

## 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 September 28, 2021, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Biblioteca Las Americas' Lecture Hall, 300 Med High Drive, Mercedes, TX 78570.

1. Welcome.

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

2. Public Hearing on 2019-2020 Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) Report.

Marla Knaub, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, provided an overview of the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas report for South Texas ISD. The FIRST report included the following disclosures as per Title 19 Texas Administrative Code:

- Superintendent's employment contract is posted on the district's internet site at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) under Finance.
- Reimbursements received by the Superintendent and Board Members for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (Page 8 of FIRST Report).
- Outside compensation and/or fees received by the Superintendent for Professional Consulting and/or Personal services in fiscal year 2019-2020 (Page 9 of FIRST Report).
- Gifts Received by the Executive Officers and Board Members (and first-degree relatives, if any) in fiscal year 2019-2020 (Page 9 of FIRST Report).
- Business transactions between school district and Board Members for fiscal year 2019-2020 for the 12-month period ending August 31, 2020 (Page 10 of FIRST Report).
- South Texas ISD's rating under School FIRST for the year ending August 31, 2020 was "Superior Achievement" which is the state's highest with a score of 100. This is the 14th year in a row earning a "Superior Achievement" rating.

Board Members expressed congratulatory remarks to Ms. Marla Knuab and staff for a job well done!

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Mr. David Torres.

4. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence and remembering Antonio Trad (Yolanda Kamel's father), Irma Perez Treviño, and Lucila Gonzales (Hector Gonzales' wife).

5. Board Meeting called to order.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Doug Buchanan at 7:05 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.

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 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 to pull agenda item 12.H South Texas ISD's Emergency Operations Plan from consent agenda in case there were any questions.

A motion was made by Mr. A.J. Cantu and seconded by Mr. Lerma approving the consent agenda items as presented excluding agenda item 12.H as requested. The motion passed unanimously.

The following board members were present:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Javier Farias	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia Sanchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following Board members were absent:

Martin Castillo, DC	Edinburg
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Richard Fleming, MD	Mission
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Irma Perez-Treviño	Harlingen

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Jeff Hembree
Marla R. Knaub	Efrain Garza
Amanda Odom	Ana Castro
Lissa Frausto	Sonia E. Rodriguez
Marcos L. Flores	Ramon Longoria
Eric Gutierrez	Carmen Noriega
Janie Ortiz	
Janis De Luna, Ph.D.	

7. Awards & Recognitions.
  - A. Recognition of Preparatory Academy and Rising Scholars Academy for being named 2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools.
  - B. Recognition of the district and all six campuses for ranking among the best in the state and nation for the eighth consecutive year in the Niche Best Schools Rankings.
  - C. Unveiling of logo for STISD Virtual Academy.

On behalf of the school Board and administration, Amanda Odom recognized Preparatory Academy and Rising Scholars Academy for being named 2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools and the district and all six campuses for ranking among the best in the state and nation for the eighth consecutive year in the Niche Best Schools Rankings. A video was shown to the board, unveiling the logo for STISD Virtual Academy.

8. \*Action: Review and act on the August 19th special called board meeting and the August 24th regular board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with consent agenda.

9. Public Comments for Agenda Topics.

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

10. Public Audience for Non-Agenda Topics.

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

11. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - Richard Fleming, MD & Natividad Sosa, Co-Chairs

Mrs. Natividad Sosa reported on the following committee items:

- A. \*Report on student graduation plans.

Approved with consent agenda.

- B. Report on the Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Support (TCLAS) Award.

Mr. Efrain Garza reported on the Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Support Award granted to South Texas ISD for approximately \$2 million in direct grant funds and in-kind awards. Through the Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Support, we aim to provide a strategic approach to accessing learning acceleration supports that meet the local needs of students, teachers, communities and school systems; leverage statewide resources to allow for deeper, more targeted supports and services for districts at a lower cost to the state; and develop coordinated and coherent supports for LEAs based on needs identified by Texas educators for the coming school year.

