



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 December 6, 2022, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Biblioteca Las Americas' Lecture Hall, 300 Med High Drive, Mercedes, TX 78570.

1. Welcome.

Henry LeVrier, Board Vice-President, welcomed the guests, staff and fellow Board members.

2. Public Hearing on 2021-2022 Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) Report.

Marla Knaub, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, provided an overview of the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas report for South Texas ISD. The FIRST report included the following disclosures as per Title 19 Texas Administrative Code:

- Superintendent's employment contract is posted on the district's website.
- Reimbursements received by the Superintendent and Board Members for the twelve-month period ended August 31, 2021 (Page 8 of FIRST Report).
- The Superintendent had no outside compensation for Professional Consulting and/or other Personal Services in Fiscal Year 2021 (Page 9 of FIRST Report).
- Gifts received by the Executive Officer and Board Members (and First-Degree Relatives, if any) in Fiscal year 2021 (Page 9 of FIRST Report).
- Business Transactions between School District and Board Members for Fiscal Year 2021 for the twelve-month period ended August 31, 2021 (Page 10 of FIRST Report).

For the 15th year in a row, South Texas ISD received a rating of "Superior Achievement" under Texas' school finance accountability rating system. Board Members expressed congratulatory remarks to Ms. Marla Knaub and staff for a job well done!

3. Board Meeting called to order.

The meeting was called to order by Henry LeVrier, Board Vice President 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:

David Briones	La Feria
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Javier Farias	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Norberto “Beto” Salinas	Mission
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville

The following Board members were absent:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Eduardo L. “Larry” Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Marco Zamora
Efrain Garza	Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.
Marla R. Knaub	Ramon Longoria
Amanda Odom	Frank Treviño
Nereyda Treviño	Crystal Solis
Eric Gutierrez	Carmen Noriega
Marcos Flores	
Criselda Rodriguez	
Maribel Valdez	
Cynthia Chairez, Ed.D.	

The following guests were present:

- Honorable Eddie Treviño, Jr., Cameron County Judge
- Honorable Aurelio “Keter” Guerra, Willacy County Judge
- Honorable Richard F. Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge

Honorable Noe Gonzalez, Judge of the 370th District Court
Former Board Member, Dr. Richard Fleming

4. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Mr. Jaime Solis.

5. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence.

6. Action: Receive and declare the results of the November 8, 2022 Election from the County Commissioners' Court of Hidalgo County.

Dr. Tony Lara reported the election results of the November 8, 2022 Election were canvassed by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court. The following election results were declared:

For School Board Trustee, County Commissioners' Pct. #2, South Texas ISD
Margarita Garcia 17,944 votes
Fernando Castillo 11,339 votes

For School Board Trustee, County Commissioners' Pct. #4, South Texas ISD
Rodolfo 'Rudy' Ramirez 25,770 votes
Martin Castillo 12,089 votes

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Natividad Sosa, accepting the election results of the November 8, 2022 Election, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Receipt of appointments of directors at large to the South Texas ISD Board of Directors from Hidalgo and Cameron County Judges.

Dr. Tony Lara reported receiving in writing from Hidalgo County Judge, Richard Cortez, the at large Hidalgo County appointments of the following board members for a four-year term starting November, 2022 and ending November, 2026 to the South Texas ISD Board of Directors:

- Yolanda Kamel
- Javier Farias
- Jaime Solis
- Norberto "Beto" Salinas

In addition, he received in writing from Cameron County Judge, Eddie Treviño, Jr. the at large Cameron County appointments of the following board members for a four-year term starting November, 2022 and ending November, 2026 to the South Texas ISD Board of Directors:

- Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez
- Manuel Ricardo Villarreal, DDS

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Javier Farias, accepting the appointments for Hidalgo County & Cameron County, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- 8. Report on the Statement of Officer Oaths filed in our office for the newly elected/appointed Board members.

Dr. Tony Lara attested that the following board members signed a Statement of Officer Oaths prior to taking office and are filed in his office:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Douglas E. Buchanan | Eduardo “Larry” Cantu |
| Abiel J. Cantú | Robert J. Lerma |
| Margarita Garcia | David Briones |
| Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez | Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez |
| Javier Farias | Manuel Ricardo Villarreal |
| Yolanda Kamel | |
| Jaime Solis | |
| Norberto “Beto” Salinas | |

- 9. Administer Oath of Office for newly elected and newly appointed Board Members.

