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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 December 5, 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
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg

The following Board members were absent:

Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen

Javier Farias	McAllen
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo
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	Jose Lucio
Amanda Odom	Maribel Valdez
Marcos Flores	Marco Zamora
Nereyda Trevino, Ed.D.	Ramon Longoria
Brenda de la Garza, Ed.D.	Frank Trevino
Vanessa Rivera	Carmen Noriega
Sandra Torres	
Mathew Maciel	

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Eduardo R. Rodriguez.

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.

- B. Recognition of Medical Professions teacher Maria Saenz for receiving two awards from Summit K12 for her work with Emergent Bilingual students.
- C. Recognition of both STISD middle schools for ranking among the best in the state and nation in the 2024 US News and World Report Best Middle Schools Rankings.
- D. Recognition of Health Professions, Medical Professions and Science Academy for earning spots on the 2023 AP School Honor Roll.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda Odom recognized and congratulated middle school cross country and volleyball teams who placed at regionals and advanced to the state competitions; Medical Professions Teacher Maria Saenz for receiving two awards from Summit K12 for her work with Emergent Bilingual students; both STISD middle schools for ranking among the best in the state and nation in the 2024 US News and World Report Best Middle Schools Rankings; and Health Professions, Medical Professions and Science Academy for earning spots on the 2023 AP School Honor Roll.

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 Eduardo Rodriguez, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

9. *Action: Review and act on the November 9, 2023 Special Called Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

A. *Report on STISD Leader Monthly Newsletter.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Report on Honors, Advanced Placement Program, Dual Enrollment and IB Enrollment.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Jaime Solis reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the Cameras and Access Controls District-wide project.

Frank Trevino, Contruction Manager, provided a report on the the Cameras and Access Controls District-wide project. This was a report only.

- B. Action: Review and act on approving the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project as substantially complete.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Adrian Garcia, approving the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project as substantially complete. The motion passed with one abstention (Eduardo Rodriguez).

- C. Action: Review and act on approving Herrcon, LLC as the contractor for the Health Professions Parking Lot project, and authorizing the Administration and the Board President to negotiate and enter into a contract for the project.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Adrian Garcia, approving Noble Texas Builders as the contractor for the Health Professions Parking Lot project and authorizing Administration and the Board President to negotiate and enter into a contract for the project. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Finance & Operations Committee - Adrian Garcia and Rudy Ramirez, 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 removing assets from the capital asset listing.

Approved with the consent agenda.

C. *Action: Review and act on Bank Resolution for Health Professions.

Approved with the consent agenda.

D. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment and carry forward budgets:

1. General Fund (199) budget amendment #2
2. Supply Chain Assistant Grant (240)
3. TCLAS Grant (279 429)
4. Mental Health Grant (289)
5. AP/IB Incentive Program Grant (397)
6. School Safety Standards Grant (429)
7. ESSER III (282)

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Robert Lerma, approving the budget amendment and carry forward budgets for General Fund (199) budget amendment #2, Supply Chain Assistant Grant (240), TCLAS Grant (279 429), Mental Health Grant (289), AP/IB Incentive Program Grant (397), School Safety Standards Grant (429), and ESSER III (282). The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Payment application #5 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$187,647.16 for the Cameras and Access Controls District-wide project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving payment application #5 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$187,647.16 for the Cameras and Access Controls District-wide project. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment application #21 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$512,032.27 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia to table the item but no second was made. Board President, Henry LeVrier, made a motion to move discussion of this item into Executive Session and possible action to after Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Jaime Solis and passed with two against (Sylvia S. Lopez and Adrian Garcia).