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

Mr. Henry LeVrier reported on the following committee items:

- A. \*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 consent agenda.

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

Approved with consent agenda.

- C. \*Action: Review and act on Resolution authorizing bank signatures for Science Academy and Rising Scholars.

Approved with consent agenda.

- D. \*Action: Review and act on amending the 2021-2022 school year stipends.

Approved with consent agenda.

- E. \*Report on the 2020-2021 fourth quarter student activity accounts.

Approved with consent agenda.

- F. \*Action: Review and act on the following budget amendments to carry forward the 2020-2021 federal funds:
  - 1. 211 Title I Part A
  - 2. 224 IDEA B

3. 244 Carl D. Perkins
4. 255 Title II Part A
5. 263 Title III Part A
6. 266 Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Grant I (ESSER I)
7. 289 Title IV Part A SSAEP

Approved with consent agenda.

- G. \*Action: Review and act on proposed calendar for South Texas ISD Audit.

Approved with consent agenda.

- H. Action: Review and act on South Texas ISD's Emergency Operations Plan.

Ms. Knaub shared information on the Emergency Operations Plan and asked if there were any questions.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving South Texas ISD's Emergency Operations Plan as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Report on the following projects:
1. Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility
  2. Edinburg Exterior Restroom project
  3. Preparatory Parking Lot Expansion
  4. Science Academy CATE Building Renovation project
  5. New Central Office Building Renovation project

Mr. Eddie Guerra shared with the Board a verbal report on the status of each construction project and presented pictures showing the progress of each project.

- J. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
1. Payment application #13 to D. Wilson Construction for the Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility in the amount of \$39,615.
  2. Payment application #8 to Gignac for the New Central Office Building Renovation Project in the amount of \$16,891.73.
  3. Payment application #2 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$912,792.12.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. I. Quintanilla, approving payment application #13 to D. Wilson Construction for the Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility in the amount of \$39,615; payment application #8 to Gignac for the New Central Office Building Renovation Project in the amount of \$16,891.73; and payment application #2 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$912,792.12 as presented. 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 the September 2021 review of Local Policies FB (LOCAL) through FG (LOCAL).

The Committee is not recommending any changes at this time to the policies reviewed.

14. Community & Governmental Relations Committee –Margarita Garcia & Yolanda Kamel, Co-Chairs

Mrs. Margarita Garcia reported on the following committee items:

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

This was a report only.

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

- A. \*Campus Reports
  1. Preparatory Academy - A. Castro
  2. Rising Scholars Academy - J. Ortiz
  3. World Scholars - J. De Luna, Ph.D.
  4. Medical Professions - C. Rodriguez
  5. Health Professions - M. Flores
  6. Science Academy - E. Gutierrez
  7. Virtual Academy - M. Valdez
  8. Attendance Reports - J. Hembree

Approved with consent agenda.

- B. \*Action: Review and act on request from Board Member Dr. Ricardo Ochoa for reimbursement of 2021 board approved travel and accept reimbursement as donation.

Approved with consent agenda.

- C. \*Report on professional vacancies.

Approved with consent agenda.

- D. \*Action: Review and act on board members to attend the following:
  1. NSBA Annual Conference, April 2-4, 2022, San Diego, CA.

Approved with consent agenda.

- E. \*Action: Review and act on staff members to attend the following:

1. ACTE's CareerTech Vision 2021 Hybrid Conference, December 1-4, 2021, New Orleans, LA.

Approved with consent agenda.

- F. \*Action: Review and act on the Texas Association of Sports Officials Rio Grande Valley Softball Chapter's request for the extended use of Health Professions facilities.

Approved with consent agenda.

