



**SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

1450 Gillette Boulevard · San Antonio, Texas 78224 · (210) 977-7000 · Fax (210) 977-7017

Minutes of Special Meeting

**The Board of Trustees
South San Antonio ISD**

A Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of South San Antonio ISD was held Monday, December 6, 2021, beginning at 6:00 PM in the ADMINISTRATION BUILDING 1450 Gillette Blvd. San Antonio, Texas 78224.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Trustee	Present	Absent	Late Arrival/Departed Early
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		
Gina Villagomez	X		

Led by Michelle Martinez, Senior Executive Assistant

- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- TEXAS PLEDGE
- PRAYER

Led by Brad Domitrovich, Public Relations Consultant

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mr. Arrellano, Board President, read board meeting rules of decorum aloud.

Tom Cummins, South San AFT, addressed the Board regarding the differences among the Board as per the current agenda and stated that employees are concerned with what is going on with the Board right now. He also asked that the budget for substitutes be increased and that the family doctors for our staff are made available to them again with the health care provider.

Genevieve Trinidad, Community member, addressed the Board regarding the needs of our families being heard, respect for our elders, and the Board bringing peace, unity, and respect to South San families.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REMARKS (NO ACTION / REPORT ONLY)

Dr. Marc Puig, Superintendent of Schools, addressed the Board and audience regarding South San being designated as 1 of 12 recognized districts by Texas School Business Magazine's Bragging Rights. He also stated that the district received a \$50,000 Toyota donation last Friday. He thanked Mrs. Sendejo for going to accept the award on behalf of the district. He also stated that the district leaders are currently attending the Fundamental Five professional development which supports the academic playbook. He stated that the blue Santa press conference is at 9:30 am at Five Palms tomorrow. He stated that the quicksand of dysfunction in our governance team remains pervasive and he added that this is something that started over 30 years ago. Dr. Puig stated that in 1990 we had a

TEA Master assigned to our district. He stated that 7 days ago he received a letter from TEA regarding another investigation. The letter cited that the Board has interfered with the duties of the Superintendent. He stated that this ongoing painful and pervasive lack of focus on what matters most is plaguing our district. He posed the question, what's the cost of this consistent pervasive approach to governing the district. He answered with, we have lost 2,000 students over the last 7 years which equates to about 16 million dollars. He added that our graduation rate sunk to the lowest 3 years ago. He stated that the unwitting victims of undisciplined governance are our children, our staff, and our community. He stated that he wrote a letter to TEA in December championing and defending the work of this governance team. He said he called the Commissioner and asked him to please end the investigation now. He stated that in May he met with the Commissioner and discussed the amazing work happening. Dr. Puig said that in May he received a 2-year extension and raise that he did not ask for. He stated that Trustee Flores made the motion for that extension and that raise. Dr. Puig quoted Mr. Flores from that day "I have faith and belief that Dr. Puig is doing a tremendous job. I believe he is doing the very best and we are headed into greater heights and a brighter future with him" "the district had a reputation of being a Superintendent killer if Superintendent's didn't do what board members wanted them to do we put them out but this is now a different Board." Dr. Puig stated that was short lived because 21 days later, some things didn't go the way Trustees wanted them to go particularly in the area of personnel. He stated that when board members don't get their way, alliances change, there is conflict and chaos, and what almost always arises is that the Superintendent is almost always pushed out. Dr. Puig stated that's where we are tonight. He stated that impending doom came with advance notice. He said that on June 2nd Mr. Rodriguez was unceremoniously removed from the Presidency because he refused to get involved in personnel matters. He said that they eviscerated Mr. Rodriguez publicly with every intention of discrediting his good name and embarrassing the man. He stated that this Board based on anonymous allegations launched an illegitimate and manufactured investigation against Trustee Rodriguez accusing him without one shred of evidence. He said that they accused him of improperly using school facilities and hiring coaches at West Campus. He asked, do you think anyone on the Board asked me if that was true, was Mr. Rodriguez afforded the respect of simply asking him if any of this was true? He answered of course not. Dr. Puig stated that he called Mr. Rodriguez the next day to tell him about this ridiculous investigation. Dr. Puig informed taxpayers listening that that bogus investigation cost us \$25,000, took several weeks to complete, and embarrassed an honorable Board member. Dr. Puig stated that on August 31st the painful and pervasive undisciplined governance continued when Trustee Stacy Alderete was falsely accused of extorting and exploitation of an elderly employee by this Board. Dr. Puig stated that with advice of legal counsel, her name was associated with the most preposterous agenda item he had ever seen, outlining penal codes relating to extortion and exploitation. Dr. Puig asked, as a passionate parent and tax payer, do you think Mrs. Alderete was afforded the decency and respect of a conversation regarding these absurd allegations before they appeared on an agenda? Dr. Puig answered, of course not. Dr. Puig stated, now today, it is Mr. Arrellano's turn and mine. He stated to address the slanderous venom being hurled at both of us because of a live microphone conversation we had November 17th during a Board meeting. He asked, do you think I had the courtesy and respect of a simple conversation, he answered, disappointingly no. He stated that an independent certified transcript is available, the Board has seen it, the media has received it, and it is published online. He stated for the record I stand behind exactly what I said on the 17th during the live microphone. He stated it is nothing that I wouldn't have said publicly. He stated it is nothing that I wouldn't talk about or haven't talked about with other Trustees. He said context matters, critical thinking matters, and truth matters. Dr. Puig stated that he has not and will not take part in any of the incivility, the boorishness and thoughtlessness fueling this nonsensical subject. He asked will we South San ever free ourselves from this persistent, pervasive painful way of doing business? He answered, it doesn't seem that way, certainly not with the falsehoods and misinformation being spewed in the media by some of the Trustees here tonight. He stated that this ongoing trampling of the truth is a travesty to our children. He said our kids, and our community are counting on us. He stated that their hope is rested on our actions. He added, regardless of what has occurred, he will never hold a grudge, and said he is willing to work with all of the Trustees. He thanked the Board for

