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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 January 23, 2024, 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
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Israel G. Quintanilla	Raymondville
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo

The following Board members were absent:

Eduardo L. “Larry” Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Javier Farias	McAllen
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Mathew Maciel
Efrain Garza	Jaclyn Buelow
Lissa Frausto	Brenda De La Garza, Ed.D.
Marla Knaub	Cynthia De La Garza
Amanda Odom	Vanessa Rivera
Marcos Flores	Ramon Longoria
Nereyda Trevino, Ed.D.	Crystal Solis
Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.	Carmen Noriega
Michele Guajardo, Ph.D.	
Eric Gutierrez	
Jose Lucio	
Marco Zamora	
Maribel Valdez	
Cynthia Chairez, Ed.D.	

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Natividad Sosa.

4. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence.

5. Public Hearing: 2023 Federal Report Card and Texas Academic Performance Report.

The Board held a Public Hearing on the 2023 Federal Report Card and Texas Academic Performance Report. Dr. Nereyda Trevino, Chief Academic Officer, and Celica Pena, Assessment and Accountability Coordinator, reported on the District & Campus Texas Academic Performance Reports which included the 2022-2023 Federal Report Card and the 2022-2023 Texas Academic Performance Report and guidelines for the district and each campus.

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.

A. Recognition of South Texas ISD Board of Directors in honor of School Board Recognition Month.

In honor of Texas School Board Recognition Month, students and administrators addressed the Board members, thanking them for their service and presenting them with tokens of appreciation. The World Scholars Mariachi and Health Professions Folklorico dancers also performed in their honor.

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 Hector Gonzales, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

10. *Action: Review and act on the December 5, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

11. *Action: Review and act on the December 12, 2023 Special Called Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

12. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - Sylvia S. Lopez and Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D., Co-Chairs

Sylvia S. Lopez reported on the following items:

A. *Report on STISD Leader Monthly Newsletter.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Report on the 2023 Federal Report Card.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Report on 2023 Texas Academic Performance Report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. Action: Review and act on Proposed Actions for new TEA-approved CTE courses.

A motion was made by Sylvia S. Lopez, seconded by Adrian Garcia, approving the Proposed Actions for new TEA-approved CTE courses at Science Academy, Health Professions, Medical Professions, World Scholars, and Virtual Academy campuses. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Buildings and Grounds Committee - Margarita Garcia and Jaime Solis, Co-Chairs

David Torres reported on the following items:

- A. Report on Districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Findings.

Jaime R. Solis reported on the districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Findings and announced that specific details would be shared with the Board during the executive session.

- B. Report on the following projects:
 1. District wide Camera and Access Controls
 2. Health Professions Parking Lot project
 3. Health Professions Gymnasium project
 4. 2023-2024 Capital Projects

Marla Knaub provided a construction update on the District wide Camera and Access Controls, Health Professions Parking Lot project, Health Professions Gymnasium project, and the 2023-2024 Capital Projects.

14. Finance & Operations Committee - Adrian Garcia and Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D., Co-Chairs

Adrian Garcia reported on the following items:

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

15. Approved with the consent agenda.

A. *Report on checks written since last report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

B. *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.

C. *Report on 2023-2024 first quarter student activity accounts.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

E. *Action: Review and act on approving bank resolutions for Preparatory Academy, World Scholars, Health Professions, and Science Academy.

Approved with the consent agenda.

F. Report on tax delinquent collection from Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson.

Michael Cano, Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP, presented a report on the delinquent tax collection for the periods of September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023 and Year to Date (September 1, 2023 through November 30, 2023).

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

1. Payment application #4 to D. Wilson in the amount of \$114,804.65 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, approving payment application #4 to D. Wilson in the amount of \$114,804.65 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment application #5 (final) to D. Wilson in the amount of \$20,565.00 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Israel Quintanilla, approving payment application #5 (final) to D. Wilson in the amount of \$20,565.00 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Payment application #4 (final) to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$7,434.51 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #4 (final) to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$7,434.51 for the Preparatory Academy Pavilion project. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Payment application #6 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$57,352.65 for the District wide Cameras and Access Controls project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving payment application #6 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$57,352.65 for the District wide Cameras and Access Controls project. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Action: Review and act on approving the donation of Vipers Game tickets from Veronica Vizcarra for World Scholars Athletics and Exercise Health and Science students.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving the donation Vipers Game tickets from Veronica Vizcarra for World Scholars Athletics and Exercise Health and Science students. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and act on extending Agreement with Pathfinder Public Affairs for RFP 24-001 Public Affairs and Governmental Relations.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Israel G. Quintanilla, approving extending the agreement with Pathfinder Public Affairs for RFP 24-001 Public Affairs and Governmental Relations. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on extending Luis Orozco, CPA, for RFQ 20-013 Independent Auditors for one year or authorize administration to advertise for qualifications.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Hector Gonazales, approving extending the agreement with Luis Orozco, CPA, for RFQ 20-013 Independent Auditors for one year. The motion passed with one abstention (Eduardo R. Rodriguez).