- G. Action: Review and Act on request for New Professional and Para-Professional Positions and approval of the Announcement of Vacancies for the following:
  1. Virtual Academy: Counselor, Special Education Teachers (2), Classroom Aides (2)
  2. Rising Scholars: Classroom Aides (2)
  3. Health Professions: Classroom Aides (3)
  4. Science Academy: Classroom Aide
  5. World Scholars: Classroom Aides (2)
  6. Central Office: Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, Literacy Coach (grant-funded), Secretary/Receptionist
  7. District-wide: Custodian/Bus Monitor (10)

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Mr. A. J. Cantu, approving the request for the following positions and approval of the announcement of vacancies: Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, Counselor, Special Education Teachers (2), Classroom Aides (13), Literacy Coach (grant-funded), Secretary/Receptionist, and Custodian/Bus Monitors (10) as presented.

- H. Action: Review and act on authorizing the Superintendent to negotiate and execute a contract with the Architect(s) for the 2021-2022 Capital Projects.

A motion was made by Mr. Solis, seconded by Mr. A.J. Cantu, authorizing the Superintendent to interview and begin negotiations with The Warren Group and Sam Garcia Architects. Based on the concepts each firm submits, if contract is reasonable, it will be brought to the board for review and approval. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention (A. Garcia).

- I. Action: Review and Act on approving the Resolution Regarding Local Remote Learning Program in accordance with Education Code 29.9091.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving the Resolution Regarding Local Remote Learning Program in accordance with Education Code 29.9091. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on rescinding board approved Resolution delegating authority to the Superintendent to Act in Place of the Board during an emergency closure.

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Mr. A. J. Cantu, rescinding the board approved Resolution delegating authority to the Superintendent to Act in Place of the Board during an emergency closure as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- K. Action: Review and act on submitting nominees by Resolution for the following Appraisal district's Board of Directors:
1. Cameron County
  2. Hidalgo County
  3. Willacy County

A motion was made by Mr. J. Solis, seconded by Ms. Crane, nominating Gloria Casas by Resolution to the Cameron County Appraisal District's Board of Directors; nominating Richard A. Garza, Albert D. Cardenas, Amador Requenez, Eddy Betancourt, and Joe D. Olivarez by Resolution to the Hidalgo County Appraisal District's Board of Directors; and nominating Mayor Gilbert Gonzales, John Solis III, Elizabeth Barnhart, Ricardo Solis, and Albert Cavazos by Resolution to the Willacy County Appraisal District's Board of Directors. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention (Dr. Sylvia Sanchez Garza).

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The Board of Directors met on September 28, 2021 at 7:54 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 Secretary, Dr. Sylvia S. Garza, served to record the minutes of the closed 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 2021-2022 school year.
    - a. Teacher(s)
    - b. Counselor
    - c. Accountant
    - d. Purchasing Agent/Accountant
  2. Discussion and consideration of filing a written complaint with the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) regarding the resignation of an Educator's 2021-22 term contract without good cause pursuant Board Policy DFE (LEGAL), Education Code 21.210(c) 2 (AS).

The Board of Directors ended the executive session at 8:15 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 2021-2022 school year.
    - a. Teacher(s)
    - b. Counselor
    - c. Accountant
    - d. Purchasing Agent/Accountant



Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of the following professional staff retroactive to start date for the 2021-2022 school year: Amanda Castillo, Daniel Cavazos, James Galvan, Dellanira I. Ramirez and Juan Lopez as Teachers (10 months); Luis Donaldo Flores, Accountant (12 months); Reynaldo Cantu, Jr., Purchasing Agent/Accountant (12 months); and for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year Laura Ann Villarreal, Counselor (11 months); Melissa Prock Garcia, Teacher (10 months).

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mrs. Sosa, approving the superintendent's recommendation of hiring the professional staff as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and possible action to file a written complaint with the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) regarding the resignation of an Educator's 2021-22 term contract without good cause pursuant Board Policy DFE (Legal), Education Code 21.210(c) 2 (AS).

A motion was made by Ms. Sosa, seconded by Mr. A. J. Cantu, authorizing the Superintendent to file a written complaint with the State Board of Education regarding the resignation of an Educator's 2021-22 term contract without good cause pursuant Board Policy DFE (Legal), Education Code 21.210(c) 2 for former employee A.S. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Mr. Gonzales, seconded by Mrs. Sosa, adjourning the board meeting at 8:20 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.