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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, 2025, 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
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Andrea E. Gonzales-Loya	Raymondville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Oscar Salinas	Edinburg
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
David Suarez	Weslaco
Ruth Villarreal	Mission
Sue Ann Villarreal	Raymondville
Zach Zamora	Mission

The following Board members were absent:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Rodolfo "Rudy" Ramirez	Edinburg
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo

The following staff members were present:

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

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges and District Call to Action were led by Andrea E. Gonzales-Loya.

4. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence.

5. Public Hearing: 2024 Federal Report Card and Texas Academic Performance Report.

The Board held a Public Hearing on the 2024 Federal Report Card and Texas Academic Performance Report. Marcos Flores, Executive Director for Student Support, reported on the District & Campus Texas Academic Performance Reports which included the 2023-2024 Federal Report Card and the 2023-2024 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.

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 STISD students for excellence in academic, athletic and/or extracurricular endeavors.

There was no recognition of students for this meeting.

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

In honor of Texas School Board Recognition Month, Amanda Odom recognized each Board member for their years of service. In addition, school principals addressed the Board members, thanking them for their service and presenting them with tokens of appreciation.

The Board President made a recommendation moving Executive Session as the next item to be addressed. A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, moving into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:35 p.m. and returned from Executive Session at 10:04 p.m.

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 Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

10. *Action: Review and act on the December 3, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

11. *Action: Review and act on the December 12, 2024 Special Called Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

12. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - David Briones and Sue Ann Villarreal, Co-Chairs

David Briones reported on the following items:

- A. *Report on the 2024 Federal Report Card.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Report on 2024 Texas Academic Performance Report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

13. Buildings and Grounds Committee - E. Larry Cantu and Jaime Solis, Co-Chairs

Jaime Solis reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the following projects:
 1. Health Professions Gymnasium project
 2. Mercedes Athletic Fields project
 3. Edinburg Athletic Fields project
 4. Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom System

Nathaniel Perez, The Warren Group, was present and provided the Board with an update on the Health Professions Gymnasium project. Isaac Ochoa, GMS Architects, was present and provided the Board with an update on the Athletic Fields projects and the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom System.

- B. Action: Review and act on accepting the Mercedes Tennis Courts project as substantially complete.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, accepting the Mercedes Tennis Courts project as substantially complete. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza reported on the following items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Report on checks written since last report.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Report on 2024-2025 first quarter student activity accounts.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *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.

- E. *Action: Review and act on removing assets from district inventory.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. *Action: Review and act on approving a donation from Puro Prep in the amount of \$6,000 to the Medical Professions Christian Club.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- G. Action: Review and act on the following change orders:
 - 1. Change order #1 to the contract with Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$1,440,816.44 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields Restrooms project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving change order #1 to the contract with Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$1,440,816.44 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields Restrooms project. The motion passed with one against (Eduardo R. Rodriguez).

- 2. Change order #1 to the contract with Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$16,001.78 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving change order #1 to the contract with Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$16,001.78 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed with one against (Eduardo R. Rodriguez).

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

1. Payment Application #1 to Telepro Communications in the amount of \$58,995.95 for the Audio/Video Intercom project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #1 to Telepro Communications in the amount of \$58,995.95 for the Audio/Video Intercom project. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment Application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$127,572.70 for the Audio/Video Intercom project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$127,572.70 for the Audio/Video Intercom project. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Payment Application #2 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$3,827.18 for the Audio/Video Intercom project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #2 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$3,827.18 for the Audio/Video Intercom project. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Payment Application #3 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$916,207.58 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #3 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$916,207.58 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project. The motion passed with one against (Eduardo R. Rodriguez).

5. Payment application #4 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$1,184,611.06 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #4 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$1,184,611.06 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project. The motion passed with one against (Eduardo R. Rodriguez).

6. Payment application #5 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$51,904.17 for the Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #5 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$51,904.17 for the Athletic Fields project. The motion passed with one abstention (Oscar Salinas).

7. Payment Application #2 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$785,405.37 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #2 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$785,405.37 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Payment application #7 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$277,074.85 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Zach Zamora, approving payment application #7 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$277,074.85 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Payment application #8 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$821,597.89 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Zach Zamora, approving payment application #8 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$821,597.89 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Payment application #11 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$6,288.60 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #11 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$6,288.60 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Payment application #12 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$5,292.20 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, approving payment application #12 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$5,292.20 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Payment Application #6 (final) to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$655.62 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #6 (final) to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$655.62 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Payment Application #8 (final) to Noble Texas Builders in the amount of \$36,423.10 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, approving payment application #8 (final) to Noble Texas Builders in the amount of \$36,423.10 for the Health Professions Parking Lot project. The motion passed unanimously.

