



Always Innovating

**South  
Texas ISD**

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 6-12**

## Minutes of Regular Meeting

### The Board of Directors South Texas ISD

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A Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of South Texas ISD was held on December 3, 2024, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Central Office Teaching and Learning Center, 7001 E. Expressway 83, Mercedes, Texas 78570.

1. Welcome.

Mr. Henry LeVrier, Board President, welcomed 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
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Andrea E. Gonzales-Loya	Raymondville
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
Oscar Salinas	Edinburg
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
David Suarez	Weslaco
Sue Ann Villarreal	Raymondville
Zach Zamora	Mission

The following Board members were absent:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Sandra Torres
Efrain Garza	Vanessa Rivera
Lissa Frausto	Niranda Flores
Marla Knaub	Jacky Beulow
Amanda Odom	Ramon Longoria
Marcos Flores	Frank Trevino
Cynthia de La Garza Gonzales	Crystal Solis
Chief Steven Cortez	Carmen Noriega
Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.	
Michele Guajardo, Ph.D.	
Eric Gutierrez	
Jose Lucio	
Marco Zamora	
Maribel Valdez	

The following guests were present:

Honorable Aurelio "Keter" Guerra, Willacy County Judge  
Honorable Richard F. Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge  
Honorable Hector Bustos, Edinburg Municipal Judge  
Mr. Gerry Zamora

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges were led by Sasha Crane.

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 received the following request to address the Board of Directors:

- Megan Berryman – Class sizes at RSA

Individual was allowed three minutes to address the Board.

7. Action: Receive and declare the results of the November 5, 2024 Election from the County Commissioners' Court of Hidalgo County.

Dr. Tony Lara reported the election results of the November 5, 2024 Election were canvassed by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court. The following election results were declared:

For School Board Trustee, County Commissioners' Pct. #1, South Texas ISD:

Sandra 'Sandy' Ochoa .....	26,035 votes
Homero Garcia.....	14,149 votes

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Rudy R. Ramirez, accepting the Election results of the November 5, 2024 Election, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Action: Receive and declare the results of the November 5, 2024 Election from the County Commissioners' Court of Willacy County.

Dr. Tony Lara reported the election results of the November 5, 2024 Election were canvassed by the Willacy County Commissioners' Court. The following election results were declared:

For School Board Trustee, County Commissioners' Pct. #2, South Texas ISD:

Sue Ann Villarreal .....	908 votes
Israel G. Quintanilla.....	431 votes

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, accepting the Election results of the November 5, 2024 Election, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Receipt of appointments of directors at large to the South Texas ISD Board of Directors from Cameron and Hidalgo County Judges.

Dr. Tony Lara reported receiving in writing from Cameron County Judge, Eddie Treviño, Jr. the at large Cameron County appointments of the following board members for a four-year term starting November 2024 and ending November 2028 to the South Texas ISD Board of Directors:

Adrian Garcia  
Henry LeVrier

Additionally, he received in writing from Hidalgo County Judge, Richard Cortez, the at large Hidalgo County appointments of the following board members for a four-year term starting November 2024 and ending November 2028 to the South Texas ISD Board of Directors:

Sasha Crane  
Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza  
David Suarez  
Ruth Villarreal

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, accepting the appointments for Hidalgo County & Cameron County, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Report on the Statement of Officer Oaths filed in our office for the newly elected/appointed Board members.

Dr. Tony Lara attested that the following board members signed a Statement of Officer Oath prior to taking office and are filed in his office:

David Briones	Sylvia Sánchez Garza
Adrian Garcia	David Suarez
Henry LeVrier	Andrea E. Gonzales Loya
Sandra ‘Sandy’ Ochoa	Sue Ann Villarreal
Zachary I. Zamora	
Sasha Crane	

11. Administer Oath of Office for newly elected and newly appointed Board Members.

The Honorable Richard F. Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge, officiated the Oath of Office for the following individuals: Sasha Crane, Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, and David Suarez.

