



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 April 30, 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
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
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
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Natividad Sosa	Mission
David Torres	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo

Ruth Villarreal

Mission

The following Board members were absent:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Javier Farias	McAllen
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Hector Gonzales	Lyford
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Jaclyn Buelow
Efrain Garza	Frank Trevino
Lissa Frausto	Brenda De La Garza, Ed.D.
Marla Knaub	Sandra Torres
Amanda Odom	Vanessa Rivera
Marcos Flores	Ramon Longoria
Nereyda Trevino, Ed.D.	Carmen Noriega
Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.	
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 Sylvia S. Lopez.

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.

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.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Administration, Amanda Odom recognized and congratulated tennis, golf, and soccer teams who placed at regionals and advanced to the state competitions.

- B. Recognition of all 2024 STISD Campus Teachers of the Year for their contributions to student success at their individual campuses and across STISD.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Administration, Amanda Odom recognized and congratulated Dr. Ana Villarreal as World Scholars Campus Teacher of the Year, Criselda Siragusa as Virtual Academy Campus Teacher of the Year, Megan Berryman as Rising Scholars Campus Teacher of the Year, Nytashah Guerra as Preparatory Academy Campus Teacher of the Year, Hanani Vasquez as Medical Professions Campus Teacher of the Year, Lane Dougherty as Health Professions Campus Teacher of the Year, and Cindy Key as Science Academy Campus Teacher of the Year.

- 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 Rudy Ramirez, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Board President, Henry LeVrier recommended moving Executive Session as the next item. A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Natividad Sosa, approving to move Executive Session as the next item. The motion passed unanimously. The Board went into Executive Session at 7:32 p.m.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:15 p.m.

- 9. *Action: Review and act on the March 26, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- 10. 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 Professional Development for Summer 2024.

Dr. Nereyda Trevino, Chief Academic Officer, reported on the district's Professional Development schedule for Summer 2024.

- B. Action: Review and act on the annual Instructional Materials Allotment and TEKS certification for 2024-2025 school year.

A motion was made by Sylvia S. Lopez, seconded by Adrian Garcia, approving the Instructional Materials Allotments and TEKS certification for the 2024-2025 school year. The morion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on amending the 2024-2025 Academic Calendar.

A motion was made by Sylvia S. Lopez, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving an amendment to the 2024-2025 Academic Calendar. The motion passed unanimously.

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

E. Larry Cantu reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the following projects:
 1. Health Professions Parking Lot project
 2. Health Professions Gymnasium project
 3. 2023-2024 Capital Projects
 4. New Central Administration Building project

David Monreal, GMS Architects, was present and provided the Board with an update on the Health Professions Parking Lot and the 2023-2024 Capial Projects. Laura Warren, The Warren Group, was present and provided the Board with an update on the Health Professions Gymnasium project.

- B. Action: Review and act on a request from Hidalgo County Elections Office for the use of district facilities for the November 5, 2024 Elections.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, approving the request from the Hidalgo County Elections Office for the use of district facilities for two polling locations for the November 5, 2024 Elections. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on approving the design layout and cost analysis for the Athletic Fields project in Edinburg and Mercedes.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Robert J. Lerma, approving the design layout and cost analysis for the Athletic Fields Project in Edinburg and Mercedes. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. Action: Review and act on approving the procurement method for the Athletic Fields project in Edinburg and Mercedes.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Robert J. Lerma, approving Competitive Sealed Proposal procurement method for the Athletic Fields project in Edinburg and Mercedes. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. Action: Review and act on accepting the Roof Assessment Report and Recommendations by the roofing consultant and Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the 2023-2024 Capital Improvement Projects.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Sylvia S. Lopez, accepting the Roof Assessment Report and Recommendations by the roofing consultant and Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the 2023-2024 Capital Improvement Projects. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Review and act on approving the procurement method for the 2023-2024 Capital Improvement Roofing project.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Sylvia S. Lopez, approving Job Order Contracting and Competitive Sealed Proposals procurement methods for the 2023-2024 Capital Improvement Roofing project. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on approving a structural engineer for the evaluation of District buildings.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Sylvia S. Lopez, approving CHLH Engineering, LLC and Solorio Engineering for the evaluation of district buildings. The motion passed with one abstention (Eduardo Rodriguez).

