



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 September 26, 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 Antonio 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
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo

The following Board members were absent:

Sasha Crane	McAllen
Javier Farias	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville

Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
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	Mathew Maciel

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Doug Buchanan.

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/staff for excellence in academic, athletic and/or extracurricular endeavors.
- B. Recognition of all four STISD High Schools for ranking among the best in the state and nation in the US News and World Report Best High Schools Rankings.
- C. Recognition of STISD Business Office for receiving an A Rating on the 2022-2023 Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) Report.

On behalf of the administration and Board, Amanda Odom recognized and congratulated the STISD Medical Professions 'Grillin' Angels' Cook-off team, who competed in and won first place overall in the high school division in the Los Fresnos Rodeo Cowboy Cook-off; Preparatory Academy Athletics Program for earning the title of 2022-2023 Texas Charter School Academic & Athletic League - or TCSAAL - Texas Cup Winner for the middle school premier schools division based upon its performance last season; all four STISD high schools for ranking among the best in the state and nation in the 2023-2024 U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools Rankings; and STISD Business Office for earning an A Rating on the 2022-2023 Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) Report.

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 Abiel J. Cantu, seconded by Hector Gonzales, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

9. *Action: Review and act on the August 22, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

10. *Action: Review and act on the August 29, 2023 Special Called Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

11. *Action: Review and act on the September 14, 2023 Special Called Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

12. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - David Briones and Rick Villarreal, DDS, Co-Chairs

David Briones reported on the following items:

A. *Report on STISD Leader Monthly Newsletter.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on appointing Education Improvement Council Members for the 2023-2024 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. Report on 2023 College Entrance Scores.

Dr. Nereyda Trevino shared a report on the 2023 College Entrance Scores.

- D. Report on 2023 Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate scores.

Dr. Nereyda Trevino shared a report on the 2023 Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate scores.

- E. Action: Review and act on approving an agreement with Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station for Science Academy.

Vanessa Rivera, CTE Director, shared information on the pilot program through the Texas A&M Spark office, for student participation in the NASA High School Aerospace Scholars program.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving the agreement with Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station for Science Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Buildings and Grounds Committee - E. Larry Cantu and Ruth Villarreal, Co-Chairs

E. Larry Cantu reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the following projects:
 1. Preparatory Academy Pavilion
 2. Cameras and Access Controls
 3. Health Professions Parking Lot project
 4. Health Professions Gymnasium
 5. 2023-2024 Capital Projects

Frank Trevino, Construction Manager, provided updates on the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project, Cameras and Access Controls project, Health Professions Parking Lot project, Health Professions Gymnasium, and the 2023-2024 Capital Projects.

David Monreal from Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. was present to provide an update on the Preparatory Academy Pavilion and the Health Professions Parking Lot project and to answer

questions from the Board. Nathaniel Perez with The Warren Group was present to provide an update on the Health Professions Gymnasium and answer questions from the Board.

- B. Action: Review and act on approving the Health Professions Window Replacement project as substantially complete.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, approving the Health Professions Window Replacement project as substantially complete. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Finance & Operations Committee - Javier Farias and Rudy Ramirez, Co-Chairs

Israel G. Quintanilla reported on the following items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on removing assets from the capital asset listing.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on bank resolutions for Medical Professions and World Scholars.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on the proposed calendar for the South Texas ISD Audit.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. *Action: Review and act on South Texas ISD's Emergency Operations Plan.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- G. *Action: Review and act on Resolutions/Interlocal Agreements to participate in the following cooperatives:

1. Harris County Department of Education Purchasing Co-op (Choice Partners)

2. Houston- Galveston Area Council Buy Co-op (H-GAC)
3. OMNIA Partners National IPA & US Communities Government Purchasing Alliance, Region 14 ESC National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance (NCPA)
4. Purchasing Association of Cooperative Entities (PACE)
5. Region 19 ESC Allied States Cooperative
6. Region One Purchasing Cooperative
7. Region III ESC Purchasing Cooperative of America (PCA)
8. Region VIII ESC TIPS Purchasing Cooperative
9. Texas Association of School Boards Purchasing Co-op (BUYBOARD)
10. Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR)
11. Texas SmartBuy Membership Program
12. Sourcewell Cooperative
13. 791 Purchasing Cooperative (Region 15)

Approved with the consent agenda.

H. *Action: Review and act on the following budgets for the 2023-2024 federal funds:

1. 211 Title I Part A
2. 212 Title I Migrant
3. 224 IDEA B
4. 244 Carl D. Perkins
5. 255 Title II Part A
6. 263 Title III Part A
7. 289 Title IV, Part A SSAEP
8. 410 Instructional Materials Allotment
9. 429 Autism Grant

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

1. General Fund (199) Budget Amendment #1

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Natividad Sosa, approving General Fund (199) Budget Amendment #1. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Change order #1 to the contract in a credit amount of \$15,000 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project.

