



Minutes

Centers for Applied Science and Technology
Board of Trustees Meeting | October 16, 2025
VelocityTX | 4:30 PM - 6 PM

Board Members Present: Lisa Lewis, Shari Albright, Erik Ford, Leslie Cantu, Katie Chain, Rene Dominguez, and Jeanne Russell

Board Member Present Virtually): Dr. Lyssa Ochoa

Board Member Absent: Erik Nieves

Staff Present: Nicole Amri, Jen Maestas, Heriberto “Eddie” Rodriguez, Al Perez, Amanda Sierra, Josh Collins, and Stephanie Gaitan

Guest: Georgina Podjenski

1. **Welcome |** Stephanie Gaitan and Josh Collins welcomed the board and presented an overview of the communications and media relations strategy and shared links to videos that members can use to promote CAST Schools.
2. **Consent Agenda |** Katie Chain moved to approve items in the consent agenda, Rene Dominguez seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously. Consent agenda items included:
 - a. Minutes | August 21, 2025 Board Meeting
 - b. Minutes | July 24, 2025 Special Board Meeting
 - c. Executive Committee Minutes | October 2, 2025 Meeting
 - d. Business Development Minutes | October 9, 2025 Meeting
 - e. Letter of Resignation | Board Member Shari Albright
 - f. Welcoming New Board Member | Georgina Podjenski
 - g. Revised bylaws regarding the charge of the Executive Committee
3. **Board committee reports**
 - a. Jeanne Russell shared updates from the October 2, 2025 Executive Committee meeting to include the new charge of the committee and the Executive Director search and hiring process.
 - b. Lisa Lewis highlighted that the Business Development Committee is focused on expanding CAST's business partners by deepening collaboration with Workforce Solutions Alamo, local colleges and universities, and hospitals. The committee is also looking to increase partnerships with engineers.
4. **Board Shoutouts |** Heriberto “Eddie” Rodriguez thanked each board member for their service to CAST Schools and highlighted:
 - a. Katie Chain and H-E-B for sending students from CAST STEM High School to the 2025 Central Texas Women in Industry Expo
 - b. Lisa Lewis and CPS for hosting the Career Connecting Summit on October 28
 - c. Rene Dominguez and VelocityTX for hosting the board meeting and reception
5. **Board action items |** Heriberto “Eddie” Rodriguez asked the board to:
 - a. Make a personal contribution to CAST Schools, of any amount, for FY 25-26
 - b. Support a student in need of Emergency Funds at St. Mary's University
 - c. Identify an opportunity for CAST's project management apprentice to shadow current project managers. Lisa Lewis shared that CPS could offer that opportunity.
 - d. Identify additional corporate sponsors for the Youth Leadership work
 - e. Sign up now for the January 30 Senior Hiring Fair
6. **Strategic Direction update |** Jen Maestas shared aggregated feedback gathered from principals, board members, and other key stakeholders, providing insight into priorities for the strategic plan. She presented top-level KPIs and facilitated a discussion around the proposed Graduate Success Report, developed in collaboration with the Carnegie and Greater Texas Foundations. Board members offered feedback to refine the report and ensure alignment with network goals.
7. **Strategic Metrics and Outcomes (selected KPIs) |** Heriberto “Eddie” Rodriguez reviewed post-secondary data from recent junior and senior interviews. The data highlighted student's anticipated colleges, careers, and

plans after graduation.

- 8. Development Update |** Nicole Amri reviewed the 2025–2026 development goals to include new grant opportunities. She also highlighted key areas of focus for fundraising and strategies to diversify financial resources to support long-term sustainability.
- 9. Executive Session: The board convened in executive session to discuss Executive Director selection process and timeline, plus financials**
- 10. Update:** Jeanne Russell shared the the end of year financials were approved by the board via electronic vote
- 11. Upcoming Events |** Board Members were invited to attend the following events:
 - a. CAST Schools Career-Connecting Summit: October 28, 2025 at CPS Energy Headquarters (8:30 am - 10 am)
 - b. The next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 9 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at Toyotetsu.
- 12. The board adjourned to attend the reception**