

# BISD bus driver reinstated with back pay

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[By Gary Long, The Brownsville Herald](#)

A BISD bus driver has been reinstated with back pay and an apology letter after a public grievance hearing over her firing by transportation director Hector Chirinos.

The grievance hearing was held in public July 15 to bring attention to driver Maria Lippman's situation, her attorney John Shergold said.

At the hearing, Brownsville Independent School District trustees voted to grant the remedies Lippman had sought: reinstatement, back pay, no further retaliation and an apology letter from Chirinos.

Testimony at the hearing indicated that Lippman received a citation on April 9 for speeding near the Gladys Porter Zoo on Ringgold Street while transporting a group of pre-kindergarten and 3-year-old students from Garden Park Elementary to the zoo.

The ticket was for travelling 10 mph over the speed limit but was dismissed on May 8, testimony indicated. Nevertheless, Chirinos fired Lippman on April 10.

Shergold contended that Chirinos had retaliated against Lippmann. He said Lippman had filed a report the day before she received the speeding citation that a colleague used profanity in her presence. She also filed a report that her bus needed repairs.

Also, Joe Rodriguez, operations foreman in the transportation department, arrived at the scene while Lippman was receiving the speeding ticket, and the following day Chirinos fired her, Shergold said during the hearing.

Shergold pointed out that the citation was a first offense and was dismissed. Even if deserved, it was not grounds for termination, he said.

"This is an internal matter. It should have been handled internally (not at a grievance hearing)," trustee Pat Lehman said during the hearing.

Lippman is to return to work Aug. 19 and was to receive a check for back pay from her termination date to June 3.