



Minutes of Regular Meeting The Board of Directors South Texas ISD

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of South Texas ISD was held December 8, 2021, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Medical Professions Library, 10650 North Expressway 77/83, Olmito, TX 78575.

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 Dr. Sylvia Garza.

3. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence and remembering Antonio Trad (Yolanda Kamel’s father), Irma Perez Treviño, Jaime Solis, and Pete Garcia (Margarita Garcia’s husband).

4. Board Meeting called to order.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Doug Buchanan at approximately 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.

The following board members were present:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Eduardo L. “Larry” Cantu	Los Fresnos
Martin Castillo, DC	Edinburg
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Sylvia Sanchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford

Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville

The following Board members were absent:

Javier Farias	McAllen
Richard Fleming, MD	Mission
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Irma Perez-Treviño	Harlingen
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Jeff Hembree
Marla R. Knaub	Efrain Garza
Amanda Odom	Sonia Rodriguez
Lissa Frausto	Carmen Noriega
Nereyda Treviño	

5. Awards & Recognitions.

A. Recognition of retirees who have dedicated 25 years or more to STISD.

On behalf of the School Board and Administration, Amanda Odom presented a glass plaque and recognized district retirees whom dedicated 25 years of service or more to South Texas ISD.

6. Action: Review and accept Financial Statements & Report of Independent Certified Public Accountants, South Texas Independent School District/South Texas Independent School District Public Facilities Corporation, for the year that ended August 31, 2021.

A. Annual Financial Report

Luis C. Orozco, CPA and Jesus Moncayo, auditors, reported on the Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended August 31, 2021. A report titled South Texas Independent School District Annual Financial Report was distributed, discussed, and accepted. Mr. Orozco reported the financial statements in the report presented fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of South Texas Independent School District as of August 31, 2021, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

In short, Mr. Orozco reported there were no findings for this audit report and the evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide the basis for their audit.

Board President Doug Buchanan thanked Ms. Marla Knaub and her staff for a job well done.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Dr. Garza to accept Financial Statements & Report of Independent Certified Public Accountants, South Texas Independent School District/South Texas Independent School District Public Facilities Corporation, for the year that ended August 31, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

7. 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.

Mr. Buchanan reported he received a request to pull items 12.F. (**Action: Review and act on approval of agreement between South Texas ISD and Sam Garcia Architects for architectural services for the New Rising Scholars Academy project.*) and 15.F. (**Action: Review and act on request for a new Administrative Professional Position for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year; approval of Announcement of Vacancy; and revision of Administrative Professional Compensation Plan.*) from the consent agenda.

A motion was made by Mr. Gonzales, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving pulling items 12.F. and 15.F. from the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Mr. Eduardo Rodriguez, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

8. *Action: Review and act on the October 28, 2021 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 any 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 - Dr. Richard Fleming and Ms. Natividad Sosa, Co-Chairs

Ms. Natividad Sosa reported on the following committee items:

- A. *Report on Honors, Advanced Placement Program, Dual Enrollment and IB Enrollment.

Approved with consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on the 2021-2022 District Improvement Plan (Final Reading).

Approved with consent agenda.

- C. Action: Review and act on school calendar for the 2022-2023 school year and legend.

A motion was made by Mr. Torres, seconded by Ms. Sosa, approving the school calendar as presented for the 2022-2023 school year and legend. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Finance & Operations Committee - Mr. Javier Farias and Mr. Adrian Garcia Co-Chairs

- A. *Action: Review and act on annual incentive program pay for qualified employees.

Approved with consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on the following budget amendments:
 - 1. (199) General Fund, Budget Amendment #1
 - 2. (244) Carl D. Perkins, Budget Amendment #2
 - 3. (244 & 429) JET Grant, Budget Amendment #1

Approved with consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on Requisition #096587 to Anatomage, Inc. for the Anatomage Table Conversion.

Approved with consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on the following Change Order:
 - 1. Change Order #4 to the betterment fund in the amount of \$7,142.00 for the Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility.

Approved with consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
 - 1. Payment application Retainage #1 to D. Wilson Construction for the Edinburg Bus Barn/Maintenance Facility in the amount of \$115,457.75.
 - 2. Payment application #4 to D. Wilson for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$682,943.23.
 - 3. Payment application #10 to Gignac & Associates Architects LLP for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$10,821.15.

