



Association of Brownsville Educators

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BISD Board Candidate Questionnaire

- 1. Please provide a brief biographical information essay about yourself, your family, your educational background (including elementary, middle & high school), employment, organizations you belong to (professional, community, social), etc.**

Hello, my name is Nelda Corinne Torres Rocha, I am the daughter of the late Maria Esperanza Garcia Torres and US Air Force Retired Staff Sgt. Juventino Torres of Smyrna, Georgia. I was raised with my older brother, David Torres who passed in 2020 and my younger brother, Danny Torres, who is a retired Dallas Police officer. I have another brother, Stephen Torres who is a jeweler in Georgia. I am married to Rogelio "Rocky" Rocha Jr., we have 4 children and 4 grandchildren. My husband is a teacher at Stell Middle School. Our children attended Brownsville ISD elementaries, middle schools and graduated from either Riveira or Hanna High schools. 3 of our grandchildren attend Paredes Elementary. I attended public elementary schools in Abilene, TX, and Jacksonville Arkansas. I also attended Junior High school in Jacksonville Arkansas. This was due to my father's military service. However, upon his retirement we came home to Brownsville where I attended Oliveria MS and graduated from Porter High School. I received an Associates of Arts from Texas Southmost College, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas Brownsville. My teaching certifications are, Elementary 1-8 (lifetime), English 1-8 (lifetime), Secondary Reading (lifetime), and an ESL endorsement (inactive due to retirement). I taught Elementary 2nd and 3rd grade at Vermillion Road Elementary, and Middle School Reading and ESL, grades 6th- 8th at Faulk, Besteiro, Perkins, and Stell. I have also taught an ESL high school summer program.

Throughout my 29 years with BISD, I also participated with various district and campus departments and committees. Some examples include curriculum writing, Calendar Committee representative, DEIC campus alternate representative, Employee Benefits Committee campus representative, chess sponsor, hosted chess tournament, district chess committee representative, substitute teacher before my teaching career, campus department chairperson, campus 21st century lead teacher, LPAC Chairperson, Site Based Decision Making committee member, co-cheerleading sponsor, and chaperone and Hanna Band Booster. I also have been an advocate and board member with Association of Brownsville Educators. I am currently, 2nd vice president of BARSEA, Brownsville Area Retired School Employee Association /TRTA, Texas Retired Teacher Association, I have been a member of TSTA-Retired, Texas State Teacher Association Retired. I have been a Girls Scout Troop Leader, Little Miss Kickball team mom and

concession stand volunteer, along with other volunteer activities for the community.

2. Why are you running for school board?

I am running for the Brownsville Independent School Board Place 5 because I deeply care about the quality of education in our community. Having worked as a teacher for nearly three decades, I am also concerned about the district's financial situation that has caused the current school board to close 3 schools. Another reason I have chosen to run for school board is to address the treatment of students, parents, educators, and staff due to arbitrary policies and procedures.

3. What do you see as the three biggest problems confronting the district? Prioritize and explain.

- a. Student Academic Success. How to raise student academic achievement without frustrating students and educators.
- b. Inequitable policy and procedural usage that leaves parents, students, and staff to feel disrespected and or micromanaged.
- c. Budget concerns due to loss of student enrollment, state funding issues, goal focused budgeting.

4. What are your goals for BISD?

Create responsible policies that demonstrate respect for educators, support staff, parents, and the primary client the students of BISD.

Maximize the budget to meet the primary goal of demonstrating respect and value to the employees that directly impact student achievement.

5. One of the biggest issues confronting the district is the drop in student enrollment. What solutions do you have to help attract and retain students in BISD?

As an elected board member, I would like to see the administrative team create and enhance the quality academic and extracurricular programs that would motivate parents to return their students to BISD.

6. How do you plan to engage parents, students, and community members in the decision-making process, and what steps will you take to ensure transparency in school board decisions?

Providing opportunities for parental involvement and parent/community workshops that allows many to participate and provide their opinions and visions for the quality education they want for their children and grandchildren.

7. How do you plan to address the issues and concerns with the leadership and membership of our employee union, Association of Brownsville Educators -

AOBE/TSTA/NEA?

Every employee should have an avenue to voice their concerns and ideas through mutual communication opportunities. I am no stranger to listening to concerns and offering as much assistance possible as a prior advocate of AOE.

8. Would you consider bringing back the annual step increase to the salary pay table, and if so, how would you go about it to bring it back?

I recall the times of the annual step increase. The step kept me motivated and dedicated to BISD. It was also easier to understand. If given the opportunity I would encourage an annual step increase to the salary pay. Compensation can reflect value and respect.

9. TIA has been an issue with many of our members. What are you going to do to ensure that teacher incentive allotment is implemented with fidelity and consistency across the district?

I had the opportunity to be a community representative member of the TIA for Brownsville ISD a few years ago. I learned that TIA was to be a legislative initiative to reward classroom educators for exemplary instruction. It was never to be a competition against colleagues or be subjective evaluations. The district decided to create the criteria it would use and though the attempt to be uniformed has been made, it has become very subjective by the evaluators. At least that is my understanding of how teachers feel. Whether the leadership puts value or chooses to minimize their feelings of the frustration it seems so unnecessary. The district could have removed the subjectiveness and encourage teachers to seek national certification. However, that may be more of a challenge, but it is equitable non subjective way to TIA. Also, as it stands every teacher is required to adhere TIA criteria even when they know they will not receive it as they may be retiring before award of monies can be given or their supervisor has made it clear only certain departments will qualify at a particular campus. If possible, a revisit of the criteria and the grant would be beneficial for equitable opportunities for teachers to demonstrate success.