- K. Action: Review and act on request for use of funds from MacKenzie Scott donation for CTE Programs at Health Professions, Medical Professions, Science Academy and World Scholars.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving the use of funds from the MacKenzie Scott donation for CTE Programs at Health Professions, Medical Professions, Science Academy and World Scholars. The motion passed unanimously.

- L. Action: Review and act on requisition 117428 to Toolkit Technologies, Inc. for the purchase of a robotic pharmacy dispensing system for Health Professions in the amount of \$105,295.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Hector Gonzales, approving requisition 117428 to Toolkit Technologies, Inc. for the purchase of a robotic pharmacy dispensing system for Health Professions in the amount of \$105,295. The motion passed unanimously.

- M. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendments:
 - 1. General Fund (199)
 - 2. Perkins V (244)
 - 3. Effective Advising Implementation Grant (244.03)

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Hector Gonzales, approving a budget amendment for General Fund (199), Perkins V (244), and Effective Advising Implementation Grant (244.03). The motion passed unanimously.

- 16. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Abiel J. Cantú and Hector Gonzales, Co-Chairs

Hector Gonzales reported on the following items:

- A. Action: Review and act on Resolution to Employ or Accept as Volunteers Chaplains.

A motion was made by Hector Gonzales, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, approving a resolution NOT to Employ or Accept as Volunteers Chaplains. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Report on potential special education CO-OP partnership with school districts.

Dr. Brenda De La Garza, Special Programs Director, provided the Board with a report on a potential partnership with local school districts for Special Education CO-OP.

- C. Report on Career and Technical Education Partnerships.
 - 1. Ford Automotive Career Exploration (ACE)
 - 2. South Texas College CTE Dual Enrollment
 - 3. Texas State Technical College CTE Dual Enrollment

Vanessa Rivera, CTE Director, presented a report to the Board on the following CTE Partnerships: Ford Automotive Career Exploration (ACE), South Texas College CTE Dual Enrollment, and Texas State Technical College CTE Dual Enrollment.

- D. Report on new Fellowship Using the Science of Engagement (FUSE) partnership with The University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Nereyda Trevino and Judith Guerra, Math Coordinator, reported on the new Fellowship Using the Science of Engagement (FUSE) partnership with The University of Texas at Austin.

- E. Report on potential partnership with Horizon Montessori Public Schools.

Efrain Garza reported on the potential partnership with Horizon Montessori Public Schools.

- F. Report on Strategic Planning for 2024-2029.

Efrain Garza provided the Board with an update on Strategic Planning for 2024-2029.

- 17. Community & Governmental Relations Committee - Eduardo R. Rodriguez and Yolanda Kamel, Co-Chairs

Yolanda Kamel reported on the following items:

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

Amanda Odom presented on the current marketing campaign for student recruitment.

- B. Report on Enrollment Process for 2024-2025 School Year.

Amanda Odom reported on the Enrollment Process for the 2024-2025 School Year, which opened on January 13, 2024.

- 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 - 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 staff members to attend the following:
 1. AASA National Conference on Education, February 15-17, 2024 in San Diego, CA.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. Report: Celebrating Five Years of Service and Future Endeavors

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent, provided the Board with a report on highlights over the last five years.

- E. 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:
 1. Chief of Police

A motion was made by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, seconded by Hector Gonzales, 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 Police. The motion passed with one against (Dr. Noel Garza).

19. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on January 23, 2024 at 9:38 p.m. as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Section, 551.001, 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.076, 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. Post-Secondary Success Specialist (Grant-Funded)
 - b. Teacher(s)
- B. 551.076 Security
 1. Discussion and consideration regarding Districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Findings.

- C. Summative Evaluation of Superintendent's job performance.
 - 1. STISD Superintendent's contract and fringe benefits.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 10:46 p.m.

20. 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 school year.
 - a. Post-Secondary Success Specialist (Grant-Funded)
 - b. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the retroactive employment of Alfredo Serna, Jr., as Teacher (10 months), Ramiro Josue De Leon as Teacher (10 Months) and the employment of Delia Ann Ramos as Post-Secondary Success Specialist (11 months) for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year.

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

- B. Action: Review and act on Summative Evaluation of Superintendent's job performance.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, approving the summative evaluation of Dr. Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Superintendent, extending the Superintendent's employment contract for one additional year, and increasing his annual salary by 7 % (\$18,200) with benefits to remain the same. The Board President shared congratulatory remarks to Dr. Tony Lara. The motion passed unanimously.

21. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Hector Gonzales, seconded by Natividad Sosa, adjourning the meeting at 10:50 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.