



Always Innovating

**South
Texas ISD**

RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 6-12

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 January 27, 2022, 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. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Mr. Abiel J. Cantú.

3. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence and remembering Pete Garcia (Margarita Garcia's husband), Ms. Yolanda Kamel and family, Ms. Irma Perez-Treviño, and Jaime Solis.

4. Board Meeting called to order.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Doug Buchanan at approximately 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 were present:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Martin Castillo, DC	Edinburg
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Javier Farias	McAllen
Richard Fleming, MD	Mission
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville

Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg

The following Board members were absent:

Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia Sanchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Irma Perez-Treviño	Harlingen
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Eric Gutierrez
Efrain Garza	Marcos Flores
Marla R. Knaub	Dr. Janis De Luna
Amanda Odom	Maribel Valdez
Lissa Frausto	Ramon Longoria
Ana Castro	Carmen Noriega
Janie Ortiz	Crystal Solis
Jacky Buelow	Matthew Maciel
Criselda Rodriguez	

5. Awards & Recognitions.

A. Recognition of South Texas ISD Board of Directors in honor of School Board Recognition Month.

In recognition of Texas Board Recognition Month, students, campus principals and the Superintendent expressed words of appreciation to board members and presented the Board with tokens of appreciation honoring them for their leadership, work, and dedication to South Texas ISD. In addition, a student from Preparatory Academy performed a song for the Board.

B. District recognition for receiving a JET Grant from the Texas Workforce Commission.

State Senator, Eddie Lucio, Jr., State Representative Armando Martinez, and Mr. Francisco Almaraz CEO, Workforce Solutions shared congratulatory remarks to the district's Administration on their award of the JET grant as well as words of appreciation for the many contributions STISD has made to the South Texas community. Labor Commissioner, Julian Alvarez from the Texas Workforce Commission, also shared congratulatory remarks and presented the JET Grant award to South Texas ISD.

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.

A motion was made by Mr. A. Cantú, seconded by Mr. L. Cantú, approving the consent agenda items as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

7. *Action: Review and act on the December 8, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

8. Public Comments for Agenda Topics.

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

9. Public Audience for Non-Agenda Topics.

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

10. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - Dr. Richard Fleming and Ms. Natividad Sosa, Co-Chairs

Ms. Natividad Sosa reported on the following committee items:

A. Action: Review and act on the following Proposed Actions:

1. Health Professions Course Additions: Applied Nutrition and Dietetics; Practicum in Human Services; Principles of Biosciences; Practicum in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math; Biotechnology II; Principles of Exercise and Wellness; Kinesiology I; Kinesiology II; Career Preparation I; Intro. to Pharmacy Science; and Introduction to Dental Science.
2. Science Academy Course Additions: Statistics (High School); U.S. History (Dual OnRamps); Computer Science II; Cybersecurity Capstone; Introduction to Unmanned Aerial Vehicles; and Introduction to Welding.
3. World Scholars Course Additions: Practicum in Culinary Arts; Practicum in Marketing; Mobile Application Development; Professional Communications; Graphic Design and Illustration/Lab; Graphic Design and Illustration II/Lab; Practicum in Graphic Design and Illustration; Legal Research Writing; Practicum in Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; Forensic Science; and Statistics H.

4. Medical Professions Course Additions: Introduction to Dental Science; Dental Anatomy and Physiology; Introduction to Pharmacy Science; Pharmacy I; Allied Health Therapeutic Services; Principles of Nursing Science; Principles of Exercise Science and Wellness; Kinesiology I; Kinesiology II; Career Preparation I; Comprehensive Wellness I; Comprehensive Wellness II; Exercise Physiology; Principles of Biosciences; Biotechnology I; Biotechnology II; Practicum in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Foundations of Restaurant Management.
5. Preparatory Academy and Rising Scholars Course Additions: Principles of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Foundations of Cybersecurity; and Principles of Transportation.
6. District Course Additions: Lifetime Fitness and Wellness Pursuits; Lifetime Recreation and Outdoor Pursuits; Skill-Based Lifetime Activities; PE Substitution Athletics 1; PE Substitution Athletics 2; PE Substitution Athletics 3; Health I; and Health II.
7. District Course Removals: Foundations of Personal Fitness; Aerobic Activities; Exercise Physiology; Individual Sports Weight Training; Individual Sports; Team Sports; and Advanced Health Ed.