Dr. Ricardo Ochoa officiated the Oath of Office for Dr. Sandra ‘Sandy’ Ochoa.

Mr. Gerry Zamora officiated the Oath of Office for Zachary I. Zamora.

The Honorable Aurelio ‘Keter’ Guerra, officiated the Oath of Office for the following individuals: Andrea E. Gonzales Loya, David Briones, Adrian Garcia, and Henry LeVrier.

The Honorable Hector Bustos officiated the Oath of Office for Sue Ann Villarreal.

12. Action: Reorganization of the Board of Directors.
  - A. Action: Election of President

Dr. Tony Lara called for nominations for the office of the President. Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa nominated Henry LeVrier; Yolanda Kamel seconded the nomination.

A call was made for any further nominations. After receiving no further nominations, the Board ceased the nominations, and Henry LeVrier was elected President of the Board by acclamation.

B. Action: Election of Vice-President (newly elected President presiding)

Dr. Tony Lara called for nominations for the office of the Vice-President. Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa nominated Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza; Dr. Noel Garza seconded the nomination.

A call was made for any further nominations. After receiving no further nominations, the Board ceased the nominations, and Sylvia Sánchez Garza was elected Vice-President of the Board by acclamation.

C. Action: Election of Secretary

Dr. Tony Lara called for nominations for the office of Secretary. Abiel J. Cantú nominated E. Larry Cantu, Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa seconded the nomination.

A call was made for any further nominations. After receiving no further nominations, the Board ceased the nominations, and E. Larry Cantu was elected Vice-President of the Board by acclamation.

The Board President called for a ten minute recess. The Board went into a recess at 7:42 p.m. The Board returned at 7:51 p.m.

13. Awards & Recognitions.

- A. Recognition of STISD students for excellence in academic, athletic and/or extracurricular endeavors.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda Odom recognized Science Academy Girls' Varsity Volleyball Team as Regional Champions; Health Professions Varsity Boys' Volleyball Team as State Champions; and Rising Scholars Academy MSP Girls' Volleybal Team as State Champions.

14. 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.

The Board president announced a request to pull item 22.C. \*Action: Review and act on re-adoption of Board of Trustees' Code of Ethics to include new board members from the consent agenda.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed with one against (Adrian Garcia).

15. \*Action: Review and act on the October 22, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

16. \*Action: Review and act on the November 16, 2024 Special Called Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

17. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - David Briones and Sylvia S. Lopez, Co-Chairs

David Briones reported on the following item:

A. \*Action: Review and act on proposed admission qualifications for students and campus target populations for 2025-2026 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

18. Buildings and Grounds Committee - E. Larry Cantu and Margarita Garcia, Co-Chairs

Jaime Solis reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the following projects:
1. Health Professions Gymnasium project
  2. Athletic Fields project
  3. New Administration Building

Nathaniel Perez, The Warren Group, was present to and provided the Board with an update on the Health Professions Gymnasium project. David Monreal, GMS Architects, was present and provided the Board with an update on the Athletic Fields project. Marla Knaub provided the Board with a report on the New Administration building.

19. Finance & Operations Committee - Adrian Garcia and Israel Quintanilla, 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 district inventory.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. \*Action: Review and act on approving the following donations:
  - 1. Donation of 10 SMART Rover Robots valued at \$1,000 from Deloitte Consulting Product Services LLC to Science Academy Computer Science Club.
  - 2. Donation of 10 SMART Rover Robots valued at \$1,000 from Deloitte Consulting Product Services LLC to Science Academy Robotics Club.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. Action: Review and act on the following change order(s):
  - 1. Change Order #1 to the contract in the credit amount of \$19,300.00 for the Roofing project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving change order #1 to the contract in the credit amount of \$19,300.00 for the Roofing project. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
  - 1. Payment application #23 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$21,804.03 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Yolanda Kamel, approving payment application #23 to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$21,804.03 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

