



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 on October 25, 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. Margarita Garcia.

3. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence and remembering Ruth Villarreal's mother.

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
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville

The following Board members were absent:

Irma Perez Treviño	Harlingen
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Marco Zamora
Efrain Garza	Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.
Marcos Flores	Frank Treviño
Marla R. Knaub	Mathew Maciel
Nereyda Treviño	Jaclyn Buelow
Amanda Odom	Ramon Longoria
Brenda De La Garza, Ed.D.	Carmen Noriega
Cynthia Chairez, Ed.D.	
Eric Gutierrez	
Criselda Rodriguez	
Maribel Valdez	
Cynthia Chairez, Ed.D.	

5. Awards & Recognitions.

- A. Recognition of the district and campuses for ranking among the best in the state and nation for the ninth consecutive year in the Niche Best Schools Rankings.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda Odom recognized the district and campuses for ranking the best in the state and nation for the ninth consecutive year in the Niche Best Schools Rankings. South Texas ISD ranked 2nd in the state and 38th in the nation in the Best School Districts rankings. In addition, the district also earned the top spots in the state in the Best Places to Teach in Texas and the Districts with the Best Teachers in Texas.

- B. Recognition of STISD students for excellence in academic, athletic and/or extracurricular endeavors.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda Odom recognized STISD students for excellence in academic, athletic and/or extracurricular endeavors. The following individuals/groups were recognized: Cross Country Girls & Boys Superintendent’s Cup Champs, Flag Football Superintendent’s Cup Champs, Cross Country State Qualifiers, Valiant Team (Esports), Congress of Future Medical Leaders Award of Excellence for outstanding academic achievement, National Hispanic Recognition Award and the National Rural and Small Town Award, and Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth.

- C. Recognition of Human Resources Staff in honor of Texas Education Human Resources Day, October 12.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda Odom recognized the STISD Human Resources Staff in honor of Texas Education Human Resources Day and presented the team with a token of appreciation.

- D. Recognition of principals in honor of Principals' Month.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda Odom recognized the campus principals in honor of Principals’ Month and presented each principal with a token of appreciation.

- E. Recognition of Board Secretary Sylvia Sánchez Garza for her recent reelection to a three-year term on the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Board of Directors, representing TASB Region 1, Position B.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda Odom recognized STISD Board Secretary, Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, for her recent reelection to the TASB Board of Directors, representing Region 1, Position B. The Board shared congratulatory remarks.

6. 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.

7. Public Audience for Non-Agenda Topics.

The Board received the following requests to address the Board of Directors:

1. Elizabeth Cantu – Positive changes and developments at Science Academy
2. Nancy Ruiz – District direction
3. George Pina – Participation in sports
4. Dr. Janet Martinez – Feedback on a positive first year learning experience at RSA, safety measures, academic structure, discipline procedures, and a positive overall learning environment.

Each individual was allotted three minutes to speak before the Board.

Mr. Buchanan announced a recommendation to move Executive Session as the next item on the agenda for consideration. A motion was made by Ms. Sosa, seconded by Mr. Quintanilla, approving the recommendation to move into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board of Directors ended Executive Session at 9:22 p.m.

8. 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. Solis, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

9. *Action: Review and act on the September 27, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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 proposed admission qualifications for students and campus target populations for 2023-2024 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

B. Report on the Bilingual ESL Program Evaluation for 2021-2022.

Dr. Brenda de la Garza, STISD Special Programs Director, gave a report on the Bilingual ESL Program Evaluation for 2021-2022. The data collected for the 2021-2022 school year shows the effectiveness of the program in preparing students for educational success. This was a report only.

C. Report on STISD Leader Monthly Newsletter.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño reported on the October 2022 STISD Leader Monthly Newsletter. This newsletter provides communication to the campus leaders such as important news, deadlines and updates.

D. Action: Review and act on the 2022-2023 Gifted/Talented Manual.

A motion was made by Dr. Sánchez Garza, seconded by Dr. Villarreal, approving the 2022-2023 Gifted/Talented Manual, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Action: Review and act on the 2023-2024 Campus Course Offerings for the following:

1. Rising Scholars Academy
2. Preparatory Academy
3. Health Professions
4. Medical Professions
5. Science Academy

A motion was made by Dr. Sánchez Garza, seconded by Mr. Lerma, approving the 2023-2024 Campus Course offerings for Rising Scholars Academy, Preparatory Academy, Health Professions, Medical Professions, and Science Academy, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Buildings and Grounds Committee - Henry Levrier, Co-Chair

Henry LeVrier provided an update on the committee's activity since being established.

Henry LeVrier reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the following projects:
1. New Central Office Building Renovation project.
 2. New Rising Scholars Academy project.
 3. New Health Professions Gymnasium project.
 4. 2022-2023 Capital Projects

Frank Treviño, Construction Manager, provided the Board with an update on the New Central Office Building Renovation project, New Rising Scholars Academy project, New Health Professions Gymnasium Project, and the 2022-2023 Capital Projects.

Laura Warren, with The Warren Group Architects Firm presented to the Board design development documents, renditions and samples of materials and answered questions from the Board.