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Ms. Crane, approving the following proposed actions as presented: Health Professions Course Additions: Applied Nutrition and Dietetics; Practicum in Human Services; Principles of Biosciences; Practicum in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math; Biotechnology II; Principles of Exercise and Wellness; Kinesiology I; Kinesiology II; Career Preparation I; Intro. to Pharmacy Science; and Introduction to Dental Science. Science Academy Course Additions: Statistics (High School); U.S. History (Dual OnRamps); Computer Science II; Cybersecurity Capstone; Introduction to Unmanned Aerial Vehicles; and Introduction to Welding. World Scholars Course Additions: Practicum in Culinary Arts; Practicum in Marketing; Mobile Application Development; Professional Communications; Graphic Design and Illustration/Lab; Graphic Design and Illustration II/Lab; Practicum in Graphic Design and Illustration; Legal Research Writing; Practicum in Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; Forensic Science; and Statistics H. Medical Professions Course Additions: Introduction to Dental Science; Dental Anatomy and Physiology; Introduction to Pharmacy Science; Pharmacy I; Allied Health Therapeutic Services; Principles of Nursing Science; Principles of Exercise Science and Wellness; Kinesiology I; Kinesiology II; Career Preparation I; Comprehensive Wellness I; Comprehensive Wellness II; Exercise Physiology; Principles of Biosciences; Biotechnology I; Biotechnology II; Practicum in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Foundations of Restaurant Management. Preparatory Academy and Rising Scholars Course Additions: Principles of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Foundations of Cybersecurity; and Principles of Transportation. District Course Additions: Lifetime Fitness and Wellness Pursuits; Lifetime Recreation and Outdoor Pursuits; Skill-Based Lifetime Activities; PE Substitution Athletics 1; PE Substitution Athletics 2; PE Substitution Athletics 3; Health I; and Health II. District Course Removals: Foundations of Personal Fitness; Aerobic Activities; Exercise Physiology; Individual Sports Weight Training; Individual Sports; Team Sports; and Advanced Health Ed.

A. Action: Review and act on the 2022-2023 Campus Course Sequence

A motion was made by Mr. Lerma, seconded by Ms. Sosa, approving the 2022-2023 Campus Course Sequence as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Adrian Garcia reported on the following committee items:

- A. *Report on first quarter 2021-2022 District Comparison of Revenues/Expenditures.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on removing assets from district inventory.

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 checks written since last report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. *Report on 2021-2022 first quarter student activity accounts.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. Action: Review and act on the following requisitions:
1. Requisition #098068 to Grainger for the purchase of equipment and supplies for the Science Academy Welding Program.

A motion was made by Dr. Castillo, seconded by Ms. Sosa, approving requisition #098068 to Grainger for the purchase of equipment and supplies for the Science Academy Welding Program. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Requisition #098105 to Sam Garcia Architect for architectural services for the New Rising Scholars Academy project.

A motion was made by Mr. Solis, seconded by Mr. A. Cantú, approving requisition #098105 to Sam Garcia for architectural services for the New Rising Scholars Academy project. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Report on the following projects:
1. New Central Office Building Renovation project

2. New Rising Scholars Academy project

Ms. Knaub shared a verbal report with the Board on the status of each construction project and presented pictures showing the progress of each project.

H. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:

1. Payment application #1 to Sam Garcia Architect for the New Rising Scholars Academy project in the amount of \$111,630.
2. Payment application #1 to Gignac for the Medical Professions Wing Addition project in the amount of \$33,382.50.
3. Payment application #5 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$477,409.61.
4. Payment application #6 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$296,714.99.
5. Payment application #11 to Gignac Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$5,410.58.
6. Payment application #12 to Gignac for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$3,246.34.
7. Payment application #14 to D. Wilson Construction for the Edinburg Bus Barn and Maintenance Facility project in the amount of \$13,924.50.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving the Payment application #1 to Sam Garcia Architect for the New Rising Scholars Academy project in the amount of \$111,630; Payment application #1 to Gignac for the Medical Professions Wing Addition project in the amount of \$33,382.50; Payment application #5 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$477,409.61; Payment application #6 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$296,714.99; Payment application #11 to Gignac Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$5,410.58; Payment application #12 to Gignac for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$3,246.34; Payment application #14 to D. Wilson Construction for the Edinburg Bus Barn and Maintenance Facility project in the amount of \$13,924.50. The motion passed unanimously.

I. Action: Review and act on approving the following donations:

1. Aircraft chassis valued in the amount of \$500-\$1,000 from Experimental Aviation Association to Science Academy.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Ms. Crane, approving the donation of an aircraft chassis from Experimental Aviation Association to Science Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Javier Farias reported on the following committee items:

- J. Action: Review and act on revising the Administrative Professionals Compensation Plan to include a revised number of days for the Construction Manager position.

