



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 April 26, 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. Israel Quintanilla.

3. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence and remembering Pete Garcia (Margarita Garcia's husband), Board member, Ms. Irma Perez-Treviño, and the family of Mr. Edward Varnam.

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
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Martin Castillo, DC	Edinburg
Richard Fleming, MD	Mission
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg

Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following Board members were absent:

Abiel J. Cantu	Raymondville
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Javier Farias	McAllen
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
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
Nereyda Treviño	Frank Treviño
Lissa Frausto	Ramon Longoria
Ana Castro	Carmen Noriega
Criselda Rodriguez	

Board President, Doug Buchanan announced recommended changes and deletions to the agenda. Item 14.A.2, report from Rising Scholars Academy, may contain information regarding new security measures at Rising Scholars Academy and the Administration, in consultation with Legal Counsel, recommends that the item be moved into Executive Session pursuant Sec. 551.076 of the Tex. Open Meetings Act; Also, items 15.A.2.b, 15.B.1 and 16.A.2.b regarding termination of probationary contracts, Administration requests that references to employee A.C. be deleted.

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Dr. Sánchez Garza, approving the recommended changes and deletions to the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Awards & Recognitions.

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

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.

Board President Doug Buchanan announced a request received by Board member, Ms. Natividad Sosa, to pull item 15.C. from the consent agenda for discussion.

A motion was made by Mr. H. LeVrier, seconded by Ms. Natividad Sosa, approving the consent agenda items as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

7. *Action: Review and act on the March 29, 2022 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 received one request from Dr. Belinda Gomez to address the Board of Directors regarding an incident at Rising Scholars. Dr. Gomez was allowed three minutes to speak before the Board.

10. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D. and Ricardo Ochoa, MD, Co-Chairs

Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza reported on the following items:

A. *Action: Review and act on the annual instructional materials allotment and TEKS certification for 2022-2023 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

B. *Action: Review and act on the application for a County District Campus Number (CDCN) for South Texas ISD Virtual Academy effective 2022-2023 school year for grades 6-12th.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. Report: Professional Development for Summer 2022.

Ms. Nereyda Treviño gave a verbal report on the Professional Development plans for Summer 2022.

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

Mr. Adrian Garcia reported on the following items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. Report on tax delinquent collection from Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, Attorney Michael Cano.

Attorney, Michael Cano from Linebarger, Goggan Blair & Sampson provided the Board with a report on the delinquent semi-annual tax collection for September 1, 2021 through February 28, 2022.

- D. Report from Financial Advisor, Raul Villasenor, Hilltop Securities.

Mr. Raul Villasenor from Hilltop Securities provided the Board with an update and a status on the lease revenue bonds for the new Rising Scholars Academy.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 - 1. General Fund budget amendment #4

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Quintanilla, approving the General Fund budget amendment #4 to provide additional funds for students in co-curricular activities. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Action: Review and act on approving requisition #100128 to McAllen Roofing LLC for roof repairs at Science Academy in the amount of \$82,062.37.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Ms. Villarreal, approving requisition #100128 to McAllen Roofing LLC for roof repairs at Science Academy in the amount of \$82,062.37. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Report on the following projects:
 - 1. New Central Office Building Renovation project update:
 - a. Gignac and Associates
 - b. D. Wilson Construction

Mr. Juan Mujica from Gignac and Associates provided an update on the New Central Office Building renovation project. Mr. Mujica shared some challenges they have faced throughout the project and provided an estimated completion date of September 2022.

Mr. Jose Reyes from D. Wilson Construction provided an update on the New Central Office Building renovation project and details on the change orders for this project.

- 2. New Rising Scholars Academy project presentation by Sam Garcia, Architect.

Mr. Sam Garcia, Architect provided the Board an update on the New Rising Scholars Academy project.

- 3. New Health Professions Gymnasium project update by Frank Treviño, Construction Manager for STISD.

Mr. Frank Treviño provided the Board with an update on the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

- H. Action: Review and act on the following Change Orders:
 - 1. Change order #3 to the betterment fund in the amount of \$160,000 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
 - 2. Change order #4 to the contract in the amount of \$1,463 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
 - 3. Change order #5 to the contract in the amount of \$64,434.40 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
 - 4. Change order #6 to the contract in the amount of \$7,586.04 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
 - 5. Change order #7 to the contract in the amount of \$12,767.70 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
 - 6. Change order #8 to the contract in the amount of \$25,795 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
 - 7. Change order #9 to the contract in the amount of \$2,022.90 for the New Central Office Renovation project.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Dr. Sánchez Garza, approving Change order #3 to the betterment fund in the amount of \$160,000 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #4 to the contract in the amount of \$1,463 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #5 to the contract in the amount of \$64,434.40 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #6 to the contract in the amount of \$7,586.04 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #7 to the contract in the amount of \$12,767.70 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #8 to the contract in the amount of \$25,795 for the New Central Office Renovation project; and Change order #9 to the contract in the amount of \$2,022.90 for the New Central Office Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
 - 1. Payment application #4 to Sam Garcia Architect for the New Rising Scholars Academy project in the amount of \$255,150.00.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Dr. Castillo, approving payment application #4 to Sam Garcia Architect for the New Rising Scholars Academy project in the amount of \$255,150.00. The motion passed unanimously.