12. Finance & Operations Committee - Adrian Garcia and Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D., 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 approving the following donation:
 - 1. Donation from Sombrero Festival LTD in the amount of \$1,000.00 to Medical Professions.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
 - 1. Payment application #2 to Noble Texas Builders in the amount of \$96,443.05 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Israel Quintanilla, approving payment application #2 to Noble Texas Builders in the amount of \$96,443.05 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project. The motion passed with one abstention (Eduardo Rodriguez).

- 2. Payment application #3 to Noble Texas Builders in the amount of \$69,258.80 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving payment application #3 to Noble Texas Builders in the amount of \$69,258.80 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project. The motion passed with one abstention (Eduardo Rodriguez).

- 3. Payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$2,950.27 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Sylvia S. Lopez, approving payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$2,950.27 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project. The motion passed unanimously.

- 4. Payment application #5 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$23,500.00 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Sylvia S. Lopez, approving payment application #5 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$23,500.00 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 - 1. General Fund #5 (199)
 - 2. Title I, Part A (211)

3. Title I, Part C Migrant (212)
4. IDEA B (224)
5. Title II, Part A (255)
6. Title III, Part A – ELA (263)
7. Title IV, Part A SSAEP (289)
8. Innovative Services (429 PIC 23)

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Natividad Sosa, approving the budget amendments as presented. The motion passed with one abstention (Eduardo Rodriguez).

- F. Action: Review and act on approving the 2024-2025 Teacher Compensation Plan and the 2024-2025 Stipend Schedule.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Natividad Sosa, approving the 2024-2025 Teacher Compensation Plan, increasing the starting salary to \$56,000 and the 2024-2025 Stipend Schedule as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- G. Action: Review and act on approving the new electrical provider, and the corresponding Interlocal Agreement.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Sylvia S. Lopez, to deny TASB as the new electrical provider, and the corresponding Interlocal Agreement. The motion failed with thirteen against and one abstention (Dr. Rick Villarreal).

A motion was made by Natividad Sosa, seconded by Sylvia S. Lopez, approving TASB as the new electrical provider, and the corresponding Interlocal Agreement. The motion passed with two against (Adrian Garcia and Sylvia S. Lopez).

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

Robert J. Lerma reported on the following items:

- A. Report on EAB Match Reverse College Admissions Program.

Marcos Flores, Executive Director for Student Support, reported on the EAB Match Reverse College Admissions Program for STISD Seniors.

- B. Report on Spring Advisory Meeting.

Vanessa Rivera, CTE Director, reported on the Spring Advisory Meeting, including the 30 local industry partners that have contributed to the overall design, implementation, and evaluation of CTE programs at STISD.

14. 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.

Approved with the consent agenda.

15. 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 amending summer 2024 office hours.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
 1. Certified Certiport Educator Conference, June 17-19, 2024, in Orlando, Florida.
 2. 2024 National TSA Conference, June 26-30, 2024, in Orlando, Florida.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on board member(s) to attend the following:
 1. TASB Legislative Advisory Council Meeting, April 20, 2024, in Austin, TX.

2. TASA|TASB txEdCON24 Annual Convention, September 27-29, 2024, in San Antonio, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. Discussion, consideration, and possible action for Board membership and travel to attend the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund Conference.

A motion was made by Robert J. Lerma, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving Board membership and travel to attend the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund Conference. The motion passed with one against (Adrian Garcia).

- G. Action: Name delegate and alternate for the TASA|TASB txEdCON24 Annual Convention, September 28, 2024, in San Antonio, TX.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, naming Natividad Sosa as the Delegate and Israel G. Quintanilla as the Alternate for the TASA|TASB txEdCON24 Annual Convention, September 28, 2024, in San Antonio, TX. The motion passed with one against (Adrian Garcia).