allowing him to work alongside them even in some of the most adverse situations we have dealt with. He stated he was honored and it is a blessing to be here tonight. He said let your conscience be your guide tonight, and may God help us.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REMARKS (NO ACTION / REPORT ONLY)

Ernesto Arrellano Jr., Board President, addressed the Board, the Superintendent, staff, community, and students, stating I'm going to be blunt, be honest, which is what I try to do all the time. He discussed the issue of the "hot mic". He stated that it was his microphone that he forgot to turn off. He said it was an accident and apologized because it allowed ugliness amongst the Board members to transpire, he said one of them stated "we will need to strike while the iron is hot." He stated that there is a certified transcript of that time. He stated that there is nothing on there that he would not say publicly/face to face. He stated that before that transcript, the "strike while the iron is hot gangs" bias, wrong, and irresponsible versions, have been circulating for 2 weeks. He stated that the context has been ignored to get emotions stirred up to cause chaos. He stated his version of the conversation. He said that the Board had quite a few questions of the status of the Maintenance Director position that had not been filled for over 18 months. Mr. Arrellano stated that the Superintendent brought on a contractor to fill that role without Board approval which is allowed up to \$50,000; above that requires board approval. He said the item was on the agenda because that dollar mark was coming up in January. He said there were discussions about that and the Board was concerned that if we gave the Superintendent unfettered approval then the Superintendent would let the contractor stay as long as the Superintendent wanted him to and we would never get a permanent position filled. He stated that it was at that point that the attorney suggested that they could approve small increases to the authorization that the Superintendent could work with; example \$50,000 in January could be increased to \$65,000 to allow the Superintendent to have the contractor while we looked for a permanent replacement. He stated that he got the sense that Trustees were ok with that. He said that the Board then had a vote to table that item for another meeting and the Board went into executive session. He said that is when the hot mic issue happened; that is when the Superintendent expressed his concern in tabling the vote would send a bad signal to the contractor and that he may walk away. He said he tried to alleviate his concerns by reminding him that he could call a special called meeting to answer the Boards questions and may approve on a month to month basis. Mr. Arrellano stated that Dr. Puig was still concerned that the contractor could walk because it is hard to find someone to run multimillion dollar projects all at the same time. Mr. Arrellano stated that Dr. Puig attempted to use his brother as an example of someone with that experience. Mr. Arrellano stated that he reminded Dr. Puig that his brother would not be able to work here as long as he is on the Board. Mr. Arrellano said he then jokingly said that he would step down if it would be better for the district to have his brother rather than him. He stated I would never do that. He said he spoke to his brother reminding him that if he won the race, he would not be able to work for South San Antonio ISD. Mr. Arrellano said he tried to use humor to end that topic and get to closed session. He stated that the Superintendent made the comment that if the Board granted him full hiring authority then his brother could be hired without Mr. Arrellano having to step down. He said it was then that he told Dr. Puig that if he put that on the agenda, then Mr. Arrellano would not show up to that meeting, meaning that he would not support it. He stated that the Superintendent can attempt to put something like this on any draft agenda and any board member can as well but the Board President has final approval of items that will be in a meeting. Mr. Arrellano said there would be no way that he as Board President would have allowed that on any agenda based strictly because the Superintendent wanted the power to avoid nepotism rules, he said there is no way that would happen and it did not happen. He stated that he was taken aback by what was said and he was consistent in his attempts to get away from the topic and in no way accepted anything that may appeared to have been offered. Mr. Arrellano said some Trustees are accusing him with being buddy-buddy with the Superintendent. He stated his facts to dispel that. He said since December I have been hammering the Superintendent and administration about the failure rate at South San, I voted both times not to provide an extension to Dr. Puig, a sweetheart deal, 2-year extension with a 12% increase/\$25,000, I voted to reprimand the Superintendent that precipitated a heated discussion