Approved with consent agenda.

- F. *Action: Review and act on approval of agreement between South Texas ISD and Sam Garcia Architects for architectural services for the New Rising Scholars Academy project.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mrs. Lopez, pulling agenda item 12.F. from the agenda because of the time-frame and wanting to re-look at architects with the intent to re-advertise for qualifications. Some board member discussion/concerns were heard. Board President Doug Buchanan reminded everyone the Board had already received/reviewed/ranked the request for qualifications (RFQs). Dr. Lara reported the contract is in order and has been reviewed by legal counsel. Dr. Lara reminded the Board that they have already authorized the Superintendent to negotiate and enter into an agreement. However he was bringing it to the Board as a courtesy as he mentioned at the last meeting, to keep everyone up to date and not just report on the board weekly. The motion to pull the item from the agenda failed.

Another motion was made by Dr. Garza, seconded by Mr. Gonzales, approving the agreement between South Texas ISD and Sam Garcia Architects for architectural services for the new Rising Scholars Academy project. The motion passed with two against (Adrian Garcia & Sylvia Lopez).

- 13. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Mr. Hector Gonzales and Mr. Robert J. Lerma, Co-Chairs

- A. *Report on Policy Update 118, First Reading.

Approved with consent agenda.

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

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

Approved with consent agenda.

- 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. *Report on professional vacancies.

Approved with consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on appointing School Health Advisory Council Members.

Approved with consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on board members to attend the following:
 - 1. TASB Governance Camp, March 2-5, 2022 in Galveston, TX.

Approved with consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on staff to attend the following:
 - 1. Model Schools Conference, June 26-29, 2022 in Orlando, Florida.

Approved with consent agenda.

- F. *Action: Review and act on request for a new Administrative Professional Position for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year; approval of Announcement of Vacancy; and revision of Administrative Professional Compensation Plan.

- 1. Construction Manager (1)

The Superintendent reported that at the last meeting the Board discussed the possibility of hiring a construction management firm to come and work for our projects. In committee, it was suggested/considered hiring a construction manager in house so that it would be a district employee responsible for the construction as well as putting together a district facilities plan (maintenance of buildings and future construction). Dr. Lara reported the administration looked at investment cost to hire a firm for construction projects of almost \$45 million vs. hiring a person to work for the district. The job description was created using TASB's model and what other districts have in place. The position is based on salary scale, asking board to authorize to see if we can find someone qualified as opposed to hiring a firm in the future.

Dr. Lara answered questions on the cost savings, salary, pre-requisites of the job, and the announcement of vacancy. He reported that the major advantage is that the employee reports to the district and would have the district's best interest in mind – no ties to contractors – and keeps them neutral in taking care of our needs.

Board members requested to look at hiring someone that would make sure to look for cost savings for each project and keep the projects on track.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mrs. Kamel, approving the request for a new administrative professional position for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year; approval of Announcement of Vacancy; and revision of Administrative Professional Compensation Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Cast vote(s) for the Appraisal District Director(s) for the following:

1. Cameron County Appraisal District

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Dr. Garza, casting (1) vote to Gloria Casas. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Hidalgo County Appraisal District

A motion was made by Dr. Castillo, seconded by Mr. Garcia, splitting the (110) votes evenly among candidates, Mr. Richard Garza and Mr. Pete Garcia. The motion passed with two against (Ms. Crane and Ms. Kamel). Ms. Crane moved to amend the motion to split the (110) votes evenly among the 5 candidates. The motion failed.

3. Willacy County Appraisal District

Willacy County has only 5 open positions and received only 5 nominees. As per Agustin Lopez, Chief Appraiser, no formal voting was needed.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: A closed 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 2021-2022 school year.
 - a. Teachers

The Board of Directors ended the executive session at 8:30 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 2021-2022 school year.
 - a. Teachers

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of the following professional staff retroactive to start date for the 2021-2022 school year: Aaron Longoria and Max Andrew Flores as Teachers (10 months).

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Mr. A. Cantu, approving the employment of professional staff as recommended. The motion passed unanimously.

18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Ms. Kamel, adjourning the board meeting at 8:36 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.