- 2. Payment application #9 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$390,024.55.

A motion was made Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving payment application #9 to D. Wilson Construction for the New Central Office Building Renovation project in the amount of \$390,024.55. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on approving the following donations:
 - 1. Donation of gaming equipment from Elizabeth and Richard Cantu to Science Academy E-Sports valued at \$964.24.
 - 2. Donation of gaming equipment from PTSO at Science Academy to Science Academy E-Sports valued at \$2,148.00.
 - 3. Donation from Dr. Janis De Luna to World Scholars to assist student with registration fee for the 2022 Great Debate Program in the amount of \$200.00.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Dr. Castillo, approving the donation of gaming equipment from Elizabeth and Richard Cantu to Science Academy E-Sports valued at \$964.24; the donation of gaming equipment from PTSO at Science Academy to Science Academy E-Sports valued at \$2,148.00; and the donation from Dr. Janis De Luna to World Scholars to assist student with registration fee for the 2022 Great Debate Program in the amount of \$200.00. The motion passed unanimously.

- K. Action: Review and act on authorizing administration to go out for Competitive Sealed Proposals (CSPs) for the New Rising Scholars Academy project.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. LeVrier, authorizing administration to go out for Competitive Sealed Proposals (CSPs) for the New Rising Scholars Academy project. The motion passed unanimously.

- L. Action: Review and act on awarding Request for Proposals (RFP 22-004) for Landscaping and Maintenance.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. LeVrier, awarding the Request for Proposals (RFP 22-004) for Landscaping and Maintenance to Adams Total Lawn. The motion passed unanimously.

- M. Action: Review and act on approving the Interlocal Agreement with Political Subdivision Alliance of Texas.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving the Interlocal Agreement with Political Subdivision Alliance of Texas. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Larry Cantu reported on the following item:

- A. Action: Review and act on the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) Local Teacher Designation System and Compensation Plan.

A motion was made by Mr. L. Cantu, seconded by Dr. Castillo, approving the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) Local Teacher Designation System and Compensation Plan as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- 13. 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.

- 14. 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. *Action: Review and act on amending summer 2022 office hours.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Report on the 2022 summer programs.

Item was pulled from the consent agenda as requested by Ms. Natividad Sosa. Ms. Sosa recommended summer camps for special populations as well as ACT/SAT camps for Summer 2022. The administration will revise and bring to the next board meeting.

- D. *Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
 1. National Conservation Foundation Envirothon Competition, July 23-30, 2022 in Oxford, Ohio.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on board members to attend the following:
 1. TASA/TASB Annual Convention, September 23-25, 2022 in San Antonio, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. Action: Name delegate and alternate for the TASA/TASB Convention, September 23-25, 2022 in San Antonio, TX.

A motion was made by Mr. Torres, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, naming Israel Quintanilla as the delegate and Natividad Sosa as the alternate for the TASA/TASB Convention, September 23-25, 2022 in San Antonio, TX. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on approving the request for new Professional positions for the 2022-2023 school year and the announcement of vacancies for the following:
 1. Professional Positions:
 - a. Special Education Teacher (4) - District-Wide
 - b. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Teacher (1) - Science Academy
 - c. Career and Technology (Law Enforcement) Teacher (1) - World Scholars
 - d. Bilingual Coordinator (1) - District-Wide
 - e. Assessment and Accountability Coordinator (1) - District-Wide

- f. Science Coordinator (1) - District-Wide
 - g. Social Studies Coordinator (1) - District-Wide
 - h. Speech Language Pathologist (1) - District-Wide
 - i. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (1) - District-Wide
 - j. Human Resources Coordinator (1) – District-Wide
2. Non-Professional Positions:
- a. Special Education Classroom Aides (3) – District-Wide

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Dr. Villarreal, approving the request for new professional positions for the 2022-2023 school year and the announcement of vacancies for Special Education Teacher (4); Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Teacher; Career and Technology (Law Enforcement) Teacher; Bilingual Coordinator; Assessment and Accountability Coordinator; Science Coordinator; Social Studies Coordinator; Speech Language Pathologist; Licensed Specialist in School Psychology; Human Resources Coordinator; and the request for new non-professional positions for the 2022-2023 school year and the announcement of vacancies for Special Education Classroom Aides (3). The motion passed with two against (Dr. Ochoa and Ms. Sosa).

15. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: A closed or executive session as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Section, 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.082, 551.0821, 551.084 and 551.001, the Board may go into Executive Session to discuss the following:**

- A. Section 551.074, Personnel Matters
 - 1. Recommendation of professional staff for the remainder of the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 school years.
 - a. Teacher(s)
 - 2. Review recommendations for renewal/extension/non-renewal of employment contracts for Central Office Administrators, Principals, Teachers and other Professional staff.
 - a. Renewal of Chapter 21 term and probationary employment contracts for Central Office Administrators, Principals, Teachers and other Professional staff for the 2022-2023 school year.
 - b. Consider and discuss termination of Chapter 21 probationary contract(s) of teacher(s) at the end of the 2021-2022 contract period, in the best interest of the District (L.U.P.) and (A.C.).
 - c. Consider and discuss the proposed non-renewal of 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contract(s) of teacher(s) (R.C.) and (G.H).
- B. Sections 551.071, 551.074 and 551.0821, Consultation with attorney
 - 1. Discussion and consideration with Legal Counsel of legal issues regarding the termination of teacher(s) 2021-2022 Chapter 21 probationary contracts at the end of the contract period, in the best interests of the District. (L.U.P.) and (A.C.).
 - 2. Discussion and consideration with Legal Counsel of legal issues regarding the proposed non-renewal of a teacher(s) 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contracts. (R.C.) and (G.H.)

3. Presentation of Investigation and legal analysis of certain special education practices at World Scholars.
4. Discussion with legal counsel regarding construction issues and to obtain legal advice regarding same.

The Board ended the executive session at 11:34 p.m.

16. 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 remainder of the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 school years.
 - a. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Ms. Criselda Siragusa, Teacher (10 months) for the remainder of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year and recommended the following professional staff for the 2022-2023 school year: Jesus Barrientos, Teacher (10 months), Eric Gene Calderon, Teacher (10 months), Blair Rodriguez, Teacher (10 months), Melissa Garcia (10 months), and Brianna Rodriguez, Teacher (10 months).

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving the recommendation of Ms. Criselda Siragusa, Teacher (10 months) for the remainder of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year and the recommendation of the following professional staff for the 2022-2023 school year: Jesus Barrientos, Teacher (10 months), Eric Gene Calderon, Teacher (10 months), Blair Rodriguez, Teacher (10 months), Melissa Garcia (10 months), and Brianna Rodriguez, Teacher (10 months). The motion passed unanimously.

2. Action: Review and act on recommendations for renewal/extension/non-renewal of employment contracts for Central Office Administrators, Principals, Teachers and other Professional staff.
 - a. Review and act on renewal of Chapter 21 term and probationary employment contracts for Central Office Administrators, Principals, Teachers and other Professional staff for the 2022-2023 school year.

Dr. Lara recommended the extension of employment contracts through June 30, 2024 for Efrain Garza, Marla Knaub, Lissa Frausto, Amanda Odom, Criselda R. Flores, Marcos Flores, Eric Gutierrez, and Maribel Valdez. In addition, the Superintendent recommended the renewal of employment contract for teachers and other professional staff as listed on agenda pages 165-207 for the 2022-2023 school year.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving the Superintendent's recommendation to renew/extend the employment contracts for professional staff as presented. The motion passed with two against (Dr. Ochoa and Ms. Sosa).

- b. Discussion, consideration and possible action to terminate teacher(s) Chapter 21 probationary contract(s) at the end of the 2021-2022 school year in the best interest of the District (L.U.P.) and (A.C); Board Policy DFAB (Legal) and Tex. Edu. Code Sec. 21.103.

Dr. Lara recommended the termination of a probationary contract teacher at the end of the 2021-2022 school year (L.U.P).

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Ms. Lopez, to terminate the 2021-2022 Chapter 21 probationary contract of a teacher at the end of the current contract period in the best interest of the district and authorize the Superintendent to provide the teacher with all required legal notices (L.U.P). The motion passed with two against (Dr. Ochoa and Ms. Sosa).

- c. Discussion, consideration and possible action to propose the non-renewal of teacher(s) Chapter 21 2021-2022 term contract(s) (R.C.) and (G.H.); Board Policy DFBB (Legal) and (Local) and Tex. Edu. Code Sec. 21.206.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Ms. Villarreal, proposing the non-renewal of the 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contract of a Teacher and authorize the Superintendent to provide the Teacher with all required legal notices (R.C.). The motion passed with two against (Dr. Ochoa and Ms. Sosa).

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. Torres, proposing the non-renewal of the 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contract of a Counselor and authorize the Superintendent to provide the Counselor with all required legal notices (G.H.). The motion passed with two against (Dr. Ochoa and Ms. Sosa).

B. Discussion, consideration and possible action regarding construction issues.

A motion was made by Mr. Buchanan, seconded by Mr. LeVrier, to authorize legal counsel to proceed with the construction issues as discussed in Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

17. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Ms. Lopez, seconded by Mr. LeVrier, ajourning the meeting at 11:42 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.