- B. Report on the Change Order log for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

Mr. LeVrier gave a report on the change order log for the New Central Office Building Renovation project, which was previously reviewed by the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

- C. Report on the pending change orders for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

Mr. LeVrier gave a report on the pending change orders for the New Central Office Building Renovation project, which were previously reviewed by the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

- D. Report on the following project timelines:
 1. New Central Office Building Renovation project timeline.
 2. New Rising Scholars Academy project timeline.

Mr. LeVrier gave a report on the project timelines for the New Central Office Building Renovation and New Rising Scholars Academy projects, which were previously reviewed by the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

- E. Action: Review and act on approving the Design Development documents for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Mr. LeVrier, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving the Design Development documents for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed with two against (Sylvia S. Lopez and Natividad Sosa).

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

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 a bank resolution for Virtual Academy.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 1. General fund (199) budget amendment #1.
 2. TCLAS (279, 429) budget amendment #1.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on removing assets from the capital asset listing.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following Change Orders:

1. Change order #45 to the contract in the amount of \$39,738.60 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
2. Change Order #46 in the amount of \$25,978.70 and change order #60 in the amount of (\$25,978.70) to the contract for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
3. Change order #47 to the contract in the amount of \$22,173.80 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
4. Change order #48 to the contract in the amount of \$4,697.55 for the New Central Office New Central Office Building Renovation project.
5. Change order #49 to the contract in the amount of \$1,760.00 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
6. Change order #50 to the contract in the amount of \$59,147.46 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
7. Change order #51 to the contract in the amount of \$6,853.00 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
8. Change Order #53 in the amount of \$87,621.16 and change order #61 in the amount of (\$87,621.16) to the contract for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
9. Change order #54 to the contract in the amount of \$185,562.67 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
10. Change order #56 to the contract in the amount of \$3,487.00 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
11. Change order #57 to the contract in the amount of \$65,872.26 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
12. Change order #58 to the contract in the amount of \$3,050.30 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
13. Change order #59 to the contract in the amount of (\$93,433.99) for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. LeVrier, approving change order #45 to the contract in the amount of \$39,738.60 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change Order #46 in the amount of \$25,978.70 and change order #60 in the amount of (\$25,978.70) to the contract for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #47 to the contract in the amount of \$22,173.80 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #48 to the contract in the amount of \$4,697.55 for the New Central Office New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #49 to the contract in the amount of \$1,760.00 for the New

Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #50 to the contract in the amount of \$59,147.46 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #51 to the contract in the amount of \$6,853.00 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change Order #53 in the amount of \$87,621.16 and change order #61 in the amount of (\$87,621.16) to the contract for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #54 to the contract in the amount of \$185,562.67 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #56 to the contract in the amount of \$3,487.00 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #57 to the contract in the amount of \$65,872.26 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #58 to the contract in the amount of \$3,050.30 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #59 to the contract in the amount of (\$93,433.99) for the New Central Office Building Renovation project reserving the right to pursue/address existing issues. The motion passed with two against (Sylvia S. Lopez and Natividad Sosa).

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

1. Payment application #15 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$340,376.28 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving payment application #15 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$340,376.28 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed with two against (Sylvia S. Lopez and Natividad Sosa).

2. Payment application #14R to Gignac Architects in the amount of \$56,871.05 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Dr. Castillo, approving the payment of pending invoices to Gignac Architect, reissued as invoice 17R, subject to reconciliation of the invoice by administration, review, and approval by the Buildings and Grounds Committee and legal counsel, in an amount not to exceed \$176,545.22. The motion passed with two against (Sylvia S. Lopez and Natividad Sosa).

3. Payment application #15R to Gignac Architects in the amount of \$7,278.62 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

No action taken.

4. Payment application #8 to Sam Garcia Architects in the amount of \$127,575 for the New Rising Scholars Academy project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Gonzales, approving payment application #8 to Sam Garcia Architects in the amount of \$127,575 for the New Rising Scholars Academy project. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Payment application #9 to Sam Garcia Architect in the amount of \$21,300 for the New Rising Scholars Academy project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving payment application #9 to Sam Garcia Architect in the amount of \$21,300 for the New Rising Scholars Academy project. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Payment application #12 to Sam Garcia Architect in the amount of \$13,112.52 for the New Rising Scholars Academy project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Dr. Sánchez Garza, approving payment application #12 to Sam Garcia Architect in the amount of \$13,112.52 for the New Rising Scholars Academy project. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Payment application #1 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$78,000 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Solis, approving payment application #1 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$78,000 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on executing a contract with the Architect(s) for the 2022-2023 Capital Projects.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Quintanilla, seconded by Mr. Farias, approving executing a contract with Gomez Mendez Saenz Inc., as the Architect on Record for the 2022-2023 Capital Projects. In agreement with Administration, the Buildings and Grounds Committee recommended moving forward with only four of the six projects previously approved in the 2022-2023 Capital Projects listing and review the remaining two projects at a later date. The motion passed unanimously.

