



Always Innovating

**South  
Texas ISD**

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 6-12**

## **Minutes of Regular Meeting**

### **The Board of Directors South Texas ISD**

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A Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of South Texas ISD was held February 28, 2023, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Biblioteca Las Americas' Lecture Hall, 300 Med High Drive, Mercedes, TX 78570.

1. Welcome.

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

2. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Mr. Rudy Ramirez.

3. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence, remembering Board member, Mayor Beto Salinas.

4. Board Meeting called to order.

The meeting was called to order by Henry LeVrier, Board 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
Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Javier Farias	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan

Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
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:

Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Norberto “Beto” Salinas	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Lucy Vasquez
Efrain Garza	Ramon Longoria
Lissa Frausto	Mathew Maciel
Marla Knaub	Frank Trevino
Amanda Odom	Carmen Noriega
Nereyda Treviño, Ed.D.	
Eric Gutierrez	
Marcos Flores	
Criselda Rodriguez Flores	
Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.	
Marco Zamora	
Cynthia Chairez, Ed.D.	
Maribel Valdez	

#### 5. 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.

#### 6. Public Audience for Non-Agenda Topics.

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

1. Debbie Delgado – South Texas ISD RSA success, school choice, school environment
2. Annalisa Salinas – Positive Impact of STISD within the community
3. Mercedes S. Espinosa – Support for STISD Funding as a Taxing Entity
4. Rick Aguirre – In Support of STISD Tax
5. Ben Policaprio – In Support of STISD Tax

6. Ito Deutsch – In Support of STISD Tax
7. Felipe Salinas – STISD Funding Legislation

Individuals were allowed three minutes to address the Board.

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

Dr. Nereyda Treviño reported on the District & Campus Texas Academic Performance Reports which included the 2021-2022 Federal Report Card and the 2021-2022 Texas Academic Performance Report and guidelines for the district and each campus.

8. 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, which included the following: 15 Medical Professions students who passed the Phlebotomy Certification Exam by the National Health Career Association; 36 Registered Dental Assistant X-Ray Certification students of the Medical Professions Class of 2023; Rising Scholars Academy Mathletes who advanced to state competition in Austin in March; Rising Scholars Academy UIL competitors who qualified for the state competition; Science Academy's UIL CX Debate teams who placed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd at the recent District 32-5A meet, and are moving on to state competition; 3 students from Science Academy and World Scholars who advanced to National Merit Scholarship Program Finalist status; one World Scholars student who was selected as a finalist to perform with the State orchestra group with all other top violinists in the state of Texas; BPA State Qualifiers from World Scholars who will compete in Dallas; Health Professions' Lady Mustangs Golf Team who placed 1st at the Inaugural STISD Golf Tournament at Tierra Santa Golf Club; Preparatory Academy Girls MSP Basketball Team that advanced to the State tournament; Preparatory Academy Boys MSP Basketball Team; Preparatory Academy Boys MSO Basketball Team; Rising Scholars Academy MSP Girls Basketball Team named Division Champions; Rising Scholars Academy Girls MSO Basketball Team named Undefeated Division Champions; Rising Scholars Academy MSP Boys Basketball Team who won Superintendent's Cup Middle School Boys Champions, Undefeated Division Champions, South Texas Regional Runner-Up, and State Final Four; and the Rising Scholars Academy MSO Boys Basketball Team named Division Champions.

9. 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 Abiel J. Cantú, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

- 10. \*Action: Review and act on the January 24, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- 11. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - David Briones and Sylvia S. Lopez, Co-Chairs
A. \*Report on STISD Leader Monthly Newsletter.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. \*Report on the 2022 Federal Report Card.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. \*Report on 2022 Texas Academic Performance Report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- 12. Buildings and Grounds Committee - E. Larry Cantu and Margarita Garcia, Co-Chairs

E. Larry Cantu 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 procurement methods available for construction projects and the Board approved ranking criteria for all construction projects.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Frank Treviño, Construction Manager, provided a report on the status of the New Central Office Renovation project, the New Health Professions Gymnasium project, the 2022-2023 Capital Projects, and the CATE Building.

