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**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 June 27, 2023, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Central Office Teaching and Learning Center, 7001 E. Expressway 83, Mercedes, Texas 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
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Eduardo L. “Larry” Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Javier Farias	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Noel Garza, Ph.D.	Mission
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
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:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Ramon Longoria
Efrain Garza	Frank Trevino
Lissa Frausto	Jaclyn Buelow
Marla Knaub	Carmen Noriega
Amanda Odom	
Nereyda Treviño, Ed.D.	
Eric Gutierrez	
Marcos 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 Ms. Natividad Sosa.

4. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence.

5. Receipt of appointment by Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez of Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa to the South Texas ISD Board of Directors for the unexpired term of Hidalgo County Commissioners' Precinct 1.
6. Receipt of appointment by Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez of Dr. Noel Garza to the South Texas ISD Board of Directors for the unexpired term of Hidalgo County At-Large position.

Dr. Tony Lara reported receiving in writing from Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez, appointments of the following Board members for the remainder of the unexpired terms:

Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa – Hidalgo County Commissioners Pct. 1 – unexpired term through 2024
Dr. Noel Garza – Hidalgo County At-Large – unexpired term through 2026

7. Administer Oath of Office for newly appointed Board members.

The Honorable Richard F. Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge, officiated the Oath of Office for Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa and Dr. Noel Garza.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. Awards & Recognitions.

- A. Presentation of proclamation in memory and honor of board member Norberto “Beto” Salinas.
- B. Recognition of Dr. Ricardo Ochoa for years of service as Board Member.
- C. Recognition of retirees who have dedicated 25 years or more to STISD.

On behalf of the Board and Administration, Amanda Odom presented a proclamation to the family of the late Norberto “Beto” Salinas to honor him and recognize his service to STISD. Former STISD Board member, Dr. Ricardo Ochoa was also recognized for his service as an STISD Board member. In addition, Amanda Odom recognized retirees who dedicated 25 years or more to the district. The Board President shared remarks of appreciation on behalf of the Board.

Board President Henry LeVrier announced a recommendation to move Executive Session as the next item to be discussed. A motion was made by I. Quintanilla, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, moving Executive Session as the next item to be discussed/addressed. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board went into executive session at 7:34 p.m.

The Board ended Executive Session at 8:47 p.m., at which time, Hector Gonzalez, Sylvia Lopez, and Dr. Noel Garza left the meeting.

11. 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 Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

12. *Action: Review and act on the May 23, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

13. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - Natividad Sosa and Rick Villarreal, DDS, Co-Chairs

Dr. Rick Villarreal reported on the following items:

A. Report on 2023 STAAR Preliminary results.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño, Chief Academic Officer, gave a report on the 2023 STAAR Preliminary results. A final report will be provided in August.

B. Report on 2023 STAAR EOC results.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño gave a report on the 2023 STAAR EOC results.

C. Report on Health and Safety Initiatives.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño reported on CPR training initiative implemented district-wide.

D. Action: Review and act on approving application for Virtual Academy Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) full-online waiver.

A motion was made by Dr. Rick Villarreal, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving the application for Virtual Academy Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) full-online waiver. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Buildings and Grounds Committee - Jaime Solis and David Torres, Co-Chairs

Jaime R. Solis reported on the following items:

A. Discussion, update and possible action on the following items tabled from the May 23, 2023 Board meeting, as requested by Board Member, David Torres:

1. Action: Review and act on approving requisition #110779 to D. Wilson for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.

Information was brought to the Buildings & Grounds committee for their review and recommendation. A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, approving requisition #110779 to D. Wilson for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project. In addition, David Torres recommended Administration update local Conflict of Interest Policies as discussed in Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Action: Review and act on approving requisition #110774 to D. Wilson for the Health Professions Window System project.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Abiel Cantú, approving requisition #110774 to D. Wilson for the Health Professions Window System project. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Action: Review and act on proceeding with the 2022-2023 Capital Project Health Professions Parking Lot project.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving proceeding with the 2022-2023 Capital Project Health Professions Parking Lot project. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Finance & Operations Committee - Sylvia S. Garza, Ph.D. and Israel Quintanilla, Co-Chairs

Israel G. Quintanilla reported on the following items:

- A. *Report on District Comparison of Revenues/Expenditures.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Report on checks written since last report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Report on school district investments:
 1. Investments owned by the district.
 2. Investments held by Wilmington Trust for the South Texas ISD Public Facilities Corporation.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Report on the 2022-2023 third quarter student activity accounts.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 1. General Fund budget amendment #6
 2. ESSER II #2

A motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving General Fund budget amendment #6 and ESSER II #2. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on approving the 2023-2024 Compensation Plan.

The Board held a Compensation Plan Workshop prior to the Board meeting to review options for the 2023-2024 Compensation Plan. A motion was made by Yolanda Kamel, seconded by Javier Farias, approving the 2023-2024 Compensation Plan (Option 2 which includes a 3% salary increase from the midpoint for all eligible employees and \$162.50 increase in the health insurance allotment). The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Action: Review and act on approving the 2023-2024 Stipends.

A motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by Javier Farias, approving the 2023-2024 Stipend listing. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and act on approving the 2023-2024 Benefits.

A motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving the 2023-2024 Benefits. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on approving requisition #111488 to Automated Logic for HVAC Controls in Edinburg and Mercedes.

A motion was made by Israel Quintanilla, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving requisition #111488 to Automated Logic for HVAC Controls in Edinburg and Mercedes. The motion passed unanimously.

- 16. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Hector Gonzales and Bobby Lerma, Co-Chairs

Abiel J. Cantú reported on the following items:

- A. *Review Policy Update 121, first reading.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Discussion and review of Board Operating Procedures, first reading.

This is a first reading and will be brought to the Board for approval at the next meeting.

- C. Action: Review and act on approving district policy CDA (LOCAL) Other Revenues & Investments.

A motion was made by Abiel Cantú, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving district policy CDA (LOCAL) Other Revenues & Investments. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. Action: Review and act on approving a vendor for the 2023-2028 Strategic Planning.

A motion was made by Abiel Cantú, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) for the 2023-2028 Strategic Planning and authorizing administration to work with Phase I and II. The motion passed unanimously.

17. Community & Governmental Relations Committee - Eduardo Rodriguez and Sasha Crane, Co-Chairs

Sasha Crane reported on the following items:

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

Amanda Odom gave the Board an update on the current marketing campaign and student recruitment efforts. This was a report only.

- B. Report: Update regarding marketing efforts for Virtual Academy and World Scholars.

Amanda Odom gave the Board an update on marketing efforts specifically for Virtual Academy and World Scholars campuses. This was a report only.

18. Superintendent's Report - Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.

- A. *Campus and District 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
8. Human Resources Report

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Report on professional vacancies.

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 staff travel to attend the GAPE/NEH Rethinking Gilded Age and Progressivisms Teacher Institute at Loyola University, July 8-28, 2023, in Chicago, IL.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on the Highland Hustlers 4-H Club request for the extended use of Rising Scholars Academy facilities.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. *Action: Review and act on Resolution authorizing the Superintendent to contract for school-related services.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- G. Discussion and possible action on legal counsel/legal services, as requested by Board Member, David Torres.

A motion was made by David Torres, seconded by Natividad Sosa, to give proper notice to current Legal Counsel to terminate their services and direct District Administration to follow proper procedures to go out for new Professional Services for Legal Counsel. The motion passed with seven against (Abiel J. Cantú, E. Larry Cantu, Javier Farias, Adrian Garcia, Eduardo Rodriguez, Rick Villarreal, and Israel Quintanilla).

19. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The Board of Directors met on June 27, 2023 at 7:34 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 G. 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 2023-2024 school year.
 - a. Executive Director for Student Support
 - b. ELA Coordinator
 - c. Assessment and Accountability Coordinator
 - d. Teacher(s)
 - e. LSSP (Intern)
 - B. 551.071, 551.076, 551.089 Deliberation Regarding Security Devices or Security Audits and consultation with school attorney regarding Security Devices or Security Audits: Closed Meeting
 - 1. Discussion and consideration of Security Devices/Security Audits.
 - C. 551.071 Consultation with Attorney on legal issues regarding:
 - 1. Requisition #110779 to D. Wilson for Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.
 - 2. Requisition #110774 to D. Wilson for Health Professions Window Systems project.
 - D. 551.071 Attorney consultation regarding Sam Garcia Architects, LLC

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:47 p.m.

20. **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 2023-2024 school year.
 - a. Executive Director for Student Support
 - b. ELA Coordinator
 - c. Assessment and Accountability Coordinator
 - d. Teacher(s)
 - e. LSSP (Intern)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Marcos Leonel Flores as Executive Director for Student Services (12 months), Georgia Rae Blunt as English Language Arts Coordinator (12 months), Celica I. Pena as Assessment and Accountability Coordinator (12 months), Claudia Martinez as Teacher (10 months), Joshua David Hilton as Teacher (10 months), Sandra Nieto as Teacher (10 months), Jesus Martinez as Teacher (10 months), Yessica Collins as Teacher (10 months), David Sostenes Garcia as Teacher (10 months), Cynthia Jovita Bernal as Teacher (10 months), Denisse Alexandra Montemayor as

Teacher (10 months), Pedro Joel Valdez as Teacher (10 months), Gilberto Humberto Yanez-Balderas as Teacher (10 months), Elvis Aaron Reid Jr. as Teacher (10 months), Luis Antonio Castillo Vela as Teacher (10 months), Ernesto Jaimez as teacher (10 months), Ann Marie Garza as Teacher (10 months), and Mia Hope Garcia as Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern (11 months).

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving the employment of professional staff as recommended. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion, consideration and possible action on Security Devices/Security Audits.

No action was taken on this item.

C. Discussion, consideration and possible action regarding Sam Garcia Architects, LLC

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Sandra Ochoa, approving the settlement agreement with Sam Garcia Architects, LLC and thereby agree to terminate any current contract for services with Sam Garcia Architects, LLC related to the Rising Scholars Project and authorize the Superintendent to finalize and execute a final settlement agreement with Sam Garcia Architects, LLC. The motion passed unanimously.

21. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Javier Farias, adjourning the meeting at 9:36 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.