



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 March 25, 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 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
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
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
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo
Sue Ann Villarreal	Raymondville

The following Board members were absent:

Sasha Crane	McAllen
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
Ruth Villarreal	Mission
Zach Zamora	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
Amanda Odom	
Marcos Flores	
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.

On behalf of the Board and Administration, Amanda Odom recognized the following athletic achievements:

- Health Professions Girls Basketball Team for placing 2nd in the State.
- Science Academy Boys Basketball Team for competing at the State level.
- Preparatory Academy Cross Country MSP Girls for earning 2nd Place at Regionals and 2nd Place at State.
- Preparatory Academy Cross Country MSP Boys for being Regional Champions and placing 2nd in State.
- Rising Scholars Cross Country MSP Girls for being Regional Champions and placing 6th in State.
- Rising Scholars Cross Country MSP Boys for placing 3rd at Regionals and 7th in State.
- Medical Professions Varsity Girls Cross Country Team for being Regional Champions and placing 3rd in State.
- Health Professions Varsity Boys Cross Country Team for being Regional Runner-Up and placing 8th in State.
- Science Academy Varsity Boys Cross Country Team for being Regional Champions and placing 9th in State.

The Board President also extended congratulations to all the students, coaches, staff, and parents for their hard work and accomplishments.

The Board President made a recommendation moving Executive Session as the next item to be addressed. A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, moving into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:23 p.m. and returned from Executive Session at 8:25 p.m. Dr. Sandra Ochoa left the meeting at 8:27 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 Jaime Solis, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

9. *Action: Review and act on the February 18, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

David Briones reported on the following items:

- A. Report on the Fine Arts Pathway in Music.

Jose Lucio, Principal for Medical Professions, reported on the Fine Arts Pathway in Music.

- B. Action: Review and act on proposed course offerings for the AP Capstone Diploma Program at Science Academy.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by David Briones, approving the proposed course offerings for the AP Capstone Diploma Program at Science Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on a proposed course addition for Middle School Music.

A motion was made E. Larry Cantu, seconded by David Briones, approving the course addition for Middle School Music. The motion passed unanimously.

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
 4. CTE Automtotive Expansion

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

- B. Action: Review and act on approving an amendment to the contract with Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the CTE Expansion project at Science Academy and authorize the Board President to execute the amendment.

A motion was made by David Suarez, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the amendment to the contract with Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the CTE Expansion project at Science Academy and authorize the Board President to execute the amendment. 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. *Report on the 2024-2025 second quarter student activity accounts.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on approving the following donations:

1. Donation from Osmin Vargas Family Clinic PLLC in the amount of \$1,000.00 to the Health Professions PASF Club.
2. Donation from Sombrero Festival in the amount of \$3,000.00 to the Medical Professions 2025 Senior Class (\$1,500) and Medical Professions HOSA Club (\$1,500).
3. Donation from STISD PTSO to Medical Professions in the amount of \$1,205.00 to the 2025 Senior Class for prom expenses.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. Action: Review and act on amending the authorized bank signers for the District's Non-Operating, General Fund, Payroll and Debt Services bank accounts.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Doug Buchanan, amending the authorized bank signers for the District's Non-Operating, General Fund, Payroll and Debt Services bank accounts. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Payment application #4 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$582,758.50 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving payment application #4 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$582,758.50 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Payment application #7 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$11,647.64 for the Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, approving payment application #7 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$11,647.64 for the Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$28,491.24 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom project.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, approving payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$28,491.24 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom project. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Payment application #6 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$203,985.37 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by David Briones, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, approving payment application #6 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$203,985.37 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Payment application #10 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$830,478.42 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Eduardo Rodriguez, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #10 to Gerlach Builders, LLC in the amount of \$830,478.42 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Payment application #3 to Telepro Communications in the amount of \$2,038,957.12 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom project.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving payment application #3 to Telepro Communications in the amount of \$2,038,957.12 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom project. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Payment application #13 to The Warren Group Architects, Inc. in the amount of \$20,889.40 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Eduardo Rodriguez, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #13 to The Warren Group Architects, Inc. in the amount of \$20,889.40 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Budget amendment #4 General Fund (199)

A motion was made by Doug Buahanan, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving budget amendment #4 General Fund (199). The motion passed unanimously.

2. Budget amendment #2 Child Nutrition (240)
3. Budget amendment #1 Child Nutrition (242)

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving budget amendment #2 Child Nutrition (240) and budget amendment #1 Child Nutrition (242). The motion passed unanimously.

H. Action: Review and act on approving a contract with Keller Williams RGV for real estate services, and authorize the Board President to execute the contract.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, approving a contract with Keller Williams RGV for real estate services, and authorize the Board President to execute the contract. The motion passed unanimously.