- D. Action: Review and act on authorizing administration to proceed with the Virtual Academy Renovation project.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Doug Buchanan, authorizing administration to proceed with the Virtual Academy Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. Action: Review and act on approving a structural engineer for the current Rising Scholars Academy.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by David Torres, approving a structural engineer for the current Rising Scholars Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Action: Review and act on approving commissioning services for the New Central Office Renovation project.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving commissioning services for the New Central Office Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

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

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 proposed 2023-2024 budget calendar.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. \*Action: Review and act on approving the following donations:
  1. \$50 from Maritza G. Navarro to the Science Academy Ecology Club for registration fees for the Texas Envirothon.
  2. \$50 from Mary Loo Rodriguez to the Science Academy Ecology Club for registration fees for the Texas Envirothon.

3. \$100 from Rhea Watson to the Science Academy Ecology Club for registration fees for the Texas Envirothon.
4. \$40 from Sandra Liguez to the Science Academy Ecology Club for registration fees for the Texas Envirothon.
5. \$100 from Ricardo Romero, MD to the Science Academy Ecology Club for registration fees for the Texas Envirothon.
6. Android Tablets valued at \$359.96 donated by Girls Who Code Organization to Science Academy Girls Who Code Club.
7. \$350 from Anti-Vaping Contest Awards to Preparatory Academy.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
1. General Fund (199) budget amendment #3.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving General Fund (199) budget amendment #3. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Action: Review and act on approving requisition #108429 and the corresponding contract for Transfinder as the district's routing software.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving requisition #108429 and the contract for Transfinder as the district's routing software. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on the following Change Orders:
1. Change order #68 to the contract in the amount of \$23,804.85 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
  2. Change order #69 to the contract in the amount of (\$20,000) for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
  3. Change order #70 to the contract in the amount of \$8,122.40 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.
  4. Change order #71 to the contract in the amount of \$6,600 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving change order #68 to the contract in the amount of \$23,804.85 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project, change order #69 to the contract in the amount of (\$20,000) for the New Central Office Building Renovation project, change order #70 to the contract in the amount of \$8,122.40 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project and change order #71 to the contract in the amount of \$6,600 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:

1. Payment application #19 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$310,513.66 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving payment application #19 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$310,513.66 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and act on awarding Request for Proposal (RFP 24-001) for Public Affairs and Governmental Relations.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Sasha Crane, approving Pathfinder Public Affairs for the Request for Proposal (RFP 24-001) for Public Affairs and Governmental Relations. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on Resolution extending the district's bank depository with Plains Capital Bank for 2023-2025 biennium.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the Resolution extending the district's bank depository with Plains Capital Bank for 2023-2025 biennium. The motion passed unanimously.

- K. Action: Review and act on approving contracting Legal Counsel for Special Projects.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Sasha Crane, approving contracting Legal Counsel for Special Projects. The motion passed unanimously.

- L. Discussion, consideration and possible action on priorities for the \$8 million dollar gift received from Mackenzie Scott.

The Board discussed possible options and programs for the use of the unsolicited \$8 million donation from MacKenzie Scott.

14. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Doug Buchanan and Abiel J. Cantú, Co-Chairs

- A. \*Action: Review and act on the Memorandum of Understanding related to the Hidalgo County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program for the 2023-2024 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

15. Community & Governmental Relations Committee - Sasha Crane and Yolanda Kamel, Co-Chairs

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

16. 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. \*Report on staff ethnicity, gender and degree status.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. \*Action: Review and act on board members to attend the following:
  - 1. TASB Summer Leadership Institute, June 14-17, 2023 in San Antonio, TX or June 21-24, 2023 in Fort Worth, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. \*Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
  - 1. #House of Code Congressional App Event, April 17-18, 2023, in Washington, DC.
  - 2. Technology Student Association (TSA) National Competition, June 27- July 3, 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Action: Review and act on Resolution honoring MacKenzie Scott for her donation to South Texas ISD.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the Resolution honoring MacKenzie Scott for her donation to South Texas ISD. The motion passed unanimously.



The Board went into Executive Session at 8:40 p.m.

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 remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.
      - a. Teacher(s)
    2. 551.074 Discussion regarding employee (R.SA).
    3. 551.071 Consultation with Attorney regarding legal issues related to Sam Garcia Architects.

The Board ended the executive session at 9:31 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 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 Maria D. Garza as Teacher (10 months).

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

- B. Discussion and possible action regarding Sam Garcia Architects.

No Board action was taken.

19. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Hector Gonzales, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, adjourning the meeting at 9:34 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.