



Always Innovating

**South  
Texas ISD**

RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 7-12

## **Minutes of Regular Meeting**

### **The Board of Directors**

### **South Texas ISD**

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A Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of South Texas ISD was held on March 30, 2021 beginning at 7:00 PM and was conducted via Video/Audio Conference Pursuant to Governor Greg Abbott's Temporary Suspension of Open Meetings Laws issued on March 16, 2020. The board meeting was audible to the Board and public and allowed for two-way communication.

1. Welcome.

Doug Buchanan, Board President, welcomed the guests, staff and fellow Board members.

2. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Board President Doug Buchanan.

3. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence and remembering Marc Lara, Bonnie Saucedo & Irma Perez-Treviño,

4. Board Meeting called to order.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Doug Buchanan at 7:00 p.m. at which time he was assured by Superintendent, Dr. Marco A. Lara, Jr. that notices of the meeting were posted properly according to the laws of Texas and that a quorum of the board was present.

The following board members participated remotely:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Martin Castillo, DC	Edinburg
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia Sanchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville

Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following Board members were absent:

Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Javier Farias	McAllen
Richard Fleming, MD	Mission
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
David Torres	Edinburg
Irma Perez-Treviño	Harlingen

The following staff members participated remotely:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Jeff Hembree
Marla R. Knaub	Lorena Madrigal
Lissa Frausto	Sonia E. Rodriguez
Amanda Odom	Ana Castro
Marcos L. Flores	Criselda R. Flores
Efrain Garza	Jose Lucio
Janie Ortiz	Ramon Longoria
Nereyda Treviño	

#### 5. Awards & Recognitions.

- A. Recognition of STISD middle and high school teams for representing the district at the 4th Annual Regional Battle of the Books Competitions.

On behalf of the school Board and administration, Amanda Odom recognized and presented a certificate to the STISD middle and High School teams for representing the district at the 4th Annual Regional Battle of the Books Competitions.

- B. Recognition of Preparatory Academy for earning national distinction through its re-designation as a School to Watch.

On behalf of the school Board and administration, Amanda Odom recognized Preparatory Academy for earning national distinction through its re-designation as a School to Watch.

#### 6. Approval of Consent Agenda.

In order to promote efficient meetings, the Board may act upon more than one item by a single vote through the use of consent agenda. Consent items shall be items placed on the Agenda marked with an asterisk (\*) for which no Board discussion is anticipated and for which the Superintendent recommends approval. Prior to the meeting, at the request

#### 7.

of any member of the Board of Directors, any item on the consent agenda shall be removed and given individual consideration. Requests for individual consideration are made at least a half-hour prior to Board meetings and requests must be directed to either the Board President or the Superintendent.

The Board President announced a request was made by Dr. Ricardo Ochoa to pull agenda items 14.C and 14.D from consent agenda for discussion. A motion was made by Mr. A. Cantu, seconded by Mr. Solis, pulling agenda items 14.C and 14.D as requested and approving the consent agenda items as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

8. \*Action: Review and act on the February 25, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

9. Public Comments for Agenda Topics.

The Board did not receive requests to address the Board of Directors on agenda topics for this meeting.

10. Public Audience for Non-Agenda Topics.

The Board did not receive requests for public audience for non-agenda topics for this meeting.

11. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - Sylvia S. Lopez & Rick Villarreal, DDS, Co-Chairs

Mrs. Sylvia S. Lopez reported on the following committee items:

- A. Report on TASA Curriculum Executive Summary Review findings.

Mr. Brian Ellis, TASA representative, reported on the TASA Curriculum Executive Summary Review findings. The Curriculum Audit findings report will be finalized and will be posted on the district's website. The Curriculum Audit will drive the planning and implementation of a viable curriculum that is focused on student success.

- B. Action: Review and act on school calendar for the 2021-2022 school year and legend.

