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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 August 22, 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
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo

The following Board members were absent:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Javier Farias	McAllen
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
David Torres	Edinburg
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Eric Gutierrez
Efrain Garza	Michele Guajardo, Ph.D.
Lissa Frausto	Cynthia Chairez, Ed.D.
Marla Knaub	Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.
Amanda Odom	Jose Lucio
Marcos Flores	Marco Zamora
Nereyda Trevino, Ed.D.	Maribel Valdez
Brenda de la Garza, Ed.D.	Frank Trevino
Vanessa Rivera	Ramon Longoria
Carmen Noriega	

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Dr. Sandra Ochoa.

4. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence.

5. Public Budget Hearing for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

A Public Hearing was held for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, Ms. Marla Knaub, reviewed the projected revenues and the projected expenditures by function, object, and location for the 2023-2024 proposed budget.

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

8. Awards & Recognitions.

There were no awards or recognitions for this meeting.

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 E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

10. *Action: Review and act on the August 1, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Dr. Rick Villarreal reported on the following items:

A. Report on the Leader Monthly Newsletter.

Dr. Nereyda Treviño, Chief Academic Officer, shared the monthly newsletter for the Curriculum and Instruction department. This was a report only.

B. Report on the 2022-2023 State Assessment Results.

Dr. Nereyda Trevino, Chief Academic Officer, reported on the 2022-2023 State Assessment Results for 6th – 8th grades for Spring 2023. This was a report only.

C. Report on status of Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH).

Vanessa Rivera, CTE Director, reported on the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) at Science Academy for the 2023-2024 school year. This was a report only.

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

Jaime Solis reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the following projects:
 - 1. Cameras and Access Controls
 - 2. Preparatory Academy Pavilion
 - 3. Health Professions Window System
 - 4. Health Professions Parking Lot project

David Monreal from Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. was present to report on the Cameras and Access Controls, Preparatory Academy Pavilion, Health Professions Window System, and the Health Professions Parking Lot.

- B. Action: Review and act on the facilities/capital improvement projects for the 2023-2024 school year, pending approval of budget.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Adrian Garcia, approving the facilities/capital improvement projects for the 2023-2024 school year, pending approval of budget. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on hiring Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the 2023-2024 school year projects or go out for Request for Qualifications (RFQs) for architectural services.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving hiring Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the 2023-2024 school year projects. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Finance & Operations Committee - Sylvia S. Garza, Ph.D. and Israel Quintanilla, 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. *Action: Review and act on removing assets from district inventory.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on Bank Resolution for Preparatory Academy and Medical Professions campuses.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. Action: Review and act on designating fund balance for future projects.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Sasha Crane, designating \$4,000,000 to the fund balance for future projects. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. Action: Review and act on Resolution adopting the tax rate for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

A motion was made by Henry LeVrier, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, to increase the property tax rate by the adoption of a tax rate of .0492, which is effectively a 2.46 percent increase in the tax rate. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Action: Review and act on Resolution adopting the General Fund, Child Nutrition and Debt Service Budgets for the 2023-2024 school year.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving a Resolution adopting the General Fund (199), Child Nutrition (240), and Debt Service (516 & 518) budgets as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on extending the TASB Risk Management Unemployment Compensation program for the 2023-2024 school year.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Israel Quintanilla, approving to extend the TASB Risk Management Unemployment Compensation program for the 2023-2024 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Action: Review and act on revising the 2023-2024 stipend listing.

A motion was made by Rudy Ramirez, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving a revision to the 2023-2024 stipend listing as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and act on request for use of funds from McKenzie Scott donation for Virtual Academy.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, approving the use of funds from MacKenzie Scott donation for soundproof pods for Virtual Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 - 1. General Fund (199) Budget Amendment #7 (Final)

A motion was made by Robert J. Lerma, seconded by Jaime R. Solis, approving General Fund (199) Budget Amendment #7 for the fiscal year end. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Payment application #19 to Gignac & Associates Architects LLP in the amount of \$119,856.99 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project tabled at the August 1, 2023 board meeting.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Adrian Garcia, denying payment application #19 to Gignac & Associates Architects LLP in the amount of \$119,856.99 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment application #1 to D. Wilson in the amount of \$38,357.83 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Israel G. Quintanilla, approving payment application #1 to D. Wilson in the amount of \$38,357.83 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Payment application #1 to D. Wilson in the amount of \$17,985.40 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime R. Solis, approving payment application #1 to D. Wilson in the amount of \$17,985.40 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project. The motion passed unanimously.

