



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 will be held February 22, 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 Ms. Sasha Crane.

3. Moment of Silence.

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

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
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
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
Javier Farias	McAllen
Richard Fleming, MD	Mission
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Irma Perez-Treviño	Harlingen

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
Nereyda Treviño	Carmen Noriega
Ana Castro	
Janie Ortiz	
Criselda Rodriguez	

5. District & Campus Texas Academic Performance Report Public Hearing.

Nereyda Treviño reported on the District and Campus Texas Academic Performance Reports which included the 2020-2021 Texas Academic Performance Report for the district and each campus, District Accreditation Status 2019-2020 and guidelines for the TAPR for 2020-2021.

6. Awards & Recognitions.

No awards or recognitions were presented. No board action was taken.

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.

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

8. *Action: Review and act on the January 27, 2022 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 - Richard Fleming, MD and Natividad Sosa, Co-Chairs

Ms. Natividad Sosa reported on the following items:

- A. *Report on 2021 Federal Report Card

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Mr. Adrian Garcia reported on the following committee items:

- A. *Report on checks written since last report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on proposed 2022-2023 budget calendar.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on extending the lease agreement with Karle Farms for the maintenance of the orange grove on the Mercedes grounds.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 - 1. General Fund Budget Amendment #2

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Quintanilla, approving the General Fund Budget Amendment #2 as needed for audio visual equipment for the New Central Office and the revamped Peims position, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Report on the following projects:
 - 1. New Central Office Building Renovation project
 - 2. New Rising Scholars Academy project

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

- G. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
 - 1. Payment application #2 to Sam Garcia Architect for the New Rising Scholars Academy project in the amount of \$31,891.88.
 - 2. Payment application #7 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$646,401.58.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving payment application #2 to Sam Garcia Architect for the New Rising Scholars Academy project in the amount of \$31,891.88 and payment application #7 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$646,401.58. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Action: Review and act on approving the bank resolution for a new bank account for South Texas ISD Virtual Academy.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving the bank resolution for a new bank account for the South Texas ISD Virtual Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and act on extending Luis Orozco, CPA for Request for Qualifications (RFQ-20-013) Independent Auditors or authorize the Administration to go out for Request for Qualifications for Independent Auditors.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving extending the contract for Luis Orozco, CPA Request for Qualifications (RFQ-20-013) Independent Auditors for an additional two years. The motion was passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on extending Request for Proposals (RFP 20-001) Benefit Brokerage Services with First Financial Group.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. A. Cantú, approving extending the contract for First Financial Group, Request for Proposals (RFP 20-001). The motion passed unanimously.

- K. Action: Review and act on awarding Request for Proposals (RFP 22-001) for Property, Liability and Auto Insurance proposals.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, awarding the Property, Liability and Auto Insurance proposal to Shepard Walton King for April 1, 2022 through April 1, 2023 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- L. Action: Review and act on rejecting Request for Proposals (RFP 22-022) for Landscaping and Maintenance.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Quintanilla, rejecting the Request for Proposals (RFP 22-022) for Landscaping and Maintenance as recommended by Administration. The motion passed unanimously.

- M. Action: Review and act on a resolution by the Board of Directors of the South Texas Independent School District authorizing district staff, Bond Counsel and Financial Advisor to proceed with the issuance of lease purchase obligations to finance the construction and equipment of school buildings and approval of other matters related thereto.

A motion was made by Mr. A. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving the resolution by the Board of Directors of the South Texas Independent School District authorizing district staff, Bond Counsel and Financial Advisor to proceed with the issuance of lease purchase obligations to finance the construction and equipment of school buildings and approval of other matters related thereto. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Ms. Sylvia Lopez reported on the following items:

- A. Report: Update on current policy, projects, planning, and partnerships.

Dr. Sánchez Garza shared a brief update on the NSBA Advocacy Institute and will provide a detailed report to the Board at the next meeting. Dr. Lara provided the Board with an update on a

possible employee longevity policy; the community wellness project across all campuses; an update on planning for the possibility of a P-Tech High School; and potential partnerships. This was a report only. No board action was taken.

- B. Discussion, consideration and possible action to recommend approval of Resolution granting additional employee paid leave for COVID-19 isolation and/or quarantine, as requested by Board Member, Sylvia Lopez.

A motion was made by Ms. Lopez, seconded by Dr. Ochoa, approving a Resolution granting additional employee paid leave for COVID-19 isolation and/or quarantine effective retroactive to January 27, 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

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

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

Approved with the 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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Report on staff ethnicity, gender and degree status.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. Action: Review and Act on request for a New Professional Position and approval of the Announcement of Vacancies for the following:
 - 1. Data Analytics Director

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving the request for a New Professional Position and approval of the Announcement of Vacancy for a Data Analytics Director. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. Action: Review and act on a Resolution nominating Dr. Marco A. Lara, Jr. to the 2022 Texas Association of School Boards Superintendent of the Year.

A motion was made by Mr. A. Cantú, seconded by Ms. Crane, nominating by Resolution Dr. Marco A. Lara, Jr. to the 2022 Texas Association of School Boards Superintendent of the Year.

- 16. *Correspondence.

No correspondence.

17. **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. Deputy Superintendent
 - b. District Student Wellness Specialist
 - c. Teacher(s)
- B. Discussion and consideration of Former Employee's request to withdraw resignation. Item tabled from January 27, 2022 Board Meeting.

The Board ended the executive session at 8:41 p.m.

18. 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. Deputy Superintendent
 - b. District Student Wellness Specialist
 - c. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of the following professional staff for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year: Mr. Efrain Garza as Deputy Superintendent (12 months) and Marcela Fernandez as District Student Wellness Specialist (11 months). Dr. Lara also recommended the employment of professional staff retroactive to start date for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year: Mario Alberto Guzman as Teacher (10 months).

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

- B. Discussion, consideration, and possible action of Former Employee's request to withdraw resignation. Item tabled from January 27, 2022 Board Meeting.

The Board did not make a motion. No board action was taken.

19. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Mr. Torres, seconded by Ms. Sosa, adjourning the board meeting at 8:43 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.