The Honorable Richard F. Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge, officiated the Oath of Office for the following individuals: Margarita Garcia, Javier Farias, Yolanda Kamel, Norberto “Beto” Salinas, and Jaime Solis.

The Honorable Eddie Treviño, Jr., Cameron County Judge, officiated the Oath of Office for the following individuals: David Briones, Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez, and Manuel Ricardo Villarreal.

The Honorable Aurelio “Keter” Guerra, Willacy County Judge, officiated the Oath of Office for Abiel J. Cantú.

The Honorable Noe Gonzalez, Judge of the 370th District Court, officiated the Oath of Office for Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez.

- 10. Action: Reorganization of the Board of Directors.
A. Action: Election of President

Henry LeVrier called for nominations for the office of the President. Javier Farias nominated Henry LeVrier. Jaime Solis seconded the nomination.

A call was made for any further nominations. After receiving no further nominations, the Board ceased the nominations and Henry LeVrier was elected President of the Board by acclamation.

- B. Action: Election of Vice President (newly elected President presiding)

Henry LeVrier called for nominations for the office of the Vice President. Javier Farias nominated Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza. Rudy Ramirez seconded the nomination.

A call was made for any further nominations. After receiving no further nominations, the Board ceased the nominations and Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza was elected Vice President of the Board by acclamation.

C. Action: Election of Secretary

Henry LeVrier called for nominations for the office of Secretary. Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza nominated Israel Quintanilla. David Torres seconded the nomination.

A call was made for any further nominations. After receiving no further nominations, the Board ceased the nominations and Israel Quintanilla was elected Secretary of the Board by acclamation.

11. Awards & Recognitions.

A. 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: Health Professions Chess Team, Health Professions Cross Country competitor who competed at State, Health Professions Boys Volleyball team who placed second at the state tournament, Medical Professions recipients of The National Hispanic Recognition Award and The National Rural and Small Town Award, Science Academy Girls Volleyball Team who advanced to the Regional Championship, Congressional App Challenge participants from Science Academy, Rising Scholars Cross Country competitor who competed at State, Rising Scholars Girls Middle School Volleyball Regional Champions, the Preparatory Academy Boys and Girls Cross Country Teams who competed at State, and all coaches and sponsors.

B. Recognition of retirees who have dedicated 25 years or more to STISD.

On behalf of the School Board and Administration, Amanda Odom recognized district retirees whom dedicated 25 years of service or more to South Texas ISD.

C. Recognition of former Board Members for their years of service to STISD.

On behalf of the School Board and Administration, a token of appreciation was presented to the former Board members for their years of service as a South Texas ISD Board Member.

Mr. Henry LeVrier, Board President, recommended moving Executive Session as the next item on the agenda for consideration. A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving the recommendation to move into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board of Directors ended Executive Session at 8:52 p.m.

12. 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.

13. Public Audience for Non-Agenda Topics.

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

14. 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 Hector Gonzales, seconded by Dr. Sánchez Garza approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

15. *Action: Review and act on the October 25, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

16. 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 Honors, Advanced Placement Program, Dual Enrollment and IB Enrollment.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on approving a revision to the 2022-2023 academic calendar.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. Report on STISD Cabinet Monthly Newsletter.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño reported on the Cabinet Monthly Newsletter. This newsletter has been implemented to provide communication to all STISD staff regarding district initiatives.

D. Report on STISD Leader Monthly Newsletter.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño reported on the latest Leader Monthly Newsletter. This newsletter provides communication to the campus leaders such as important news, deadlines and updates from the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Department, the Special Programs Director, the CTE Director, and the Data Analytics Director.

E. Report on campus demographics for Virtual Academy.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño provided a report on student demographics for the 2022-23 school year, student performance for the 2021-22 school year, and the financial impact for Virtual Academy.

F. Report on the feasibility of Cosmetology Program of Study at World Scholars.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño provided a report on students’ interest and the feasibility of a Cosmetology Program of Study for World Scholars. This was a report only.

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

- 1. World Scholars
- 2. Virtual Academy

A motion was made by Hector Gonzales, seconded by Natividad Sosa, approving the 2023-2024 Campus Course offerings for World Scholars and Virtual Academy, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Action: Review and act on school calendar for the 2023-2024 school year and legend.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by David Torres, approving the calendar for the 2023-2024 school year with an amendment to include March 29th, 2024 as a holiday. The motion passed unanimously.