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

There were no committee items for this meeting.

15. 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.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Discussion and possible action to consider and approve the Superintendent's recommendation regarding designation of ten non-business Public Information Act days for Public Information Act requests received beginning September 1, 2023 and continuing throughout the 2023 and 2024 calendar years.

Amanda Odom, Administrator for Public Relations and Marketing, reported on the Superintendent's recommendation designating the following ten non-business days for 2023 and two non-business days for 2024, for the purpose of responding to Public Information requests:

2023: October 9; November 20, 21, 22; December 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29

2024: March 29; April 1

A motion was made by Sasha Crane, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, designating the non-business days for Public Information Act requests as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

16. 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 - J. Lucio
5. Health Professions - M. Guajardo, Ph.D.
6. Science Academy - E. Gutierrez
7. Virtual Academy - M. Valdez
8. Enrollment & Attendance Report
9. Human Resources Report

Approved with the consent agenda.

B. *Report on the 2023-2024 Board Meeting dates.

Approved with the consent agenda.

C. *Report on professional vacancies.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

E. *Action: Review and act on staff and student travel to attend the HOSA Washington Leadership Academy, September 23-26, 2023 in Washington, DC.

Approved with the consent agenda.

F. Action: Name delegate and alternate for the TASA/TASB Convention, September 29 - October 1, 2023 in Dallas, TX.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime R. Solis, naming Natividad Sosa as delegate and Israel G. Quintanilla as alternate for the TASA/TASB Convention, September 29 - October 1, 2023 in Dallas, TX. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on extending Agreement with Pathfinder Public Affairs for Public Affairs and Governmental Relations.

A motion was made by Sasha Crane, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving to extend the Agreement with Pathfinder Public Affairs for Public Affairs and Governmental Relations through February 27, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Action: Review and act on a contract for legal services with The Law Office of Javier Villalobos, P.C. as General Counsel (RFQ 24-012).

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent reported to the Board that he and Mr. Henry LeVrier, Board President have been working through the scope of work with Attorney Javier Villalobos, and currently do not have a contract. Two options have been presented, one is an hourly rate and the other is a monthly rate.

A motion was made by Natividad Sosa, seconded by Jaime R. Solis, authorizing the Board President, Mr. Henry LeVrier, to negotiate and execute a contract with legal counsel. The motion passed with two against (Adrian Garcia and Rick Villarreal, DDS).

- I. Action: Review and act on approving the request for New Non-Professional Positions for the 2023-2024 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
 - 1. Child Nutrition Worker (1)
 - 2. Custodian (2)

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the request for new Non-Professional Positions for the 2023-2024 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for Child Nutrition Worker (1) and Custodian (2). The motion passed unanimously.

- 17. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The Board of Directors met on August 22, 2023 at 8:01 p.m. in a closed or executive session as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Section, 551.001, 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.082, and 551.084. The Board Secretary, Israel G. Quintanilla served to record the minutes of the closed session to discuss the following:
 - A. 551.071, 551.074 Personnel Matters and consultation with school attorney regarding Personnel Matters: Closed Meeting
 - 1. Recommendation of professional staff for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year.
 - a. Assistant Principal(s)
 - b. Teacher(s)

- 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 regarding pending litigation for Elva C. Villarreal vs. South Texas Independent School District, Cause No. CL-22-2425-G.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:35 p.m.

18. OPEN SESSION: Action on any Item Deliberated in Closed Meeting

- A. 551.071, 551.074 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 2023-2024 school year.
 - a. Assistant Principal(s)
 - b. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the retroactive employment of Rose Saenz as Teacher (10 months) and the employment of Lacy Holocker as Assistant Principal (11 months) and Jacqueline Silva as Teacher (10 months) for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Natividad Sosa, 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 taken.

- C. Discussion, consideration and possible action regarding pending litigation for Elva C. Villarreal vs. South Texas Independent School District, Cause No. CL-22-2425-G.

No action taken.

19. Adjournment.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, adjourning the Board meeting at 8:38 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.