A motion was made by Mrs. Lopez, seconded by Dr. Garza, approving the 2021-2022 school calendar and legend as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Finance & Operations Committee - Martin Castillo, DC & Henry LeVrier, Co-Chairs

Mr. Henry LeVrier reported on the following committee items:

- A. \*Report on District Comparison of Revenues/Expenditures.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. \*Report on checks written since last report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. \*Report on school district investments:

1. Investments owned by the district.
2. Investments held by Wilmington Trust for the South Texas ISD Public Facilities Corporation.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. Report on the following projects:

1. Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility
2. Edinburg Exterior Restroom project
3. Preparatory Academy Parking Lot Expansion
4. Science Academy CATE Building Renovation project
5. New Central Office Building Renovation project

A video report on the progress of each of the projects was presented to the Board.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:

1. Payment application #8 to Gomez, Mendez, Saenz Inc. for the Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility project in the amount of \$3,369.60.
2. Payment application #7 to D. Wilson Construction for the Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility in the amount of \$200,812.90.
3. Payment application #5 to Gonzalez Enterprise for the Preparatory Parking Lot Expansion project in the amount of \$7,184.52.
4. Payment application #5 to Gomez, Mendez, Saenz Inc. for the Science Academy CATE Building Renovation project in the amount of \$1,629.45.
5. Payment application #5 to Gerlach Builders for the Science Academy CATE Renovation project in the amount of \$103,389.37.
6. Payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the Edinburg Exterior Restroom project in the amount of \$477.75.
7. Payment application #2 to D. Wilson for the Edinburg Exterior Restroom project in the amount of \$29,998.15.

8. Payment application #5 to Gignac & Associates for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$238,814.16.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Dr. Villarreal approving payment application #8 to Gomez, Mendez, Saenz Inc. for the Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility project in the amount of \$3,369.60; payment application #7 to D. Wilson Construction for the Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility in the amount of \$200,812.90; payment application #5 to Gonzalez Enterprise for the Preparatory Parking Lot Expansion project in the amount of \$7,184.52; payment application #5 to Gomez, Mendez, Saenz Inc. for the Science Academy CATE Building Renovation project in the amount of \$1,629.45; payment application #5 to Gerlach Builders for the Science Academy CATE Renovation project in the amount of \$103,389.37; payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the Edinburg Exterior Restroom project in the amount of \$477.75; payment application #2 to D. Wilson for the Edinburg Exterior Restroom project in the amount of \$29,998.15; and payment application #5 to Gignac & Associates for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$238,814.16 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendments:
  1. General Fund (199) Budget Amendment #4
  2. IDEA B (224) Budget Amendment #1

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Dr. Castillo, approving General Fund budget amendment #4 for new administration building renovations due to an increase in construction costs and IDEA B budget amendment #1 to decrease object code 6100 and increase object code 6300 to expend carryover funds from prior year as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on Resolution extending the district's bank depository with Plains Capital Bank for 2021-2023 biennium.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. Quintanilla, approving the Resolution extending the district's bank depository with Plains Capital Bank for two additional years (2021-2023 biennium) as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Action: Review and act on approving the ranking of proposals for the construction services for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

Ms. Marla Knaub reported on the ranking of proposals as presented on page 77 of the agenda packet. A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. Solis, accepting the ranking for construction services on the New Central Office building renovation project as recommended by the ranking committee, and authorize the Superintendent to negotiate a construction agreement pursuant to Texas Government code section 2269.155; authorize the Superintendent to execute the construction agreement on behalf of the District with D. Wilson Construction and approve the purchase order for the base bid of \$7,864,000. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Abiel J. Cantu & Larry Cantu, Co-Chairs

Mr. Abiel Cantu reported on the following committee items:

- A. Report on STISD Local Board Policy Review Timeline 2021.

Mr. Hembree reported plans to conduct a review of the district's local policies. A timeline between March through November 2021 for reviewing policies was presented. This was a report only. No board action was taken.

- B. Report on March 2021 Local Policy Review.

This was the first month of the STISD local board policies review. The Committee is reviewing the local policies and will bring to the board a recommendation for any revisions. This was a report only. No board action was taken.

- 14. Community & Governmental Relations Committee - Sasha Crane & Jaime Solis, Co-Chairs

Ms. Sasha Crane reported on the following committee items:

- A. Report: Update regarding the current marketing campaign and future possibilities for student recruitment.

Ms. Crane reported on the work of the committee regarding enrollment strategies to implement, to improve and target. The "Follow Me" campaign will begin showcasing our success stories. This was a report only. No board action was taken.

- 15. Superintendent's Report - Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.

