



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 May 24, 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. Jaime Solis.

3. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence and remembering Board member, Ms. Irma Perez-Treviño, Mr. Earl Buchanan and Uvalde ISD, Robb Elementary School and entire school community.

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. Cantu	Raymondville
Javier Farias	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville

Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville

The following Board members were absent:

Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Martin Castillo, DC	Edinburg
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Richard Fleming, MD	Mission
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Irma Perez-Treviño	Harlingen
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
Nereyda Treviño	Frank Treviño
Lissa Frausto	Ramon Longoria
Ana Castro	Carmen Noriega
Criselda Rodriguez	

Board President, Doug Buchanan announced to pull items 14.G., 14.H. and 14.I. from Superintendent's Report as requested by Dr. Ricardo Ochoa.

A motion was made by Mr. Farias, seconded by Ms. Sosa, pulling items 14.G., 14.H. and 14.I. from Superintendent's Report as requested by Dr. Ricardo Ochoa. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 5. Awards & Recognitions.

- A. Recognition of all four high schools for ranking among the best in the state and nation in the U.S. News & World Report 2022 Best U.S. High Schools.

On behalf of the school Board and administration, Amanda Odom recognized all four high schools for ranking among the best in the state and nation in the U.S. News & World Report 2022 Best U.S. High Schools. Ms. Odom presented a certificate to each Principal for earning this achievement.

#### 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 Dr. Sánchez Garza, approving the consent agenda items as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

7. \*Action: Review and act on the April 26, 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 did not receive requests to address the Board of Directors on non-agenda topics for this meeting.

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. Report on the 2022-2023 District and Campus Improvement Plans (First Reading).

Ms. Nereyda Treviño gave a report on the proposed District and Campus Improvement Plans. This was a first reading. The final proposed District and Campus Improvement plans will be brought to the Board for approval in June.

- B. Action: Review and act on the following Proposed Actions:

1. Medical Professions Course Additions: Practicum in Entrepreneurship; Practicum in Health Science II; Practicum in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Art Appreciation Dual; Spanish for Native/Heritage Speakers Dual; Principles of Microeconomics Dual; and Public Speaking Dual.

A motion was made by Dr. Sánchez Garza, seconded by Mr. Farias, approving Medical Professions Course Additions: Practicum in Entrepreneurship; Practicum in Health Science II; Practicum in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Art Appreciation Dual; Spanish for

Native/Heritage Speakers Dual; Principles of Microeconomics Dual; and Public Speaking Dual. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Finance & Operations Committee - Israel Quintanilla and Ruth Villarreal, Co-Chairs

Mr. Israel Quintanilla reported on the following items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Action: Review and act on the City of Mercedes' Tax Resale Private Bid on struck off properties and approval of a Resolution as submitted by Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP.

Michael Cano, Attorney, Linebarger Goggan Blair and Samson, was present to report on the bids submitted by the City of Mercedes and answer any questions.

A motion was made by Mr. Torres, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving the City of Mercedes' Tax Resale Private Bid on struck off properties and approving a Resolution as submitted by Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
  - 1. General fund budget amendment #5.

A motion was made by Dr. Villarreal, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving budget amendment #5 to provide additional funds for students in co-curricular activities. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. Report on the following projects:
  - 1. New Central Office Building Renovation project.
  - 2. New Rising Scholars Academy project.
  - 3. New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

Mr. Frank Treviño provided the Board with an update on the New Central Office Building Renovation project and a verbal report on the New Rising Scholars and New Health Professions Gymnasium projects.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following Change Orders:
  - 1. Change order #10 to the contract in the amount of \$34,820.50 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
  - 2. Change order #11 to the contract in the amount of \$9,625 for the New Central Office Renovation project.

3. Change order #12 to the contract in the amount of \$(1,261.80) for the New Central Office Renovation project.
4. Change order #13 to the contract in the amount of \$17,430.60 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
5. Change order #14 to the contract in the amount of \$8,531.60 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
6. Change order #15 to the contract in the amount of \$3,241.70 for the New Central Office Renovation project.
7. Change order #16 to the contract in the amount of \$(17,780) for the New Central Office Renovation project.

A motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Farias, approving Change order #10 to the contract in the amount of \$34,820.50 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #11 to the contract in the amount of \$9,625 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #12 to the contract in the amount of \$(1,261.80) for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #13 to the contract in the amount of \$17,430.60 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #14 to the contract in the amount of \$8,531.60 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #15 to the contract in the amount of \$3,241.70 for the New Central Office Renovation project; Change order #16 to the contract in the amount of \$(17,780) for the New Central Office Renovation project reserving the right to pursue/address existing issues. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Payment application #10 to D. Wilson for the New Central Office Renovation project in the amount of \$373,028.62.

A motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Ms. Kamel, approving payment application #10 to D. Wilson for the New Central Office Renovation project in the amount of \$373,028.62. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment application #5 to Sam Garcia Architect for the New Rising Scholars Academy in the amount of \$340,200.

A motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving payment application #5 to Sam Garcia Architect for the New Rising Scholars Academy in the amount of \$340,200. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Action: Review and act on approving the 2022-2023 Compensation Plan.

A motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Dr. Sánchez Garza, approving the 2022-2023 Compensation Plan (Option 2 which includes a 4% increase from the midpoint for all eligible employees; \$2,000 COVID stipend (½ to be disbursed in December and ½ in May); \$89.74 increase in the health insurance allotment; and \$3.76 increase in the dental insurance allotment (agenda pages 107-115). The motion passed unanimously.

H. Action: Review and act on approving the 2022-2023 Stipends.

A motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Garcia, approving the 2022-2023 Stipends with the exception of District Athletic Coordinator, to be reviewed at a later date. The motion passed unanimously.

I. Action: Review and act on approving the 2022-2023 Benefits.

A motion was made by Mr. Solis, seconded by Mr. Farias, approving the 2022-2023 Benefits and Travel Reimbursement as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Donation from University of Houston Clear Lake in the amount of \$4,000 to Science Academy.
2. Donation of a flight simulator from Hector Zuniga valued at \$9,750 to Science Academy.
3. Donation from H.E. Butt of \$100 in gift cards to Virtual Academy.
4. Donation from the Texas Association of Sports Officials, Rio Grande Valley (TASO) in the amount of \$550 to Health Professions.

A motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Dr. Sánchez Garza, approving the donation from University of Houston Clear Lake in the amount of \$4,000 to Science Academy; the donation of a flight simulator from Hector Zuniga valued at \$9,750 to Science Academy; the donation from H.E. Butt of \$100 in gift cards to Virtual Academy; and the donation from the Texas Association of Sports Officials, Rio Grande Valley (TASO) in the amount of \$550 to Health Professions. The motion passed unanimously.

K. Action: Review and act on approval of an underwriting syndicate for the South Texas Independent School District Public Facility Corporation Lease Revenue Bonds, Series 2022.

A motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving Baird as the District's Senior Manager and Estrada Hinojosa as Co-Manager in a 70/30 split as the underwriting syndicate for South Texas ISD Public Facilities Corporation Lease Revenue Bond Series 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Eduardo R. Rodriguez and Irma P. Treviño, Co-Chairs

Mr. Abiel Cantú reported on the following items:

- A. Review and discussion on developing the framework for an STISD Employee Longevity Incentive.

Dr. Lara shared plans with the Board to propose an STISD Employee Longevity Incentive. He will present options to the Board for review and approval at a future meeting.

13. Community & Governmental Relations Committee - Jaime Solis and David Torres, Co-Chairs

Mr. Jaime Solis reported on the following items:

- 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 - M. Guajardo, Ed.D.
  - 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 request to approve acting principal at Rising Scholars Academy and salary adjustment.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. \*Report on local certification through the District of Innovation Plan.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. \*Action: Review and act on the following Memorandum of Understanding related to the Cameron County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program for the 2022-2023 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. \*Action: Review and act on the following out of district staff travel:
  - 1. National Schools to Watch Conference, June 23-25, 2022 in Washington, D.C.

2. International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), June 26-29, 2022 in New Orleans, LA.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. Action: Review and approve nomination of Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza to the Region I, Position B seat on the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Board of Directors.

A motion was made by Mr. A. Cantu, seconded by Mr. Solis, nominating Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza to the Region I, Position B seat on the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Board of Directors. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Discussion on resources available to campuses to proactively address mental health and substance abuse issues, as requested by Board Member, Dr. Ricardo Ochoa.

Item pulled from the agenda as per board member, Dr. Ricardo Ochoa.

- H. Discussion, consideration, and action to include a monthly agenda item to the regular board meeting for questions that may arise under personnel matters in Executive Session, as requested by Board Member, Dr. Ricardo Ochoa.

Item pulled from the agenda as per board member, Dr. Ricardo Ochoa.

- I. Discussion, consideration, and action on the deadline to submit items to be placed on the agenda as per the Board Operating Procedures, as requested by Board Member, Dr. Ricardo Ochoa.

Item pulled from the agenda as per board member, Dr. Ricardo Ochoa.

