



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 May 20, 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
Abiel J. Cantú	Raymondville
Eduardo L. “Larry” Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Oscar Salinas	Edinburg
Jaime R. Solis	Edinburg
David Suarez	Weslaco
Rick Villarreal, DDS	Rancho Viejo
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

Sue Ann Villarreal

Raymondville

The following Board members were absent:

Andrea E. Gonzales-Loya	Raymondville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Rodolfo "Rudy" Ramirez	Edinburg
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Zach Zamora	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Sandra Torres
Efrain Garza	Vanessa Rivera
Lissa Frausto	Mathew Maciel
Marla Knaub	Ramon Longoria
Chief Steven Cortez	Carmen Noriega
Frank Trevino	
Amanda Odom	
Marcos Flores	
Brenda De La Garza, Ed.D.	
Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.	
Jose Lucio	
Marco Zamora	
Cynthia Chairez, Ed.D.	

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges and District Call to Action were led by Eduardo R. Rodriguez.

4. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence, remembering the Isa Ochoa and the Ochoa family.

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, Amanda Odom recognized the following teams:

- RSA Girls Soccer Team, State Champions
- RSA Tennis Girls Doubles, State Champions
- RSA Tennis Girls Doubles, State Runner-Up
- RSA Tennis Boys Doubles, State Runner-Up
- Medical Professions Tennis, 3rd Place State Finalist
- Health Professions Tennis Co-ed Doubles, 4th Place State
- Preparatory Academy Tennis Girls Doubles, 3rd Place State

B. Recognition of all 2025 STISD Campus Teachers of the Year for their contributions to student success at their individual campuses and across STISD.

On behalf of the Board and Administration, Amanda Odom recognized the following Teachers for being named 2025 Campus Teacher of the Year:

- Health Professions - Ariel Nieto
- Medical Professions - Anabel Aldrete
- Preparatory Academy - Arnold Cortez
- Rising Scholars Academy - Delia Guzman
- Science Academy - Nelly Houston
- Virtual Academy - Edward Cellar (did not attend the meeting)
- World Scholars - Shyanne Diaz

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 E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

9. *Action: Review and act on the April 22, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

10. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee - Sylvia S. Lopez and Andrea E. Gonzales Loya, Co-Chairs

David Briones reported on the following committee items:

- A. Report on the 2024 District and Campus A-F Accountability Ratings.

Efrain Garza, Deputy Superintendent, reported on the 2024 District and Campus A-F Accountanility Ratings.

- B. Action: Review and Act on Waiver for Professional Development for the 2025-2026 school year.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, approving the Waiver for Professional Development for the 2025-2026 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

- 11. Buildings and Grounds Committee - Rick Villarreal, D.D.S., and David Suarez, Co-Chairs

Dr. Rick Villarreal 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 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, were present and provided the Board with an update on the Athletic Fields projects, Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom System, and the CTE Automotive Expasion projects.

- B. Action: Review and act on the partial substantial completion of the Health Professions Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Dr. Rick Villarreal seconded by Adrian Garcia, approving the partial substantial completion of the Health Professions Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on expanding the 2024-2025 Capital Projects to include the new Special Programs facility, and the new Maintenance Facility; and approving Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc as the architect of record for the projects.

A motion was made by Dr. Rick Villarreal, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, expanding the 2024-2025 Capital Projects to include the new Special Programs facility, and the new Maintenance Facility; and approving Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc as the architect of record for the projects. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Finance & Operations Committee - Doug E. Buchanan and Adrian Garcia, Co-Chairs

Doug Buchanan 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 a Teacher Stipend for the District Curriculum Design and Enhancement.

A motion was made by Robert Lerma, seconded Doug Buchanan, approving the Teacher Stipend for the District Curriculum Design and Enhancement. The motion passed unanimously.

- D. Action: Review and act on either extending the RFQ for legal services, or to advertise for Request for Qualifications for Legal Services.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, advertising for Request for Qualifications for Legal Services. The motion passed with four against (Sasha Crane, Dr. Noel Garza, Yolanda Kamel, and Oscar Salinas).