17. Buildings and Grounds Committee - Henry LeVrier, Co-Chair

Henry LeVrier reported on the following items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

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

18. 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 removing assets from the capital asset listing.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on annual incentive program pay for qualified employees.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on approval of a bank resolution for a new account for South Texas ISD.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Report on tax delinquent collection from Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson.

Mr. Jimmy Gonzalez presented a tax delinquent collection report for September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022, on behalf of Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP. This was for board information only.

- F. Action: Review and act on approving the following donations:
 - 1. \$8,000,000 from Mackenzie Scott for South Texas ISD.
 - 2. \$1,000 from Sombrero Festival for Medical Professions.

A motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by Javier Farias, approving the donation of \$8,000,000 from Mackenzie Scott for South Texas ISD and the donation of \$1,000 from Sombrero Festival for Medical Professions. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
1. General fund (199) budget amendment #2.

A motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by Javier Farias, approving General Fund (199) budget amendment #2. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Action: Review and act on the following Change Orders:
1. Change order #62 to the contract in the amount of \$5,833.84 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
 2. Change order #63 to the contract in the amount of \$25,256 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
 3. Change order #64 to the contract in the amount of \$1,921.70 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
 4. Change order #65 to the contract in the amount of \$2,137.15 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving change order #62 to the contract in the amount of \$5,833.84 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #63 to the contract in the amount of \$25,256 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; change order #64 to the contract in the amount of \$1,921.70 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project; and Change order #65 to the contract in the amount of \$2,137.15 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project reserving the right to pursue/address existing issues. The motion passed unanimously.

- A. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
1. Payment application #16 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$100,426.20 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #16 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$100,426.20 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment application #8 (partial) to Sam Garcia Architect in the amount of \$255,150 for the New Rising Scholars Academy project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, approving payment application #8 (partial) to Sam Garcia Architect in the amount of \$255,150 for the New Rising Scholars Academy project. The motion passed with two against (Eduardo Rodriguez and Beto Salinas).

- B. Action: Review and act on approving the cost analysis and additional services for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

With recommendation from the Buildings and Grounds Committee, a motion was made by Eduardo Rodriguez, seconded by Hector Gonzales, approving the cost analysis and additional services for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed with one against (Beto Salinas).

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

Mr. Eduardo Rodriguez reported on the following items:

- A. Action: Review and act on revising Policy BBB (LOCAL) Board Members Elections.

A motion was made by Eduardo Rodriguez, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving the revision to Policy BBB(LOCAL) Board Members Elections, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Action: Review and act on revising district policy CO(LOCAL) Food and Nutrition Management: Meal Charges.

A motion was made by Eduardo Rodriguez, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the revision to district policy CO(LOCAL) Food and Nutrition Management: Meal Charges, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

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

David Torres reported on the following items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- 4. 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 appointment of members to the Safe and Supportive School Program Team for the 2022-2023 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on re-adoption of Board of Trustees' Code of Ethics to include new board members.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on request from Board Member Javier Farias for reimbursement of 2022 board approved travel.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Discussion, consideration and action to establish a special committee of the board to address and share priorities with legislators for the 88th legislative session.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Hector Gonzales, approving establishing a Special Legislative Committee of the Board to address and share priorities with legislators for the 88th legislative session. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Discussion on securing a firm for the 2023-2028 Strategic Design planning.

Dr. Tony Lara shared with the Board the current five year strategic plan is up this year. He will bring firm options to assist in developing the new strategic plan to the Board for review and approval.

- G. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for a New Professional Position for the 2022-2023 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
 1. College Career and Military Readiness Specialist

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the the request for a New Professional Position for the 2022-2023 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for a College Career and Military Readiness Specialist. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **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 remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.
 - a. Teacher(s)
 - B. 551.071 Consultation with Attorney
 - 1. Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding legal issues pertaining to architect contract with Sam Garcia and construction of New Rising Scholars Academy.
 - 2. Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding legal issues pertaining to architect contract with Gignac Architects and construction of the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

The Board of Directors ended Executive Session at 8:52 p.m. Yolanda Kamel left the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

6. 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. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of professional staff for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year: Retroactive employment of Miguel Angel Cruz, Jr., as Teacher (10 months) and Deborah Kay Villalon as Teacher (10 months).

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving the employment of professional staff as recommended. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Discussion, consideration and possible action regarding architect contract with Sam Garcia and construction of New Rising Scholars Academy.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, authorizing legal counsel to proceed regarding architect contract with Sam Garcia as discussed in executive session. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Natividad Sosa, adjourning the meeting at 10:18 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.