A motion was made by Israel G. Quintanilla, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving change order #1 to the contract in a credit in the amount of \$15,000 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Payment application #2 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$13,074.15 for the Cameras and Access Control District-wide project.
2. Payment application #3 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$639,071.77 for the Cameras and Access Control District-wide project.
3. Payment application #2 to D.Wilson in the amount of \$110,337.59 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.
4. Payment application #2 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$622.76 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.
5. Payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$1,729.87 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.
6. Payment application #2 to D. Wilson in the amount of \$130,214.60 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project.
7. Payment application #3 (final) to D. Wilson in the amount of \$7,800 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project.
8. Payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$282.15 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project.
9. Payment application #4 (final) to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$1,382.85 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project.

A motion was made by Hector Gonzales, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving payment application #2 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$13,074.15 for the Cameras and Access Control District-wide project; payment application #3 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$639,071.77 for the Cameras and Access Control District-wide project; payment application #2 to D.Wilson in the amount of \$110,337.59 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project; payment application #2 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$622.76 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project; payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$1,729.87 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project; payment application #2 to D. Wilson in the amount of \$130,214.60 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project; payment application #3 (final) to D. Wilson in the amount of \$7,800 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project; payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$282.15 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project; and payment application #4 (final) to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$1,382.85 for the Health Professions Window Replacement project. The motion passed unanimously.

L. Action: Review and act on approving the following donations:

1. Donation from Yolanda Kamel to World Scholars in the amount of \$275.71.
2. Donation of a microwave valued at \$70-\$80 from PTSO to World Scholars.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving the donation from Yolanda Kamel to World Scholars in the amount of \$275.71 and the donation of a microwave valued at \$70-\$80 from PTSO to World Scholars. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Douglas Buchanan and Noel Garza, DDS, Co-Chairs

Doug Buchanan reported on the following items:

- A. *Action: Review and act on appointing School Health Advisory Council Members for the 2023-2024 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Eduardo Rodriguez 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 on formal announcement and/or opening event for STISD Central Administration Building and Teaching & Learning Center.

Eduardo Rodriguez recommended a Special Committee to assist with the planning for the district's 60th Anniversary Celebration and New Central Office Grand Opening. The Board President will appoint board members to a Special Committee for the planning of the event.

17. 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 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 board members to attend the NSBA Annual Conference, April 6-8, 2024, New Orleans, LA.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on salary adjustment for acting Assistant Principal at Health Professions.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for a New Professional Position for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following, as requested by Board Member, Jaime Solis:
 - 1. Chief of Security

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Natividad Sosa, approving the request for a New Professional Position for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for Chief of Security. The motion passed unanimously.

- 18. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on September 26, 2023 at 7:48 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 remainder of the 2023-2024 school year.
 - a. Science Coordinator
 - b. Literacy Instructional Coach
 - c. Assistant Principal
 - d. 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 or contemplated litigation: Closed Meeting.

1. Ryan Busse, Josh Klostermann, Russell Klostermann, Mitch Thomas, Olivia Rincones, Robert Rincones, Ruben Rincones, Enrica Rincones, Adelaida Garcia, Gary Busse, Alison Savage and Lyford Consolidated Independent School District vs. South Texas Independent School District, Elizabeth Barnhart, Willacy County Tax Assessor-Collector in her Official Capacity, and Willacy County, Texas, Cause No. 2023-CV-0282-A.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:23 p.m.

19. 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 2023-2024 school year.
 - a. Science Coordinator
 - b. Literacy Instructional Coach
 - c. Assistant Principal
 - d. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the retroactive employment of Leslie Ann Davila as Teacher (10 months), Alejandra Martinez as Teacher (10 months), Ashley Marie Pena as Teacher (10 months), and Jacqueline Padilla as Teacher (10 months) for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year. In addition, he recommended the employment of Florestella Gomez as Science Coordinator (12 months), Lizella Campbell as Literacy Instructional Coach (ESL) (10 months), Amanda Humphreys as Teacher (10 months), and Laurie Kilbourn as Assistant Principal (11 months).

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Israel Quintanilla, 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 or contemplated litigation:

1. Ryan Busse, Josh Klostermann, Russell Klostermann, Mitch Thomas, Olivia Rincones, Robert Rincones, Ruben Rincones, Enrica Rincones, Adelaida Garcia, Gary Busse, Alison Savage and Lyford Consolidated Independent School District vs. South Texas Independent School District, Elizabeth Barnhart, Willacy County Tax Assessor-Collector in her Official Capacity, and Willacy County, Texas, Cause No. 2023-CV-0282-A

No action taken.

20. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Hector Gonzales, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, adjourning the meeting at 8:26 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.