



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 February 18, 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
Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Andrea E. Gonzales-Loya	Raymondville
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Rodolfo "Rudy" Ramirez	Edinburg
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
David Suarez	Weslaco
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo
Sue Ann Villarreal	Raymondville
Zach Zamora	Mission

The following Board members were absent:

Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Oscar Salinas	Edinburg
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 Buelow
Chief Steven Cortez	Ramon Longoria
Frank Trevino	Carmen Noriega
Brenda De La Garza, Ed.D.	
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 and District Call to Action were led by David Briones.

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.

There was no recognition of students for this meeting.

- B. Recognition of Health Professions teacher for earning National Teacher Board Certification.

On behalf of the Board and Administration, Dr. Tony Lara recognized Diego Leal, Health Professions Teacher, for earning the National Teacher Board Certification.

- C. Recognition of South Texas ISD's Participation in the BuyBoard Program.

Melissa Rodriguez, with TASB Business Services, presented the district with a rebate check in the amount of \$62,300 for the district's participation in the BuyBoard Program.

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 David Briones, moving into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:18 p.m. and returned from Executive Session at 7:25 p.m.

- 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 David Briones, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

- 9. \*Action: Review and act on the January 23, 2025, Board Meeting minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Sue Ann Villarreal reported on the following items:

- A. \*Action: Review and act on the academic calendar for the 2025-2026 school year and legend.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. \*Action: Review and act on the proposed action to add one course offering for Science Academy.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. Report on Professional Development.

Efrain Garza, Deputy Superintendent, gave a report on Professional Development for the district.

#### 11. 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
  - 2. Athletic Fields
  - 3. 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. Report on the New Rising Scholars Academy.

David Monreal and Chris Garza were present and provided a report on the New Rising Scholars Academy.

- C. Action: Review and act on amending the 2024-2025 Capital Projects, adding the CTE Automotive Expansion at Science Academy and approving the architect of record, budget, and procurement method for the project.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by David Suarez, approving an amendment to the 2024-2025 Capital Projects, adding the CTE Automotive Expansion at Science Academy and approving Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. as the Architect of Record, a budget of two million dollars, and job order contracting as the procurement method for this project. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Dr. Noel 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(s):

1. Donation from the TASO Rio Grande Chapter Football in the amount of \$700 to Health Professions.
2. Donation of a Lynx Simulator valued at \$3,000 from the Students in Aviation Foundation to the South Texas ISD CTE.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. \*Action: Review and act on the proposed 2025-2026 budget calendar.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Action: Review and act on the following payment application(s):

1. Payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$70,200.00 for the New Rising Scholars Academy.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$70,200.00 for the New Rising Scholars Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment Application #2 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$9,207.44 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom project.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving payment application #2 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$9,207.44 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom project. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Payment Application #6 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$7,910.70 for the Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Robert Lerma, approving payment application #6 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$7,910.70 for the Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Payment Application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$64,836.75 for the Restrooms/Concessions at the Mercedes Athletic Fields.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$64,836.75 for the Restrooms/Concessions at the Mercedes Athletic Fields. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Payment application #5 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$603,976.87 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Robert Lerma, approving payment application #5 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$603,976.87 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Payment application #3 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$417,449.00 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #3 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$417,449.00 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Payment application #9 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$439,691.10 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving payment application #9 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$439,691.10 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):

1. Budget amendment #3 General Fund (199)
2. Budget amendment #1 Perkins V (244)
3. Budget amendment #1 IDEA B (313)
4. Budget amendment #1 Safe Grant Cycle 2 (429)
5. Budget amendment #1 CCMR (486)

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving the budget amendments as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Requisition #129533 to Aries Building Systems in the amount of \$273,018.00 for the purchase of two wet portables for Fine Arts.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving requisition #129533 to Aries Building Systems in the amount of \$273,018.00 for the purchase of two wet portables for Fine Arts. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Requisition #129547 to William Scotsman in the amount of \$215,949.56 for the purchase of a portable building to be used for Special Education classrooms.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving requisition #129547 to William Scotsman in the amount of \$215,949.56 for the purchase of a portable building to be used for Special Education classrooms. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Action: Review and act on the following Request for Proposals (RFP):

1. RFP 26-003 Property, Liability, and Auto Insurance

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving RFP 26-003 Property, Liability, and Auto Insurance for HUB International, and include Option #2. The motion passed unanimously.

