all contracts, regardless of dollar amount, to be presented to the Board for approval within a reasonable timeframe. Alicia Armenta reminded the Board that, in some cases, contracts are not

approved by funders until months after a project has already begun. Edwin P. Obergfell added that some funders have taken several months or up to a year to formally approve contracts.

Alicia Armenta stated that the Board could review the resolution with the suggested language and determine whether it supports a revised resolution at the February Board meeting. Edwin P. Obergfell suggested including language requiring the Superintendent or Executive Director to notify the Board when a contract has not yet been officially awarded but expenditures are being made. Alicia Armenta noted that Edwin P. Obergfell has previously informed the Board of such situations and emphasized that IVROP has maintained transparency. A motion was made by Elvira Hernandez and seconded by Deby Ellett to add the emergency situation to the agenda as defined in California Government Code § 54954.2. **Motion carried unanimously.**

A motion was made by Fabiola Calderon and seconded by Elvira Hernandez to approve Resolution No. 1152026 for \$1,500,000. Resolution No. 10192023-1 was approved with the following roll call vote: AYES: President Alicia Armenta, Trustee Fabiola Calderon, Trustee Deby Ellett, Trustee Elvira Hernandez, Trustee Larry Iten, and Clerk of the Board Gloria Santillan. NAYES: None. Absent: Trustee Raul Navarro. **Motion carried unanimously.**

## INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

**MONTHLY BUDGET UPDATE.** Vicente Ayala reported that the Monthly Budget Update remains unchanged from the version presented in December 2025. He noted that the RN program is fully funded and that grant proposals for Project ALTO and Project STAR will be submitted. He also announced that the Payroll Account Clerk will be retiring in June and explained that the position will be restructured, with its responsibilities divided into two roles. Gloria Santillan stated that, because the position will be split, a cost analysis should be conducted. Vicente Ayala confirmed that a cost analysis will be completed. Edwin P. Obergfell referenced the pie chart, noting that 85% of the funds are derived from grants, while the remaining 15% come from IVROP funds, including memorandum of agreements.

**IVROP COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.** Edwin P. Obergfell reported that the IVROPCF Board met on Tuesday, January 13. He reminded the Board that the IVROPCF Board members include Sam Couchman, Marianne Fenley, Eric Rodriguez, and himself. During the January 13 IVROPCF Board meeting, the Board completed its reorganization, with Sam Couchman serving as President, Marianne Fenley as Secretary, Eric Rodriguez as Vice President, and Edwin P. Obergfell as Treasurer. Edwin P. Obergfell informed the Board that the IVROPCF Board is aware of his planned retirement in June 2026. He noted that the IVROPCF Board was pleased to learn that Fabiola Calderon and Raul Navarro expressed interest in filling the IVROP Board vacancy on the IVROPCF Board. The next IVROPCF Board meeting is scheduled for February 10<sup>th</sup>, and the IVROPCF Board is hopeful that the newly appointed IVROP Board representative will attend that meeting. He stated that meetings are held at 7:30 a.m. in the IVROP Computer Lab and typically last approximately one and a half hours. Fabiola Calderon requested that Edwin P. Obergfell follow up with Raul Navarro to confirm whether he remains interested in filling the vacant IVROPCF Board position. Edwin P. Obergfell stated that he would contact Raul Navarro to confirm his interest. Gloria Santillan asked who provides accounting and clerical support for the IVROPCF Board. Edwin P. Obergfell said that Vicente Ayala provides accounting services for the foundation. Edwin P. Obergfell explained that Wendy Ramirez handles clerical duties, some accounting, and additional support services for the foundation. Edwin P. Obergfell reminded the Board that IVROP and IVROPCF are interconnected, and that Imperial County high school students benefit from IVROPCF scholarships and Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). He noted that IVROPCF pays the event coordinator

\$9,000 as a consultant for her services as the Dancing With the Stars (DWTS) event coordinator. He further stated that the IVROPCF Board would like the IVROP Board to consider allowing a representative from the IVROPCF Board to assist with the application screening and interview process for the IVROP Executive Director position. He also reported that IVROPCF invested \$100,000 in Treasury bonds, generating \$2,000 in returns. Edwin P. Obergfell shared that six of the eight “Stars” have been confirmed and that additional information will be provided at the next IVROP Board meeting.

**CTE UPDATE.** Adriana provided updates on MOA renewals with various districts, noting that Brawley's approval was already secured. She shared that initial discussions have taken place with the Central Unified School District, with additional conversations pending regarding potential modifications to the MOA. Adriana also shared details about the Imperial Valley Field Day and the upcoming CTE student recognition ceremony on April 16th. She concluded by describing the upcoming CTE showcase event on January 22nd, which will feature student demonstrations and industry interactions, as part of CTE Month celebrations.