Adrian Garcia, Sylvia S. Lopez, and Natividad Sosa left the meeting at 10:23 p.m.

13. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Eduardo R. Rodriguez and Robert Lerma, Co-Chairs

Robert J. Lerma reported on the following items:

- A. Action: Review and act on Resolution of Board to Convene the District's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to recommend Curriculum Materials for Human Sexuality Instruction and Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking.

A motion was made by Mr. Lerma, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, approving the Resolution of Board to Convene the District’s School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to recommend Curriculum Materials for Human Sexuality Instruction and Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking. The committee is to hold at least two public meetings to allow it to make a recommendation to the Board at a public meeting by March 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Action: Review and act on changes to district policy BDB(LOCAL) Board Internal Organization: Internal Committees.

A motion was made by Mr. Lerma, seconded by Mr. A. Cantú, approving changes to district policy BDB(LOCAL) Board Internal Organization: Internal Committees, adding a Buildings and Grounds Committee to the other Standing Committees, which include Finance and Operations; Policy, Planning, Projects, and Partnerships; Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Community and Governmental Relations; and Executive. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on revising district policy DEC(LOCAL) Compensation and Benefits Leaves and Absences: Employee Longevity Incentive.

A motion was made by Mr. Lerma, seconded by Mr. A. Cantú, approving revising district policy DEC(LOCAL) Compensation and Benefits Leaves and Absences: Employee Longevity Incentive. The Board approved option 3 which includes: payment for each day of accumulated state and local leave, at the employee’s daily rate of pay at the time of retirement. In addition, the policy would include a payment for accumulated leave upon death. The new Employee Longevity Incentive will replace the current Annual Attendance Incentive. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Jaime Solis reported on the following item:

- 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 - M. Zamora
 - 2. Rising Scholars Academy - R. Rodriguez, Ed.D.
 - 3. World Scholars - C. Chairez, Ed.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 the Texas Association of Sports Officials (TASO) request for the extended use of Health Professions facilities.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on approval of Board delegates to attend the NSBA's Advocacy Institute, January 29-31, 2023, Washington, DC.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Report on South Texas ISD Board member training continuing education credit report.

Board President Doug Buchanan publicly announced the continuing education training credit status of each individual board member for the period beginning November 1, 2021 through October 25, 2022 for eight training areas: Local District Orientation (New Board Members); Orientation to the Texas Education Code (New Board Members); Post-Legislative Update to the Texas Education Code; Team Building; Additional Continuing Education; Evaluating Student Academic Performance and Setting Goals; Identifying and Reporting Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children; and School Safety, as detailed on page 14.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: A closed or executive session as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Section, 551.071, 551.072, 551.073, 551.074, 551.082, 551.084 and 551.001, the Board may go into Executive Session to discuss the following:**

- A. 551.073 Prospective Gift
 1. Discussion and consideration regarding potential donation to District.
- B. 551.074, 551.071 Personnel Matters and consultation with school attorney regarding Personnel Matters
 1. Recommendation of professional staff for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.
 - a. Assistant Principal
 - b. Counselor(s)
 - c. Teacher(s)
 2. Discussion and consideration of filing a written complaint with the State Board of Educator Certification regarding the resignation of an Educator's 2022-23

term contract without good cause pursuant to Board Policy DFE (LEGAL), (J.R.).

3. Superintendent's Evaluation: Discussion of Superintendent's performance as requested by Board Member, Sylvia S. Lopez.
 4. Discussion on naming a possible Acting/Interim Superintendent as requested by Board Member, Sylvia S. Lopez.
- C. 551.071 Consultation with Attorney
1. Consultation with Attorney regarding legal issues related to Gignac Architects.

The Board of Directors ended the executive session at 9:22 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 remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.
 - a. Assistant Principal
 - b. Counselor(s)
 - c. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of professional staff for the 2022-2023 school year: Retroactive employment of Wendy Lizbeth Antonio Diaz as Teacher (10 months), Michelle Denise Segura as Teacher (10 months), and Ryan Tuna Alvarez as Teacher (10 months).

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

2. Discussion and possible action to file a written complaint with the State Board of Educator Certification regarding the resignation of an Educator's 2022-23 term contract without good cause pursuant to Board Policy DFE (Legal), (J.R.).

A motion was made by Mr. Buchanan, seconded by Mr. L. Cantu, finding no good cause for the employee's abandonment of contract and authorized the Superintendent to report to the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) for abandonment of contract (J.R.). The motion passed with one against (Natividad Sosa).

3. Discussion and possible action on Superintendent's Evaluation: Superintendent's performance as requested by Board Member, Sylvia S. Lopez.

A motion was made by Mr. Buchanan, seconded by Dr. Villarreal, to proceed on the Superintendent's Evaluation as discussed in executive session. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion and possible action on naming an Acting/Interim Superintendent as requested by Board Member, Sylvia S. Lopez.

No action taken on this item.

- B. Discussion and possible action regarding Gignac Architects.

No action taken on this item.

18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Mr. Gonzales, seconded by Ms. Garcia, adjourning the meeting at 10:38 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.