A motion was made by Mr. Lerma, seconded by Mr. A. Cantú, approving revising the Administrative Professionals Compensation plan to include a revised number of days for the Construction Manager position, as presented. The motion passed with two against (Mr. Garcia and Ms. Lopez).

- K. Action: Review and act on approval of the agreement between South Texas ISD and The Warren Group for Architectural Services for the New Health Professions Gymnasium Project and approval of the corresponding requisition.

A motion was made by Mr. Farias, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving the agreement between South Texas ISD and The Warren Group for Architectural Services for the New Health Professions Gymnasium Project and approval of the corresponding requisition, as presented. The motion passed with two against (Mr. Garcia and Ms. Lopez).

- L. Action: Review and act on a resolution by the Board of Directors of the South Texas Independent School District establishing the district's intention to reimburse itself for the prior lawful expenditure of funds from the proceeds of obligations to be issued on behalf of the district for authorized purposes, and other matters in connection therewith.

Ms. Knaub shared that the Administration is looking into different options to finance the New Rising Scholars project. She shared the resolution would allow the Administration to reimburse itself in the case they do finance the project through a lease revenue bond.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. Torres, approving a resolution establishing the district's intention to reimburse itself for the prior lawful expenditure of funds from the proceeds of obligations to be issued on behalf of the district for authorized purposes, and other matters in connection therewith. The motion passed unanimously.

- M. Action: Review and act on a resolution appointing members to the South Texas Independent School District Public Facility Corporation Board of Directors, calling a meeting of the South Texas Independent School District Public Facility Corporation Board of Directors, and approval of other matters related thereto.

Mr. Buchanan appointed the following Board members to serve in the South Texas Independent School District Public Facility Corporation Board of Directors: Robert Lerma, Henry LeVrier, Javier Farias, Jaime Solis, Dr. Martin Castillo, Sasha Crane, and Israel Quintanilla. A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Mr. A. Cantú, approving a resolution appointing the members to the South Texas Independent School District Public Facility Corporation Board of Directors. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Robert Lerma reported on the following committee items:

- A. Action: Review and act on Policy Update 118, Final Reading.

A motion was made by Mr. Lerma, seconded by Dr. Castillo, approving Policy Update 118 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Ms. Amanda Odom reported on the following committee items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

5. 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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on authorizing the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources to accept a contract employee's resignation submitted or effective at any time for the South Texas Independent School District.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
 1. HOSA International Leadership Conference, June 21-26, 2022 in Nashville, TN.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for New Non- Professional Position for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
 1. Central Office: Payroll Clerk

A motion was made by Mr. Solis, seconded by Mr. A. Cantú approving the request for the new non-professional position for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for Central Office Payroll Clerk. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. Discussion and possible action regarding five-day Extension of Leave for Employee illness due to COVID-19 as requested by Board Member, Ricardo Ochoa, MD.

Dr. Lara provided information on the current leave in place for employees who are out due to COVID-19 which is that absences go against the employee's local or state leave, whichever they choose. Dr. Lara also shared information on employee absences. Student and staff attendance continues to improve.

- F. Discussion and possible action regarding COVID-19 Safety Protocols/Concerns as requested by Ricardo Ochoa, MD.

Dr. Lara shared our Safe Return Plan has been updated to follow TEA guidelines and informed the Board he will be providing updates in the weekly newsletter to the Board.

6. **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. Teacher(s)
- B. Discussion and consideration of withdrawal of resignation by Chapter 21 Contract Employee.
- C. Summative Evaluation of Superintendent's job performance.
 - 1. STISD - Superintendent contract and fringe benefits
- D. Deliberation regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to Section 554.072 of the Texas Government Code (Deliberation Regarding Real Property).

The Board ended the executive session at 10:04 p.m.

7. 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)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of the following professional staff retroactive to start date for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year: Sarah Reneeh Lopez and Helen Lee Martin 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.

- B. Discussion, consideration and possible action to consent to allow the withdrawal of resignation by Chapter 21 Contract Employee.

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Mr. Lerma, tabling possible action to consent to allow the withdrawal of resignation by Chapter 21 Contract Employee. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on Summative Evaluation of Superintendent's job performance.
 - 1. Action: STISD - Superintendent contract and fringe benefits

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving the summative evaluation of Dr. Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Superintendent, extending the Superintendent's employment contract for one additional year, and increasing his annual salary by \$14,992 with benefits to remain the same. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. Consider and take possible action regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.

A motion was made by Mr. Buchanan, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving Superintendent to proceed as discussed in closed session regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property. The motion passed unanimously.

- 8. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu , seconded by Mr. LeVrier, adjourning the board meeting at 10:08 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.