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

- A. Secs. 551.071 and 551.074, Consultation with Attorney, Personnel Matters:
  1. Recommendation of professional staff for the remainder of the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 school years.
    - a. Principal
  2. Recommendation of professional staff for the 2022-2023 school year.
    - a. Career and Technical Director
    - b. Assessment and Accountability Coordinator
    - c. Bilingual Coordinator
    - d. ELL/ELA Coordinator
    - e. Science Coordinator
    - f. Social Studies Coordinator



- g. Licensed Specialist(s) in School Psychology
  - h. Speech Language Pathologist
  - i. Principal
  - j. Assistant Principal(s)
  - k. Counselor(s)
  - l. Librarian(s)
  - m. School Nurse
  - n. Teacher(s)
3. Discussion and consideration to set date for a Special Called Meeting to conduct a hearing on the proposed non-renewal of a teacher's 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contract, R.C.
  4. Discussion and consideration to approve a compromise and settlement agreement and rescind proposed non-renewal of a counselor's 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contract, G.H.

The Board ended the executive session at 8:46 p.m.

16. OPEN SESSION: Action on any Item Deliberated in Closed Meeting

A. Secs. 551.071 and 551.074, Consultation with Attorney, 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. Principal

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Dr. Cynthia Celeste Chairez, Principal (12-months) for the remainder of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. A. Cantu, approving the employment of Dr. Cynthia Celeste Chairez, Principal (12-months) for the remainder of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Action: Review and act on recommendation of professional staff for the 2022-2023 school year.
  - a. Career and Technical Director
  - b. Assessment and Accountability Coordinator
  - c. Bilingual Coordinator
  - d. ELL/ELA Coordinator
  - e. Science Coordinator
  - f. Social Studies Coordinator
  - g. Licensed Specialist(s) in School Psychology
  - h. Speech Language Pathologist
  - i. Principal
  - j. Assistant Principal(s)

- k. Counselor(s)
- l. Librarian(s)
- m. School Nurse
- n. Teacher(s)

Mr. Doug Buchanan announced the recommendation by Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent, to pull the recommendation for Jason William Sammons, Teacher (10 months).

A motion was made by Mr. Solis, seconded by Ms. Kamel, pulling the recommendation of employment for Jason William Sammons, Teacher (10 months). The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Vanessa Ann Rivera, Career and Technical Education Director (12 months), Niranda Flores, Bilingual Coordinator (12 months), Lacy Nicole Holocker, Science Coordinator (12 months), Andres Ayala, Social Studies Coordinator (12 months), Melissa R. Rutiaga, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (11 months), Hannaly Ramirez, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (11 months), Jessica Chistiansen, Speech Language Pathologist (11 months), Carrie Ann Saucedo, Principal (12 months), Julissa Maria Flores-Sandoval, Counselor (11 months), Beatriz Salinas, Counselor (11 months), Edna Adriana Garcia-O'Gwynn, Counselor (11 months), Mireya Galvan, Librarian (11 months), Blanca Cantu Balli, Librarian (11 months), San Juana Valdez, School Nurse/RN (10 months), Brian Kurt Wilson, Teacher (10 months), Celso Pablo Alvarado, Teacher (10 months), Alfredo Terrazas, Teacher (10 months), Patrick Ryan Davila, Teacher (10 months), Edward James Cellar, Teacher (10 months), Sergio Munoz, Teacher (10 months), Jose Luna Jr., Teacher (10 months), Larissa Nicole Hernandez, Teacher (10 months), Adan Andres Desiga, Teacher (10 months), Charley Edward Paradise, Teacher (10 months), Hector Adrian Pena, Teacher (10 months), Isabel Jimenez, Teacher (10 months), Carlos Vela, Teacher (10 months), Ernesto Israel Gonzalez, Teacher (10 months), Denise Davila, Teacher (10 months), Travis Cantu, Teacher (10 months), Norma Hermelinda Martinez, Teacher (10 months), Adrian Villarreal, Teacher (10 months), Hector Martinez, Teacher (10 months), Aldo Cavazos, Teacher (10 months), Roel Flores Jr., Teacher (10 months), Thomas Christopher Sanchez, Teacher (10 months), and Hector Eduardo Huerta Garza, Teacher (10 months) for the 2022-2023 school year.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Ms. Kamel, approving the employment recommendations for the 2022-2023 school year as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Discussion, deliberation and possible action to set date for a Special Called meeting to conduct a hearing on the proposed non-renewal of a teacher's 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contract, R.C.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Ms. Kamel, authorizing the Board President, in consultation with the Superintendent, to set a date for a Special Called meeting to conduct a hearing on the proposed non-renewal of a teacher's 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contract, R.C. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion, deliberation and possible action to approve the compromise and settlement agreement and rescind the proposed non-renewal of a counselor's 2021-2022 Chapter 21 term contract, G.H.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. Farias, approving the compromise and settlement agreement as discussed in Executive Session and authorize the Superintendent to execute the agreement and rescind the proposed non-renewal of a Counselor's 2021-2022, Chapter 21 term contract, G.H. The motion passed unanimously.

17. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Ms. Sosa, seconded by Mr. Solis, adjourning the meeting at 8:47 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.