and I was kicked out of his office along with legal counsel. Mr. Arrellano stated, so to say I walk hand in hand and do everything the Superintendent wants, that is not true, never been true. He asked, do I work with the Superintendent and collaborate with him? He answered yes because I am required to do that, it is in our Board policy and it is a requirement from TEA. He stated, I want to address one thing that the Superintendent addressed concerning allegations/investigation, it was not about Trustee Rodriguez, it was on allegations of improper use of facilities at West Campus. He stated that something happened a few weeks ago that turned Trustees that were admirers of Dr. Puig to become his harshest critics within a week. He said they are championing the Board to suspend Dr. Puig. He stated that Dr. Puig has been under a lot of stress since then because his supporters abandoned him. He said Dr. Puig told him 2 weeks ago that Mr. Rodriguez was trying to have access to district facilities without going through the normal

process, and Dr. Puig said he refused and that he will never do that again. He stated nobody knows a lot of things that have happened. He said that he would never engage in what he is being accused of. He said that he wanted to dispel the notion that he does not have faith that any of our long term employees would not be able to handle the maintenance director role. He said they are more than capable and should apply for any job that they feel, not a Trustee, but that they feel, they can excel in. He said his mom was a cafeteria worker at Kindred ES for many years and loved it, he said she talked about the kids and principals. He directed a comment to Board Vice President, former President, and former Secretary, stating I demand that you stop spreading rumors like this, it is wrong and unbecoming. He stated that every Board member is a champion of our staff. He stated that we all also know that aside from some Chapter 21 contracts and some high level administrative positions, the Board has no real authority in the hiring and firing of employees, none, by longstanding policy that power is reserved for the Superintendent. He said if the Board cooperate or any individual Board member attempts to influence or direct the Superintendent in who he/she fires or hires it would be a violation of Board policy and TEA Governance Regulations. He said for any Board member to state otherwise is irresponsible and at the very least, wrong. He said family; as bad and irresponsible as this gang has been these last couple of weeks with an all-out assault on me, to first resign from being Board President, to wanting me to leave the Board all together. He stated that it is unfortunately the sad political reality here in this district, sad but true. He said but when a Vice President and at least 2 other Trustees and their supporters begin to attack my family at will, that is something that this community needs to know about. He stated that he does not go on social media to make comments very often, he said he did one time because he had to defend himself and that's what he said he is doing now. He stated 2 examples; the self-described "Voice" has posted several times that my brother was a physical and mental abuser of kids when he was working for the district, but he quickly took the posts down. He said it was borderline evil and just wrong. He said they were taken down because they know that this is not true but it was too late, the damage was done. He said this so called Voice has gone after one of his sons on social media in a similar way. He said these are just 2 examples of what his family had to endure from the last couple of weeks from this gang. He directed comments to the Board Vice President, former President, and former Secretary stating that his mother and father raised him to be able to endure injustices and come out stronger than ever before. He said their tactics almost worked, and that he thought briefly that he was tired of the constant attacks. He said thankfully people started to push back on social media. He said that his job as Board President is difficult, not easy. He said he thought why put up with it, but then his boys said if you did nothing wrong, why give up the fight and Mr. Arrellano said they are right. He said he did not do anything wrong. He said he forgot to turn off the mic, that's what he did wrong. He said what has been going on is mean spirited and evil. He said it must be fought against, this is the only way to turn this district around. He stated these may be his last remarks and some people don't care what happens to the students of this district as long as they get the perceived power. He said you get to decide what goes on an agenda and what doesn't, other than that there really is not that much power, especially when you get a 2-person memo that has this happening today. He stated that there is so much more that can be done the right way for the children of this district and that's why we each are supposed to be here.

PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS

Certified Transcription added at the end of the meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

1. Discussion and possible action to elect/reorganize Board Officers pursuant to Texas Education Code 11.061 and South San Antonio ISD Board Policy BDAA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL).

Mr. Flores made a motion: I would like to make a motion to propose officers, Stacey Alderete as President, Homer Flores as Vice President, and Gilbert Rodriguez as Secretary, seconded by Mr. Rodriguez, and the Board of Trustees voted 3/4. Motion failed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado		X	
Shirley Ibarra		X	
Homer Flores	X		

Ernesto Arrellano Jr.		X	
Gina Villagomez		X	

2. Discussion and possible action regarding South San ISD TEA appointed Monitor

Mr. Rodriguez made a motion: I motion that this Board directs legal counsel to request the appointment of a different monitor here at South San Antonio Independent School District, and Mrs. Alderete seconded.

Mr. Rodriguez made a motion: I'm appealing the ruling of the chair of him saying that he's not recognizing her point of order on sticking to the item that's up for discussion, seconded by Mr. Flores, and the Board of Trustees voted 3/4. Motion failed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado		X	
Shirley Ibarra		X	
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.		X	
Gina Villagomez		X	

Mrs. Prado made a substitute motion: I make a substitute motion that we allow the monitor to hear from him on the motion that's being presented to go forward, seconded by Ms. Ibarra, and the Board of Trustees voted 5/2 to approve. Motion passed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete		X	
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores		X	
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		
Gina Villagomez	X		

Dr. Saavedra: I'm not going to comment on whether the motion should move forward or not. That's entirely up to you folks as a Board but I will correct the record in reference to what my statements were. After hearing from Dr. Puig and the Board President in a private meeting with Mr. Sanchez the attorney, I asked the question, if the comments did not occur during open open meeting session and did not occur in closed session in instance those comments occurred, the hot mic comments occurred in between open session and closed session I asked the attorney if it didn't occur during during the official part of the meeting can that can those comments be erased from the tape. He quickly said no, it's not a good idea, it'll make things worse. I agreed and that was basically the end of the conversation. So for the record, that was my statement and my question to the attorney and he can correct anything he wants to correct. Thank you.

CLOSED / EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOTICE: The Board of Trustees may elect to go into Closed Meeting any time during the meeting to discuss matters listed on the Agenda when authorized by the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code. In the event the Board of Trustees elects to go into Closed Meeting regarding an Agenda Item, the Board of Trustees

will hold a Closed Meeting to discuss individual personnel matters including termination, litigation and other matters the Board deems necessary. Upon completion of Closed Meeting, the Board of Trustees may, in the open session, take such action as appropriate on items discussed in a Closed Meeting. If, during the course of the meeting, any discussion of any item listed on the agenda should be held in Closed Meeting, the Board will convene in such Closed Meeting in accordance with Texas Government Code Sections 551.001 - 551.088. The Board members may take action in the open portion of the meeting on items discussed in the Closed Meeting but no action will be taken in closed session.