- 2. Payment application #24 (final) to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$18,720.71 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving payment application #24 (final) to D. Wilson Construction in the amount of \$18,720.71 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project. The motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Payment application #4 (final) to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$8,585.14 for the Roofing project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving payment application #4 (final) to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$8,585.14 for the Roofing project. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Payment application #5 (final) to TADCO Roofing in the amount of \$80,004.49 for the New Central Office Building Renovation project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Zach Zamora, approving payment application #5 (final) to TADCO Roofing in the amount of \$80,004.49 for the Roofing project. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Payment application #6 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$579,909.56 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #6 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$579,909.56 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

Robert Lerma left the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

6. Payment application #4 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$16,718.96 for the Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, approving payment application #4 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$16,718.96 for the Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Payment application #2 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$841,781.61 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, approving payment application #2 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$841,781.61 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Payment application #1 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$76,004.27 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving payment application #1 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$76,004.27 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Action: Review and act on approving the following budget amendments:

1. Effective Advising Framework Grant (244)

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, approving a budget amendment for Effectove Advising Framework Grant (244). The motion passed unanimously.

G. Action: Review and act on requisition(s):

1. Requisition #127260 to Hidalgo County Elections for the November 5, 2024 Election for Commissioner's Pct. 1 seat on the South Texas ISD Board of Directors.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving requisition #127260 to Hidalgo County Elections for the November 5, 2024 Election for Commissioner's Pct. 1 seat on the South Texas ISD Board of Directors. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Discussion, consideration, and possible action on Health Insurance Benefits for the 2025-2026 school year.

No action taken.

20. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Abiel J. Cantú and Noel Garza, D.D.S., Co-Chairs

Abiel J. Cantú reported on the following item:

- A. Report on the Criminal Justice Career Pathway at World Scholars.

Vanessa Rivera, CTE Director, reported on the Criminal Justice Career Pathway at World Scholars.

21. Community & Governmental Relations Committee - Sasha Crane and Eduardo R. Rodriguez, Co-Chairs

Sasha Crane reported on the following item:

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

Apprpved with the consent agenda.

22. 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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. \*Report on progress toward Superintendent's Goals.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. \*Action: Review and act on re-adoption of Board of Trustees' Code of Ethics to include new board members.

Item pulled from the consent agenda. A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Adrian Garcia, tabling this item. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. \*Action: Review and act on the following out-of-district student and staff travel:
  - 1. Advancing Earth and Space Sciences AGU24 Conference, December 10-13, 2024, in Washington, D.C.
  - 2. Future of Education Technology Conference, January 14-17, 2025, in Orlando, FL.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. District Reports
  - 1. Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
    - a. Report on resignations and retirements of professional staff.

Lissa Frausto provided a report on the resignations and retirements of professional staff for the month.

- b. Report on professional vacancies.

Lissa Frausto gave an update on the professional vacancies.

- 2. Executive Director for Student Support
        - a. Enrollment and Attendance Report.

Marcos Flores provided a report on enrollment and attendance for the month.

- b. Report on Student Support Services.

Marcos Flores gave an update on the current Student Support Services and initiatives.

- 3. Executive Director for Special Programs

- a. Report on Special Programs.

Dr. Brenda De La Garza provided the Board with an update on Special Programs.

- b. Report on the South Texas Tri-County Special Education Co-Op.

Dr. Brenda De La Garza gave an update on the South Texas Tri-County Special Education Co-Op and services provided to each member district.

4. Chief of Security Operations

- a. Report on status update on the South Texas ISD Police Department.

Chief Steven Cortez reported on the status of the district's application for the South Texas ISD Police Department.

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

1. Cameron County Appraisal District

A motion was made by David Suarez, seconded by Oscar Salinas, casting 145 votes divided between Everardo Sanchez and David A. Garza. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Hidalgo County Appraisal District

A motion was made by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, seconded by Sasha Crane, casting all 125 votes for Richard A. Garza. The motion passed with one abstention (Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza).

23. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Rudy Ramirez, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, adjourning the meeting at 8:57 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.