

**Via Certified Mail,
Regular Mail & Email**

108-912

November 18, 2024

Dr. Marcey Sorensen, Superintendent
La Joya Independent School District
201 E. Expy 83
La Joya, Texas 78560

Mr. Julian Alvarez, Board President
La Joya Independent School District
201 E. Expy 83
La Joya, Texas 78560

RE: Appointment of Conservator

Dear Dr. Sorensen and Mr. Alvarez:

The purpose of this letter is to notify you of the appointment of Dr. Diana Barrera Ugarte to La Joya Independent School District (“ISD” or “district”) as conservator, in accordance with a fully executed Agreed Order (“agreement”) between the district and the Texas Education Agency (“TEA” or “agency”).

The terms of the agreement provide that the district will accept the appointment of one or more conservators, who will provide TEA assurances that the district makes every effort to comply with applicable statutes and regulations. As you are aware, TEA appointed a board of managers and superintendent to the district following the Final Report resulting from a Special Investigation of the district, an administrative hearing before the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH), and oral arguments presented to me by the district and the agency.

The conservator will have all authority permitted under Texas law and otherwise agreed to in the agreement including, but not limited to, the following:

- Overseeing and directing any action of the district and/or governance team;
- Conducting onsite inspections during the period of the placement;
- Supporting the creation of a plan to address system improvements in the district; and
- Reporting to the agency on the progress of the district and governance team.

The appointment of the conservator does not relieve the district and its governing board of the responsibility to operate in compliance with all applicable statutes and rules. The agency reserves the right to implement all available interventions and sanctions under Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapters 39, 39A, and Title 19, Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 97, individually or in combination, to address current or future deficiencies identified for the district.

The cost of the conservator's services will be paid by the district in accordance with TEC §39A.903. The conservator's fee is \$125 per hour plus necessary travel expenses not to exceed the state per diem rate. Failure to make timely payments to the conservator may result in appropriate amounts being deducted from the district's Foundation School Program (FSP) funds.

It is my sincere desire that all parties work together cooperatively and productively to address the issues identified for the district. If you have questions about the appointment of the conservator, please contact Garrett Black, Director of Governance Interventions at (512) 463-9146 or Garrett.Black@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Morath", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education

MM/lm