The Board will return to open session and take appropriate action, if any, on items discussed in closed session. No Action will be taken in closed session. Further, Board Members are reminded that all items discussed in closed session must remain confidential so as to avoid liability to the district. The Board will consider and discuss, the following items:

Closed Meeting pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code §§ 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.076, 551.082, and 551.0821

1. Personnel discussion and consultation with attorney pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074.
2. Personnel discussion and consultation with attorney concerning placing the Superintendent of Schools on paid administrative leave for cause as determined by the board.
3. Personnel discussion and consultation with attorney concerning appointment of an interim Superintendent of Schools.
4. Discussion concerning a personnel matter involving the possible censure of a Trustee.
Start time: 7:23 PM.
End time: 10:00 PM.

OPEN SESSION

1. Reconvene from Executive Session for action relative to items considered during Closed Executive Session.

Mr. Rodriguez made a motion: This isn't easy for me to do, but it is something that I hold myself accountable to doing as difficult as it may be. I move that the Board of Trustees place the Superintendent of Schools on paid administrative leave pending an investigation which includes another official transcript of the events of November 17th, Mrs. Alderete seconded

Mr. Rodriguez amended his motion: I move that we place the Superintendent of Schools on paid administrative leave effective immediately pending the results of an investigation which includes another transcript of the November 17th event, seconded by Mrs. Alderete, and the Board of Trustees voted 7/0 to approve. Motion passed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		
Gina Villagomez	X		

Dr. Puig stated: Thank you President Arrellano, Trustees, thank you all for the opportunity to be here with you tonight. At this time, I am no longer the Superintendent as I have been placed on leave so with that I will be exiting at this moment, thank you.

Mark Sanchez, Legal Counsel stated: Just a point of clarification, Dr. Puig said he's no longer the Superintendent, that's not accurate. He is still the Superintendent; he's just been placed on paid leave. So I want to make sure the record reflects that comment wasn't quite accurate.

Mrs. Alderete made a motion: I would like to make a motion on #4 in Executive Session. I'd like to make a motion that the Board censure the Trustee as discussed in executive session, seconded by Mr. Flores, and the Board of Trustees voted 3/4. Motion failed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado		X	
Shirley Ibarra		X	
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.		X	
Gina Villagomez		X	

Mrs. Alderete made a motion: I would like to make a motion for #3 in Executive session. I'd like to make a motion that we proceed as discussed in executive session

Mark Sanchez, Legal Counsel stated: The motion needs to be specific as to the action taken. If, let me cut to the chase, if the Board is going to propose an Interim Superintendent, that person needs to be identified for the record.

Mrs. Alderete made a motion: I would like to make a motion that we move forward as discussed by announcing Mr. Henry Yzaguirre as our Interim Superintendent, Ms. Villagomez seconded.

Mrs. Alderete amended the motion: I would like to amend the amended motion. I'd like to direct the Deputy Superintendent, Mrs. Dolores Sendejo with contacting Mr. Henry Yzaguirre with the intentions of having him as the Interim Superintendent indefinitely, seconded by Mr. Rodriguez and the Board of Trustees voted 7/0 to approve. Motion passed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		
Gina Villagomez	X		

TEA MONITOR REMARKS/REPORT

Dr. Abe Saavedra, TEA Monitor, stated: Thank you Mr. Arrellano, and members of the Board. I know its late, my remarks will be brief. First of all, I would like to commend Ms. Ibarra for her comments earlier today. There has been a lot of discussion in the two months I've been here, concerning really adult behavior. And I'm pleased to see that the Board was united in your last two action items this evening. Hopefully you can work together to change the agenda from adults to

young people. And it's really time for the Board to focus, place its focus on what's going on in the schools, what's going on in the instructional programs and simply move forward. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Alderete moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Rodriguez seconded, and the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:39 PM.

ATTEST

Gilbert F. Rodriguez

Gilbert F. Rodriguez, Board President

Stacey Alderete

Stacey Alderete, Board Secretary

NOTICE: This meeting of the Board of Trustees is authorized in accordance with the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.001 - 551.146. Verification of Notice of Meeting and Agenda are on file in the Office of the Superintendent. Closed meeting, if required and if authorized by the statute, will be conducted prior to the conclusion of the meeting for any item listed on this agenda.

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