



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 March 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. 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
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Rodolfo "Rudy" Ramirez	Edinburg
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg

The following Board members were absent:

Sasha Crane	McAllen
Javier Farias	McAllen

Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Ricardo Ochoa, MD	Weslaco
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Norberto “Beto” Salinas	Mission
Rick Villarreal, D.D.S.	Brownsville
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Ramon Longoria
Efrain Garza	Frank Trevino
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	

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Mr. Abiel J. Cantú.

4. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence.

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

7. Awards & Recognitions.

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

On behalf of the administration and Board, Amanda Odom recognized and congratulated individual students and teams from throughout the district for excellence in academic, athletic, and/or extracurricular endeavors.

- B. Recognition of Medical Professions principal Criselda R. Flores for being named a Principal Finalist in the 2023 H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda Odom recognized Medical Professions principal, Criselda R. Flores for being named a Principal Finalist in the 2023 H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards.

- 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 E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

- 9. *Action: Review and act on the February 28, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- 10. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - David Briones and Sylvia S. Lopez, Co-Chairs

- A. *Report on STISD Leader Monthly Newsletter.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

E. Larry Cantu reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the following projects:

- 1. New Central Office Building Renovation project.
- 2. 2022-2023 Capital Projects
- 3. CATE

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

B. Report from Structural Engineer regarding existing Rising Scholars Academy.

Marla Knaub, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations provided a report from the Structural Engineer regarding the existing Rising Scholars Academy. This was a report only.

C. Action: Review and act on design development for Preparatory Academy Pavilion.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving the design development for Preparatory Academy Pavilion as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Action: Review and act on cost analysis for Preparatory Academy Pavilion.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Israel Quintanilla, approving the cost analysis for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza reported on the following items:

A. *Report on checks written since last report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

B. *Report on the 2022-2023 second quarter student activity accounts.

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. Donation from TSTC to Science Academy of equipment valued at \$1,000.
2. Donation from Gabriela De La Garza to Science Academy BPA in the amount of \$300.
3. Donation from City of McAllen to Health Professions in the amount of \$300.
4. Donation from Criselda Flores to Medical Professions in the amount of \$1,000.
5. Donation from H-E-B to Medical Professions in the amount of \$2,500.

Approved with the consent agenda.

E. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):

1. Child Nutrition Program (242) Summer Feeding Program budget amendment #1.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving Child Nutrition Program (242) Summer Feeding Program budget amendment #1. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Action: Review and act on the following Change Orders:

1. Change order #72 to the contract in the amount of \$18,208.38 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving change order #72 to the contract in the amount of \$18,208.38 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Payment application #2 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$63,000 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving payment application #2 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$63,000 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$59,400 for the Cameras and Access Control project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$59,400 for the Cameras and Access Control project. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$4,500 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Natividad Sosa, approving payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$4,500 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Action: Review and act on awarding Request for Proposals (RFP 24-002) for Property, Liability and Auto Insurance proposals.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, awarding Hub International for Property, Liability and Auto Insurance (RFP 24-002). The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and act on approving requisition #109359 for TelePro for the Cameras and Access Controls District-wide project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Natividad Sosa, approving requisition #109359 for TelePro for the Cameras and Access Controls District-wide project. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. 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.

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

No items/action taken.

- 14. 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.

- 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. *Report on the 2023 summer programs.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on board members to attend the following:
 - 1. Region One School Boards Association Conference, May 19-20, 2023 in South Padre Island, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
 - 1. Atmosphere Aruba Annual Conference, April 23-28, 2023 in Las Vegas, NV.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Report from Sasha Crane on the 2023 NSBA Advocacy Institute.

This was a report only.

- F. Action: Cast votes for Place 2 and Place 5 of the Region One ESC Board of Directors.

Region One Education Service Center granted seven votes for each Place on the ballot to South Texas ISD board members. Each board member present had the opportunity to vote for each Place on the ballot.

The following candidates received the majority of the votes and the majority won the 7 votes:

- Ricardo Gutierrez, Place 2 representing Jim Hogg, Starr and Zapata Counties
- Ruben Cortez, Jr., Place 5 representing Cameron County

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, casting the votes on the ballot for the candidate for each Place who received the majority votes from the Board. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for new Professional and Non-Professional positions for the 2023-2024 school year and the Announcement of Vacancies for the following:
 - 1. Assistant Principal(1)
 - 2. Counselor(1)
 - 3. Teacher(3)
 - 4. Custodian(1)

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Hector Gonzales, approving the request for new Professional and Non-Professional positions for the 2023-2024 school year and the

Announcement of Vacancies for Assistant Principal(1), Counselor(1), Teachers (3), and Custodian (1). The motion passed unanimously.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The Board of Directors met on March 28, 2023 at 7:42 p.m. in 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 Secretary, Israel Quintanilla, served to record the minutes of the closed 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. District Student Wellness Specialist
 2. Recommendation of professional staff for the 2023-2024 school year.
 - a. District Student Wellness Specialist
 - b. Teacher(s)
 3. Review recommendations for renewal/extension 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 2023-2024 school year.
 4. Discussion and consideration of filing a written complaint with the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) regarding the resignation of an Educator's 2022-2023 term contract without good cause pursuant Board Policy DFE (LEGAL), Education Code 21.210(c) 2 (C.C.).

The Board ended the Executive Session at 7:54 p.m.

1. 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. District Student Wellness Specialist

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Aileen Marie Lonergan Carillo as District Student Wellness Specialist (11 months) for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving employment of professional staff as recommended. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Action: Review and act on recommendation of professional staff for the 2023-2024 school year:
 - a. District Student Wellness Specialist
 - b. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the following Professional staff for the 2023-2024 school year: Aileen Marie Lonergan Carrillo as District Student Wellness Specialist (11 months), Neyda Yadira Escamilla as Teacher (10 months), Kristin Nicole Esparza-Gutierrez as Teacher (10 months), and Zenaida Llanes Pasion 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.

- 3. Action: Review and act on recommendations for renewal/extension 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 2023-2024 school year.

Dr. Lara recommended the extension of employment contracts through June 30, 2025, for Efrain Garza, Marla Knaub, Lissa Frausto, Amanda Odom, Dr. Nereyda Trevino, Criselda R. Flores, Marcos Flores, Eric Gutierrez, Maribel Valdez, Dr. Reynaldo Rodriguez, Marco Zamora, and Dr. Cynthia Chairez. In addition, the Superintendent recommended the renewal of employment contract for teachers and other professional staff as listed on agenda pages 165-186 for the 2023-2024 school year.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the Superintendent's recommendation to renew/extend the employment contracts for professional staff as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- 4. Discussion and possible action to file a written complaint with the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) regarding the resignation of an Educator's 2022-2023 term contract without good cause pursuant Board Policy DFE (Legal), Education Code 21.210(c) 2 (C.C.).

A motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by David Briones, moving that the Board find that good cause did not exist under Texas Education Code 21.210(c)(2) for the resignation of a teacher's 2022-2023 term contract during the contract period; and further move to authorize the Superintendent to execute the appropriate notices and forward to the State Board of Educator Certification and the former teacher (C.C.). The motion passed unanimously.

2. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Hector Gonzales, seconded by Doug Buchanan, adjourning the meeting at 7:59 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.