2. RFP 26-004 CTE Instructional Materials, Assessment, and Supplies
3. RFP 26-005 Bus and Auto Supplies, Parts, and Repairs
4. RFP 26-008 General Maintenance, Building, Grounds, Services, Equipment & Supplies

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving RFP 26-004 CTE Instructional Materials, Assessment, and Supplies; RFP 26-005 Bus and Auto Supplies, Parts, and Repairs; and RFP 26-008 General Maintenance, Building, Grounds, Services, Equipment & Supplies as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

5. RFP 26-007 Health Insurance Consultant

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving RFP 26-007 Health Insurance Consultant for Valley Risk Consulting, Inc. The motion passed unanimously.

I. Action: Review and act on the following Request for Qualifications (RFQ):

1. RFQ 26-002 Real Estate Broker Services

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving RFQ 26-002 and authorizing the Superintendent or designee to work with the firms listed on the RFQ. The motion passed unanimously.

2. RFQ 26-006 Independent Auditors

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving RFQ 26-006 for Burton, McCumber, & Longoria, LLP. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Robert Lerma reported on the following item:

- A. Action: Review and act on Policy Update 124.

A motion was made by Robert Lerma, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving Policy Update 124. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Zach Zamora reported on the following item:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

Dr. Rick Villarreal left the meeting at 8:00 p.m. and Mr. Robert Lerma left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. \*Action: Review and act on request from the City of Mercedes for the non-school use of facilities.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. \*Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
  - 1. National Science Bowl, April 23-28, 2025 in Washington, D.C.
  - 2. 2025 HOSA International Leadership Conference, June 16-22, 2025, in Nashville, TN.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. \*Action: Review and act on the following Board travel:
  - 1. TASB Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), June 11-14, 2025, in San Antonio, TX.
  - 2. TASB Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), June 18-21, 2025, in Fort Worth, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. District Reports
  - 1. Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
    - a. \*Report on staff ethnicity, gender and degree status.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- b. \*Report on resignations and retirements of professional staff.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- c. \*Report on professional vacancies.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- d. Report on the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).

Lissa Frausto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources reported on the Teacher Incentive Allotment.

- e. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for New Professional Position(s) for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
        - 1. Visually Impaired Teacher Co-Op

The Board announced a discrepancy on the agenda language posted. The position is for the 2025-2026 school year. A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by David Briones, approving

the request for a Visually Impaired Teacher Co-Op for the 2025-2026 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- b. Report on Student Support Services.

Vanessa Rivera, CTE Director, provided an update on Student Support Services.

3. Executive Director for Special Programs
  - a. Report on Special Programs.

Dr. Brenda De La Garza, Executive Director for Special Programs, 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 Police
  - a. Report on World Scholars Courts in Schools.

Chief Steven Cortez gave a report on plans to host Courts in Schools at World Scholars.

- F. Report from E. Larry Cantu on the 2025 TASB Texas Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC.

Mr. E. Larry Cantu gave a report on their attendance to 2025 TASB Texas Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC.

- G. Report on Legislative Updates.

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent gave an update on the legislative session and plans for the STISD Day at the Capitol.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on February 18, 2025 at 7:18 p.m. in a closed or executive session as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Section, 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.082, 551.084 and 551.001. The Board**

**Secretary, E. Larry Cantu 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. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Co-Op
    - b. Special Education Coordinator
  - 2. Pursuant to Texas Government Code 551.071 and 551.074 discussion regarding Resignation and Release Agreement.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 7:25 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 remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.
    - a. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Co-Op
    - b. Special Education Coordinator

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Sandra Luna as Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Co-Op (11 months) and Eleni Basiliki Danelis as Special Education Coordinator (12 months) for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Rudy Ramirez approving the employment of professional staff as recommended. The motion passed unanimously.

18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Rudy Ramirez, seconded by Doug Buchanan, adjourning the meeting at 8:53 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.