- H. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for new Professional positions for the 2024-2025 school year and the Announcement of Vacancies for the following:
 1. Director of Bilingual and ESL Education (1)
 2. District Student Wellness Specialist (1)
 3. Occupational Therapist - Co-Op (1)
 4. Teachers (4)

A motion was made by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving new Professional positions for the 2024-2025 school year and the Announcement of Vacancies for Director of Bilingual and ESL Education (1), District Student Wellness Specialist (1), Occupational Therapist - Co-Op (1), and Teachers (4). The motion passed unanimously.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on April 30, 2024 at 7:32 p.m. 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. Section 551.074, Personnel Matters
 1. Recommendation of Professional staff for the 2024-2025 school year.
 - a. Educational Diagnostician – Co-Op
 - b. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
 - c. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern
 - d. Speech Language Pathologist Co-Op
 - e. Teacher(s)

2. Review recommendations for renewal/extension/non-renewal of employment contracts for Central Office Administrators, Principals, Teachers and other Professional staff.
 - a. Renewal of Chapter 21 and Non-Chapter 21 term and probationary employment contracts for Central Office Administrators, Principals, Teachers and other Professional staff for the 2024-2025 school year.
 - b. Discussion and consideration regarding the termination of Chapter 21 probationary contract(s) for teacher(s) at the end of the 2023-2024 contract period, in the best interest of the District (O.R.H.) and (R.C.).
- B. Sections 551.071, 551.074 and 551.0821, Consultation with attorney
 1. Discussion and consideration with Legal Counsel of legal issues regarding the termination of teacher(s) 2023-2024 Chapter 21 probationary contract(s) at the end of the contract period, in the best interest of the District. (O.R.H.) and (R.C.).
- C. Discussion and consideration with Legal Counsel regarding possible legal issues in connection with DGBA Level III grievance of (O.R.H.).
 1. Consideration of possible action regarding DGBA Level III Grievance of O.R.H.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:15 p.m.

17. 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 2024-2025 school year.
 - a. Educational Diagnostician – Co-Op
 - b. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
 - c. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern
 - d. Speech Language Pathologist Co-Op
 - e. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Dalila Garza as Educational Diagnostician Co-Op (11 months), Antolina Llanos as Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (11 months), Elizabeth Dawn Zamora as Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern (11 months), Rebecca Arevalo as Speech Language Pathologist Co-Op (11 months), Amanda H. Powelson as Teacher (10 months), Fidel Castaneda Jr. as Teacher (10 months), Heather Elizabeth Arizmendi as Teacher (10 months), Stephanie Barbie Naylor as Teacher (10 months), Brijido Brendan Ysquierdo as Teacher (10 months), Laney Dell Davis as Teacher (10 months), Veronica Muniz as Teacher (10 months), Erica Garcia as Teacher (10 months), Norma Leticia Freudenberg as Teacher (10 months), Kimberly Ann Endsley as Teacher (10 months), Leandra Villarreal Ruiz as Teacher (10 months), and Christopher Eric Robinson as Teacher (10 months).

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

2. Action: Review and act on renewal/extension/non-renewal of employment contracts for Central Office Administrators, Principals, Teachers and other Professional staff.
3. Review and act on renewal of Chapter 21 and Non-Chapter 21 term and probationary employment contracts for Central Office Administrators, Principals, Teachers and other Professional staff for the 2024-2025 school year.

Dr. Lara recommended the extension of employment contracts through June 30, 2026, for Efrain Garza, Marla Knaub, Lissa Frausto, Amanda Odom, Dr. Nereyda Trevino, Marcos Flores, and Eric Gutierrez; and the extension of employment contracts through June 30, 2025, for Jose Lucio and Dr. Michele Guajardo. In addition, the Superintendent recommended the renewal of employment contracts for teachers and other professional staff as listed on agenda pages 323-348 for the 2024-2025 school year.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving the Superintendent's recommendation to renew/extend the employment contracts for professional staff as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion, consideration and possible action to terminate Chapter 21 probationary contract(s) for teacher(s) at the end of the 2023-2024 school year in the best interest of the District (O.R.H.) and (R.C.); Board Policy DFAB (Legal) and Tex. Edu. Code Sec. 21.103.

A motion was made by Yolanda Kamel, seconded by David Torres, to terminate Chapter 21 probationary contract(s) for teacher O.R.H. and R.C. at the end of the 2023-2024 school year in the best interest of the District. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Pursuant to Sections 551.074 of the Texas Government Code, consideration and deliberation of DGBA Level III Grievance of (O.R.H.).

The Board did not take any action on this item.

18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Hector Gonzales, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, adjourning the meeting at 9:28 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.