- A. \*Campus Reports
  - 1. Preparatory Academy - A. Castro
  - 2. Rising Scholars Academy - C. Rodriguez
  - 3. World Scholars - J. Ortiz
  - 4. Medical Professions - J. Lucio
  - 5. Health Professions - M. Flores
  - 6. Science Academy - L. Madrigal
  - 7. Attendance Reports - J. Hembree

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. \*Report on professional vacancies.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. Action: Review and act on announcement of vacancies for the 2021 summer programs.

This item was pulled from consent agenda to address questions regarding program cost, effect on summer school and other programs. A motion was made by Mr. A. Cantu, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving the announcement of vacancies for the 2021 summer programs as recommended. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. Action: Review and act on request for new professional positions for Special Programs Director, Career and Technical Education Coordinator, Math Coordinator, and English/ELL Coordinator for the 2021-2022 school year and a non-professional position for Maintenance Coordinator for the 2020-2021 school year and approval of the announcement of vacancies.

This item was pulled from consent agenda to address questions regarding where vacancies will be posted and last time the staff received a pay increase. A motion was made by Mr. A. Cantu, seconded by Mrs. Lopez, approving the request for new professional positions for Special Programs Director, Career and Technical Education Coordinator, Math Coordinator, and English/ELL Coordinator for the 2021-2022 school year and a non-professional position for Maintenance Coordinator for the 2020-2021 school year and approval of the announcement of vacancies. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. \*Quarterly report on the Education Foundation of South Texas ISD.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. \*Action: Review and act on request to approve acting principal at Medical Professions and salary adjustment.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- G. \*Action: Review and act on board members to attend the following:
  - 1. TASB's Summer Leadership Institute, June 16-19, 2021 in San Antonio, TX or June 23-26, 2021 in Fort Worth, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- H. Action: Review and approve the Hybrid Instruction During Scheduled Testing Days for K-8th grade Students Waiver to be submitted to the Texas Education Agency by Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Lara explained the need for this waiver was because districts may require students who are not scheduled to take an assessment to learn remotely on district-scheduled testing days in order to reduce the number of individuals on a campus at any one time and increase the number of remote students that come on campus to take the assessment. A motion was made by Dr. Castillo, seconded by Dr. Garza, approving the Hybrid Instruction During Scheduled Testing Days for K-8th grade Students Waiver to be submitted to the Texas Education Agency by Superintendent of Schools as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and approve the Hybrid Instruction for 40% Campus for 9-12th Grade Students Waiver to be submitted to the Texas Education Agency by Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Lara explained the need for this waiver was because the district operates with an A/B schedule. Some high school courses require in person instruction due to one or more of the following reasons: Students attending clinical sites for hours to achieve certifications; students who are enrolled in a health science course; students who are participating in product-based dual enrollment and IB. Eligible students have the option to attend on campus instruction on either A or B days depending on when they take a hybrid eligible course.

A motion was made by Dr. Castillo, seconded by Mr. A. Cantu, approving the Hybrid Instruction for 40% Campus for 9-12th Grade Students Waiver to be submitted to the Texas Education Agency by Superintendent of Schools as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on Administrator/Teacher Appraisal Waiver to be submitted to the Texas Education Agency by Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Lara explained the need for waiver from the educator appraisal requirements was due to COVID-19. A motion was made by Mrs. Lopez, seconded by Dr. Garza, approving the Administrator/Teacher Appraisal Waiver to be submitted to the Texas Education Agency by Superintendent of Schools as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- K. Action: Cast votes for Place 1, Place 4 and Place 7 of the Region One ESC Board of Directors.

Region One Education Service Center granted seven votes for each Place on the ballot to South Texas ISD board members. In keeping the philosophy of everyone having a voice, the board had each member present vote for each Place. The Board voted for each place. The following candidates received the majority of the votes and won the 7 votes:

- Prisciliano (J.R.) Treviño, Place 1 representing Hidalgo County
- Homero Garcia, Place 4 representing Hidalgo County
- Raul R. (Bobby) Chapa, Place 7 representing Brooks & Willacy Counties ran unopposed

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The Board of Directors met on March 30, 2021 8:35 p.m. in a closed meeting or executive session as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Section, 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.082, 551.084 and 551.001, the Board may go into Executive Session to discuss the following:

- A. 551.074, 551.071 Personnel Matters and consultation with school attorney regarding Personnel Matters: Closed Meeting
  1. Recommendation of professional staff for the 2020-2021 & 2021-2022 school years.
    - a. Teacher(s)



2. Review recommendations for renewal/extension/non-renewal of employment contracts for the following: Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Executive Director for Student Support, Chief Academic Officer, Administrator for Public Relations & Marketing, Principals, teachers and other professional staff.
  - a. Renewal/extension of contract for professional staff for 2021-2022 school year.
  - b. Pursuant to Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code, consider and discuss termination of probationary contract teacher at the end of the 2020-2021 school year (PM).
  - c. Discussion and consideration to propose the non-renewal of a teacher's 2020-2021 term contract at the end of the school year (JDL); Board Policy DFBB (Legal) and (Local); Tex. Edu. Code Sec. 21.206.
  - d. Discussion and consideration with Legal Counsel of legal issues regarding the proposed non-renewal of a teacher's 2020-2021 term contract at the end of the school year; (JDL).
  - e. Consultation with Legal Counsel pertaining to selection of Special Legal Counsel to advise the Board of Trustees at any Nonrenewal Hearing at the end of the 2020-2021 School Year.

The Board of Directors ended the executive session at 9:30 p.m.

17. OPEN SESSION: Action on any Item Deliberated in Closed Meeting

- A. 551.074, 551.071 Personnel Matters and consultation with school attorney regarding Personnel Matters:
  1. Action: Review and act on recommendation of professional staff for the 2020-2021 & 2021-2022 school years.
    - a. Teacher(s)

Dr. Marco A. Lara, Jr., Superintendent of Schools, recommended Perla Barrientes and San Juanita Sanchez as Teachers (10-month contract) retroactive to start date for the remainder of the 2020-2021 and the 2021-2022 school year.

A motion was made by Mr. Gonzales, seconded by Mrs. Lopez approving to hire the professional staff retroactive to start date for the remainder of the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Action: Review and act on recommendations for renewal/extension/non-renewal of employment contracts for the following: Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Executive Director for Student Support, Chief Academic Officer, Administrator for Public Relations & Marketing, Principals, teachers and other professional staff.
  - a. Renewal/extension of contract for professional staff for the 2021-2022 school year.

Dr. Lara recommended the extension of employment contracts through June 30, 2023 for Jeff Hembree, Marla Knaub, Lissa Frausto, Efrain Garza, Nereyda Treviño, Amanda Odom, Ana Castro, Criselda R. Flores, San Juanita Ortiz, Marcos Flores. In addition, the Superintendent recommended the renewal of employment contract for teachers and other professional staff as listed on agenda pages 159-181 for the 2021-2022 school year.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. A. J. Cantu, approving the Superintendent's recommendation to renew/extend the employment contract for professional staff as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Action: Consider and take possible action regarding termination of probationary contract teacher at the end of the 2020-2021 school year (PM)

Dr. Lara recommended the termination of probationary contract teacher at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. A motion was made by Mr. Gonzales, seconded by Mr. Solis, to terminate the Chapter 21 probationary contract of Paul Mata at the end of the current contract year, 2020-2021 because it is in the best interest of the school district. The motion passed unanimously.

- c. Discussion, consideration and possible action to propose the non-renewal of a teacher's 2020-2021 term contract at the end of the school year(JDL); Board Policy DFBB (Legal) and (Local); Tex. Edu. Code Sec. 21.206.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mrs. Lopez, approving to propose the nonrenewal of the term contracts of Dr. Juan De Leon, Jr. at the end of the 2020-2021 contract period or when Dr. Juan De Leon's family medical leave/temporary disability leave expires, whichever comes last and to authorize the Superintendent to deliver written notices to Dr. Juan De Leon, Jr. of the Board action as required by law. The motion passed unanimously.

- d. Consider and take Possible Action to select Special Legal Counsel to advise the Board of Trustees at any nonrenewal hearing during the 2020-2021 school year.

A motion was made by Mr. Rodriguez, seconded by Mr. LeVrier to continue with the same legal firm. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Mr. A. J. Cantu, seconded by Mr. Gonzales, adjourning the board meeting at 9:36 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.