



Minutes

Centers for Applied Science and Technology
Board of Trustees Meeting | December 9, 2025 | 4:30 - 6 pm
Toyotetsu | 1 Lone Star Pass building 38, San Antonio, TX 78264

Board Members Present: Dr. Lyssa Ochoa, Lisa Lewis, Leslie Cantu, and Jeanne Russell
Board Member Present Virtually): Georgina Podjenski, Katie Chain, and Rene Dominguez
Board Member Absent: Erik Ford and Erik Nieves
Staff Present: Jen Maestas, Heriberto “Eddie” Rodriguez, Al Perez, and Amanda Sierra
Guest: Mari Aguirre Rodriguez

1. **Welcome:**
 - a. Leslie Cantu welcomed board members and guests and provided a tour of Toyotetsu
 - b. Members present had the opportunity to meet CAST Alum, and current Toyotetsu team member, Huruma Charles
2. **Consent Agenda:** Lisa Lewis moved to approve items in the consent agenda, Dr. Lyssa Ochoa seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously. Consent agenda items included:
 - a. Approving the October 16, 2025 meeting minutes | October 16, 2025
 - b. Approving Georgina Podjenski assuming the Class II term of Dr. Shari Albright, through June 30, 2027
3. **Board Committee Reports:**
 - a. Dr. Lyssa Ochoa provided an Executive Committee update highlighting their focus on defining the process for identifying the new Executive Director for the CAST Schools Network
4. **Board Shoutouts |** Eddie Rodriguez thanked board members for their support to include:
 - a. Lisa Lewis & CPS Energy | Hosting the Career Connecting Summit
 - b. Leslie Cantu | Career Connecting Summit
 - c. Katie Chain | Life Ready Summit | Hosting a session on Networking
 - d. H-E-B, CPS Energy, and Dr. Ochoa for sponsoring our Youth Leadership work
 - e. Georgina Podjenski, Erik Ford, and Jeanne Russell for contributing to our College Assistance Program
5. **Board action items |** Eddie Rodriguez shared 5 action items for the board:
 - a. Make a personal contribution to CAST Schools, of any amount by December 31, 2025
 - b. Donate to support an alum in need of emergency funds for college
 - c. Identify additional corporate sponsors for the Youth Leadership work
 - d. Sign up to judge at the Speak Up Speak Out Civics Fair on Friday, January 16, 2026 | 8:30 - 2 pm
 - e. Sign up for the Senior Hiring Fair on Friday, January 30, 2026
6. **Strategic Plan |** Jen Maestas presented an updated draft of the CAST Schools 5-year Strategic Plan for Board feedback. Members discussed the following questions and agreed to share additional feedback over email.
 - a. What part of this plan feels like the strongest signal of who we are becoming as an organization?
 - b. As you consider our environment—political, educational, financial—where do you see risk or ambiguity that we should be mindful of as we move forward?
 - c. What opportunities or partnerships do you see that could accelerate this plan over the next 12 months?
7. **Executive Session: The board convened in Closed Session to review the search process for the new executive director and approve financials**
8. **Upcoming Events:** Jeanne Russell shared a list of upcoming events to include:
 - a. January 16, 2026: Speak Up Speak Out Regional Civics Fair | Our Lady of the Lake University
 - b. January 30, 2026: CAST Schools Senior Hiring Fair | Palo Alto College
 - c. Possible January Board Meeting | CAST Offices

9. Adjourn