Elvira Hernandez departed at 7:34 a.m.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH TIMELINE.** The board discussed the Executive Director search timeline and process, with Edwin P. Obergfell proposing a three-step approach: initial paper screening by a committee (three IVROP board members and one IVROPCF board member), first interview by the same committee (three IVROP board members and one IVROPCF board member), and final interviews with the entire board. Edwin P. Obergfell or Wendy Ramirez could provide the committee with the applications but will not screen or review the Executive Director applications. Edwin P. Obergfell suggested having the following documents as part of the application process: complete application, cover letter, resume, three letters of reference, Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy, and if applicable, a copy of California Teaching Credential, Administrative Credential. They agreed to have Wendy Ramirez open the recruitment process as soon as possible, with a late February application deadline and interviews scheduled for March. Gloria Santillan asked why an IVROPCF Board Member would be part of the screening and application reviewing committee. Edwin P. Obergfell explained to the board that the IVROPCF Board is an essential piece to the organization. He reminded the board that the IVROPCF Board provides individual scholarships to students at their school districts and CTSO Student Leadership Organization scholarships. Gloria Santillan suggested having a High School Superintendent and three board members on the committee. Edwin P. Obergfell reminded the board that the Budget Update pie chart shows 85% of the funding received by IVROP is grant funding. Gloria Santillan suggested having Sam Couchman, IVROPCF Board Member, be part of the committee because he has experience with grants. Gloria Santillan stated the first step will be the application screening by the committee, the second step will be the first interview by the committee, and the third step would be the final interview with the entire IVROP Board. Fabiola Calderon said as many board members that can attend. Fabiola Calderon asked if we could wait until the regular board meeting or hold a special meeting. The IVROPCF Board Member would be part of the first and second step. Deby Ellett suggested having the interviewing committee provide the board with a maximum of the top five applications. The board agreed to have three IVROP Board Members and one IVROPCF Board Member on the committee. Gloria Santillan said if we have a meeting we need to have a quorum. The board agreed that the IVROP Board will make the final decision on who will be hired at the third step with the final interview. Wendy Ramirez confirmed that for posting purposes the Executive Director job announcement will be posted as soon as possible with February 27<sup>th</sup> as the deadline. Fabiola Calderon said the first and second interviews would be held in March 2026. Fabiola Calderon asked Wendy Ramirez to send out several dates to the board for the second interviews to be scheduled in March because the sooner they receive the

information the more availability they will have. The board agreed to discuss which three IVROP Board members will participate in the first step (screening applications) and the second step (first interviews) at the February IVROP Board Meeting. The second interview will be held at the IVROP Computer Lab.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH TIMELINE.** Edwin P. Obergfell reminded the board that they had already reviewed and approved the Executive Director Search Timeline. The approval date will be added the Executive Director Search Timeline.

**JOB DESCRIPTION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.** Edwin P. Obergfell reminded the board that the attorney had reviewed the Executive Director Job Description. The board had also reviewed and approved the Executive Director Job Description. The approval date will be added the Executive Director Job Description.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SALARY RANGE.** Edwin P. Obergfell reminded the board that they had already reviewed and approved the Executive Director Salary Schedule. The approval date will be added the Executive Director Salary Range.

Alicia Armenta departed at 7:50 a.m.

**PRESENTATION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**LEGISLATION:** None.

**OTHER:** **ARTICLES.** Gloria Santillan referred to the Imperial Valley Press articles dated November 26, 2025.

**EVENTS.** Gloria Santillan made mention that a list of events were listed on the agenda.

**IVROP/IVROPCF NEWSLETTERS.** None.

**BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS:**

Fabiola Calderon said she was happy to be back. She shared they had their reorganizational meeting in December and she was voted to continue to represent IVROP. She expressed she was looking forward to finishing off the school year, starting a new calendar year, and trying to find a replacement for the Superintendent.

Deby Ellett stated she enjoyed the field day she had attended. She thanked IVROP Staff for participating and organizing the field day. Deby Ellett said it was a high quality event. She shared the industry partners that attended the Central Union High School District Advisory meeting shared how important writing skills, English skills, and communication skills are. Deby Ellett said IVROP is doing a very good job assisting students and the school district.

Larry Iten thanked Staff for all their hard work. He wished everyone a Happy New Year! Larry Iten shared that he would be meeting with his board next Tuesday. The board will decide if he continues to be the IVROP representative. He understands the next six months will be critical for the future of IVROP.

Gloria Santillan thanked Staff for all the work they do, all the grants that are written, and the services that are provided to the students. She pointed out that IVROP assists students with writing skills, career skills, mental health, housing, etc. She said she is aware how difficult it is to secure funding. She told Staff that they are doing a great job!

Edwin P. Obergfell said he was happy to have the IVROP Board return and look forward to continuing to work with them. He shared Gabriel Aguirre is in Sacramento attending the California Workforce Association Executive Boot Camp. Gabriel Aguirre is learning how to work with boards, fiscal, reforms that may be changed, working with partners, leadership development, dealing with real-world solutions, and organizations. It will be a yearlong commitment. He told the board we appreciate all the work and all your support with the Memorandum of Agreements. He is looking forward to a very busy next six months. He is hoping that the best candidate is hired for the Executive Director position.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next IVROP Board Meeting was scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 6:30 a.m., at Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP) Main Office.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Fabiola Calderon and seconded by Deby Ellett to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 a.m. ***Motion carried unanimously.***