3. Payment application #20 to Gignac & Associates Architects LLP in the amount of \$1,200.20 for the construction phase, and \$6,667.76 for the final completion for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Sylvia S. Lopez, denying payment application #20 to Gignac & Associates Architects LLP in the amount of \$1,200.20 for the construction phase, and \$6,667.76 for the final completion for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion failed with seven against and one abstention (Eduardo

Rodriguez). A motion was made by Robert Lerma, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, to move discussion of this item into Executive Session and possible action to after Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Action: Review and act on Change order #1 to the contract in the credit amount of \$50,000.00 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving Change Order #1 to the contract in the credit amount of \$50,000.00 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on request for use of funds from MacKenzie Scott donation for CTE Programs at Preparatory and Rising Scholars Academy.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving the request for use of funds from MacKenzie Scott donation for CTE Programs at Preparatory and Rising Scholars Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

- 14. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Douglas Buchanan and Noel Garza, DDS, Co-Chairs
 - A. *Action: Review and act on Policy Update 122.

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 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. *Action: Review and act on the Texas Association of Sports Officials (TASO) request for the extended use of Health Professions facilities.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on board members to attend the TASB Governance Camp, February 28 - March 2, 2024 in Galveston, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Action: Review and act on approving the request for a New Professional and Non-Professional Position(s) for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
 - 1. Professional
 - a. Post-Secondary Success Specialist
 - 2. Non-Professional
 - a. Secretary/Receptionist

A motion was made by Robert Lerma, seconded by Hector Gonzales, approving the request for a New Professional and Non-Professional Position(s) for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for a Post-Secondary Success Specialist and a Secretary/Receptionist. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Action: Cast vote(s) for the Appraisal District Director(s) for the following:
 - 1. Cameron County Appraisal District

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Jaime Solis, casting (1) vote to Gloria Casas. The motion passed with one abstention (Eduardo Rodriguez).

- 2. Hidalgo County Appraisal District

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Jaime Solis, casting (110) votes to Richard A. Garza. The motion passed with two against (Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa and Dr. Noel Garza) and one abstention (Dr. Sylvia Sanchez Gárza).

- 3. Willacy County Appraisal District

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, casting (160) votes evenly among candidates, Elizabeth Barnhart, Albert Cavazos, Gilberto Gonzales, John L. Solis, III, and Josie Torres. The motion passed unanimously.

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on December 5, 2023 at 7:47 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 Vice-President, Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza 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. Educational Diagnostician
 - b. Occupational Therapist
 - c. Special Education Coordinator
 - d. Speech Language Pathologist
 - e. Teacher(s)
 - f. Teacher Incentive Allotment Coordinator
- B. 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 8:28 p.m.

The Board took action on the following items, which were moved to Executive Session for Discussion and Open Session for possible action:

- 13. E. 2. Payment application #21 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$512,032.27 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving payment application #21 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$512,032.27 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed with two against (Adrian Garcia and Sylvia Lopez) and one abstention (Eduardo Rodriguez).

- 13. E. 3. Payment application #20 to Gignac & Associates Architects LLP in the amount of \$1,200.20 for the construction phase, and \$6,667.76 for the final completion for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving Payment application #20 to Gignac & Associates Architects LLP in the amount of \$1,200.20 for the construction phase and \$6,667.76 for the final completion for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

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. Educational Diagnostician
 - b. Occupational Therapist
 - c. Special Education Coordinator
 - d. Speech Language Pathologist
 - e. Teacher(s)
 - f. Teacher Incentive Allotment Coordinator

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Albert Tudon Jr. as Teacher Incentive Allotment Coordinator (12 months), Cynthia A. De La Garza Gonzales as Special Education Coordinator (12 months), Alejandrina Quintanilla as Speech Language Pathologist (11 months), Paula Lorena Soto as Occupational Therapist (11 months), Maria Christina Garza as Occupational Therapist (11 months), Rose Marie Garza as Educational Diagnostician (11 months), and Antonio De La Rosa as Teacher (10 months).

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

B. 551.071 Consultation with attorney regarding pending or contemplated litigation:

1. Discussion, consideration, and possible action regarding pending or contemplated litigation: 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.

19. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, adjourning the meeting at 8:32 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.