I. Action: Review and act on approving the contract with Valley Risk Consulting, Inc. for medical consulting, and authorize the Board President to execute the contract.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, approving the contract with Valley Risk Consulting, Inc. for medical consulting, and authorize the Board President to execute the contract. The motion passed with one abstention (Oscar Salinas).

J. Action: Review and act on approving a Teacher Stipend for the District Curriculum Design and Enhancement.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, approving a Teacher Stipend for the District Curriculum Design and Enhancement. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Members Adrian Garcia and Sylvia S. Lopez left the meeting at 9:13 p.m.

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

Abiel J. Cantú reported on the following items:

- A. *Action: Review and act on the Memorandum of Understanding related to the Hidalgo County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program for the 2025-2026 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Report on the STISD Policy (LOCAL) Audit.

Efrain Garza, Deputy Superintendent reported on the recent STISD Policy (LOCAL) Audit conducted by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB).

- C. Action: Review and act on the amendment to the STISD District of Innovation Plan: Resignations Under Probationary or Term Contracts.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, approving the amendment to the STISD District of Innovation Plan: Resignations Under Probationary or Term Contracts. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- 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 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 the following out of district student/staff travel:

1. #HouseOfCode Congressional App Challenge, April 8-9, 2025, in Washington, D.C.
2. Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair, May 10-16, 2025, in Columbus, OH.

Approved with the consent agenda.

C. *Action: Review and act on the following Board travel:

1. Region One School Board Association (ROSBA) Conference, May 16-17, 2025, South Padre Island, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

D. District Reports

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- b. *Report on professional vacancies.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- c. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for New Professional and Non-Professional positions and the Announcement of Vacancies for the following:
 1. Professional positions for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year:
 1. Captain (1)
 2. Non-Professional positions for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year:
 1. Secretary to Chief of Police (1)
 3. Professional positions for the 2025-2026 school year:
 1. Police Officer (8)
 2. Teachers (8)
 3. Licenced Specialist in School Psychology (1)
 4. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern (1) Grant-funded
 4. Non-Professional positions for the 2025-2026 school year:
 1. Classroom Aide (2)
 2. Groundskeepers (6)
 3. Bus Driver/Custodians (6)

A motion was made by Dr. Rick Villarreal, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving the request for New Professional and Non-Professional positions and Announcement of Vacancies, as presented. 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.

Marco Flores, Executive Director for Student Support, 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 an update on Special Programs.

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

Dr. Brenda De La Garza, provided an update on the South Texas Tri-County Special Education Co-Op.

4. Chief of Police
 - a. Report on Districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Findings.

Chief Steven Cortez provided a report on the recent districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Findings.

- E. Report on the 2025 STISD Day at the Capitol.

Dr. Tony Lara provided the Board with a recap of the 2025 STISD Day at the Capitol. Eduardo Rodriguez and E. Larry Cantu also shared highlights from their time, including their gratitude to the State Senators and Representatives they were able to meet with.

- F. Action: Cast votes for Place 3 and Place 6 of the Region One ESC Board of Directors.

A motion was made Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Eduardo E. Rodriguez, casting votes for Laura A. McCoy (Place 3: Webb County) and Antonio G. Limon (Place 6: Cameron County). The motion passed with two against (E. Larry Cantu and Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza).

- G. Action: Review and approve the nomination of Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza to the Region 1, Position B seat on the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Board of Directors.

A motion was made by Eduardo Rodriguez, seconded by Doug Buchanan, nominating Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza to the Region 1, Position B seat on the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Board of Directors. The motion passed with one abstention (Dr. Sylvia Sanchez Garza).

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on March 25, 2025 at 7:23 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
 - 1. Recommendation of professional staff for the 2025-2026 school year.
 - a. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern (Grant-funded)
 - b. Teacher(s)
- B. 551.071 Consultation with Attorney
 - 1. Marcolfa M. v. South Texas ISD
- C. 551.076 Security
 - 1. Discussion and consideration regarding Districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Findings.
- D. 551.072 Real Property
 - 1. Deliberation regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:25 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 2025-2026 school year.
 - a. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern (Grant-funded)
 - b. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Rocio Anahi Cortez as Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern, Grant-funded (11 months) and Norma Rico as Teacher (10 months) for the 2025-2026 school year.

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

B. Consideration and possible action on Marcolfa M. v. South Texas ISD.

A motion was made by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, seconded by Doug Buchanan, accepting the recommendation as discussed in executive session. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Consideration and possible action regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.

No action taken.

18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Eduardo Rodriguez, adjourning the meeting at 9:48 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.