- I. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 1. Budget amendment #2 General Fund (199)
 2. Budget Amendment #1 Instructional Materials Allotment (410)

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving budget amendment #2 General Fund (199) and budget amendment #1 Instructional Materials Allotment (410). The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Action: Review and act on requisition #123922 to EDTX Equipment Depot in the amount of \$53,200 for the purchase of a boom lift.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving requisition #123922 to EDTX Equipment Depot in the amount of \$53,200 for the purchase of a boom lift. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Abiel J. Cantú and Robert J. Lerma, Co-Chairs

Abiel J. Cantú reported on the following item:

- A. Report on the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant award.

Vanessa Rivera, CTE Director, gave a report on the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant award.

16. Community & Governmental Relations Committee - Sasha Crane and Zach Zamora, Co-Chairs

Zach Zamora reported on the following items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Report on Enrollment Process for 2025-2026 School Year.

Amanda Odom, Administrator for Public Relations and Marketing, provided a report on the Enrollment process for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year.

17. Superintendent's Report - Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.

A. *Campus 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 2025-2026 Committee and Co-Chair Assignments for the Board of Directors.

Approved with the consent agenda.

C. *Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:

1. AASA's National Conference on Education Future Driven Leadership, March 6-8, 2025, New Orleans, LA.
2. American Association of School Personnel Administrators National Educator Shortage Summit, March 6-7, 2025 in Anaheim, CA.
3. The Switch Lab Workshop, March 24-29, 2025 in Sebastopol, CA.
4. Business Professionals of America (BPA) National Leadership Conference, May 7-11, 2025 in Orlando, FL.
5. 2024-2025 US Chess Federation SuperNationals VIII Competition, May 9-11, 2025 in Orlando, FL.
6. 2025 National Technology Student Association (TSA) Conference, June 27 - July 1, 2025 in Nashville, TN.

Approved with the consent agenda.

D. 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.

- c. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for New Professional Positions for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
 1. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology - Co-Op
 2. Special Education Coordinator

A motion was made by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the request for New Professional Positions for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year and the announcement of vacancy for a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology – Co-Op and a Special Education Coordinator. The motion passed unanimously.

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. Action: Review and act on the Memorandum of Understanding concerning mutual aid with the following:
 1. Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office
 2. Cameron County Sheriff's Office

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, approving the MOU concerning mutual aid with the Hidalgo County Sherriff's Office and the Cameron County Sheriff's Office. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Superintendent's Report on AI Integration and Expansion of Fine Arts Programs.

Dr. Tony Lara gave a report on plans for AI Integration and the expansion of the Fine Arts Program.

18. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on January 23, 2025 at 7:35 p.m. 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. 551.074, 551.071 Personnel Matters and consultation with school attorney regarding Personnel Matters: Closed Meeting
 - 1. Recommendation of professional staff for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.
 - a. Educational Diagnostician Co-Op
 - b. Teacher(s)
 - 2. Summative Evaluation of Superintendent's job performance.
 - a. STISD - Superintendent contract and fringe benefits
 - 3. Consultation with legal counsel to discuss recommendation to propose termination of the 2024-2026 Chapter 21 Term Contract of Administrator N.T. during the contract period for good cause.
 - a. Pursuant to Section 551.074 consider recommendation to propose termination of the 2024-2026 Chapter 21 Term Contract of Administrator N.T. during the contract period for good cause.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 10:04 p.m. Board Member, Sasha Crane, left the meeting during the Executive Session at 8:18 p.m. Sylvia S. Lopez left the meeting after the Executive Session. Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa left the meeting at 10:08 p.m.

19. 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 remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.
 - a. Educational Diagnostician Co-Op
 - b. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the retroactive employment of Kaila Yamel Martinez as Teacher (10 months), Maahrose R. Rana as Teacher (10 months), Andrew Robert William Hotchkiss as Teacher (10 months), and Abraham Ambriz as Teacher (10 months) for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year. In addition, he recommended the

employment of Rose Nelda Hernandez as Educational Diagnostician Co-Op (11 months) for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa approving the employment of professional staff as recommended. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Action: Review and act on Summative Evaluation of Superintendent's job performance.
 - a. Action: STISD - Superintendent contract and fringe benefits

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Zach Zamora, 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 \$15,000 (5.39%) with benefits to remain the same. The Board President shared congratulatory remarks to Dr. Tony Lara. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Consider and take possible action regarding recommendation to propose termination of the 2024-2026 Chapter 21 Term Contract of Administrator N.T. during the contract period for good cause.

A motion was made by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, seconded by David Suarez, authorizing legal counsel to resolve pending matters as discussed in executive session. The motion passed unanimously.

20. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Jaime Solis, adjourning the meeting at 11:09 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.