- E. Action: Review and act on extending the following Request for Proposals (RFPs):

1. RFP 24-005 Bus & Auto Parts
2. RFP 24-006 Mats & Linens
3. RFP 24-007 Tow Truck Services
4. RFP 24-008 Maintenance & Building Repairs Services
5. RFP 24-009 Building Materials
6. RFP 24-010 Instructional Materials
7. RFP 25-003 Awards, Incentives, Printed Materials
8. RFP 25-004 Document Imaging, Shredding, & Retention Services
9. RFP 25-005 Travel Agent and Charter Bus Services
10. RFP 25-006 Special Education Contracted Services
11. RFP 25-007 Contracted Professional Development Services
12. RFP 25-008 Hazardous Waste & Chemical Surplus Disposal
13. RFP 25-009 Career and Technical Education, Instructional Material, Assessment, and Supplies

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving the Request for Proposals as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- F. Action: Review and act on rejecting RFP# 26-010 Pharmacy Benefit Management as presented by Valley Risk.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Doug Buchanan, rejecting RFP# 26-010 Pharmacy Benefit Management as presented by Valley Risk. The motion passed with one abstention (Jaime Solis).

- G. Action: Review and act on approving RFP 26-009 Group Health Insurance with Pharmacy option as presented by Valley Risk.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, approving RFP 26-009 Group Health Insurance with Pharmacy option as presented by Valley Risk. The motion passed with two abstentions (Yolanda Kamel and Jaime Solis) and two against (Oscar Salinas and Ruth Villarreal).

- H. Action: Review and act on awarding RFP# 26-011 Stop Loss as presented by Valley Risk.

A motion was made by Adrian Garcia, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, awarding RFP# 26-011 Stop Loss as presented by Valley Risk. The motion passed with four abstentions (Sasha Crane, Oscar Salinas, Jaime Solis, and Yolanda Kamel) and one against (Ruth Villarreal).

- I. Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
 - 1. Payment application #12 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$189,196.09 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, approving payment application #12 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$189,196.09 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

- 2. Payment application #15 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$6,316.80 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #15 to The Warren Group in the amount of \$6,316.80 for the Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Payment application #9 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$5,937.01 for the Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, approving payment application #9 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$5,937.01 for the Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Payment application #8 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$337,514.80 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by David Suarez, approving payment application #8 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$337,514.80 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Payment application #6 to Holchemont, LTD, in the amount of \$117,064.42 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Jaime Solis, payment application #6 to Holchemont, LTD, in the amount of \$117,064.42 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$3,674.08 for the Restrooms/Concessions at the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #3 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$3,674.08 for the Restrooms/Concessions at the Mercedes Athletic Fields project. The motion passed with one against (Dr. Noel Garza).

7. Payment application #5 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$115,055.55 for the Audio/Video Intercom project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving payment application #5 to TelePro Communications in the amount of \$115,055.55 for the Audio/Video Intercom project. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Payment application #5 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$1,700.97 for the Medical Professions Audio/Visual Intercom System.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving payment application #5 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$1,700.97 for the Medical Professions Audio/Visual Intercom System. The motion passed unanimously.

J. Action: Review and act on the following change orders:

1. Change order #3 to the contract due to rain for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving change order #3 to the contract due to rain for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Change order #1 to the contract for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving change order #1 to the contract for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project. The motion passed unanimously.

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

1. Budget Amendment #1 Title I Part A (211)
2. Budget Amendment #1 Title I Part C Migrant (212)
3. Budget Amendment #1 Title II Part A (255)
4. Budget Amendment #1 Title III Part A – ELA (263)
5. Budget Amendment #1 Title IV Part A – SSAEP (289)
6. Budget Amendment #1 Special Education Cooperative Amendment (437)

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the budget amendments as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee - Eduardo R. Rodriguez and Oscar Salinas, Co-Chairs

Oscar Salinas reported on the following items:

- A. Action: Review and act on revisions to Policy resulting from TASB Policy Audit.

A motion was made by Oscar Salinas, seconded Doug Buchanan, approving revisions to Policy resulting from TASB Policy Audit. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Community & Governmental Relations Committee - Yolanda Kamel and Ruth Villarreal, 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 - E. Gutierrez

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
 1. IACP 2025 International Association of Chiefs of Police, October 18-21, in Denver, CO.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. 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. *Report on local certification through the District of Innovation Plan.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- d. Report on the 2024-2025 Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) Designations.

Lissa Frausto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, reported on the 2024-2025 Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) Designations.

- e. Action: Review and act on approving the T-TESS Appraisal Calendar for the 2025-2026 school year.

A motion was made by Robert Lerma, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the T-TESS Appraisal Calendar for the 2025-2026 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

- f. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for New Professional Position(s) for the 2025-2026 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:

1. Professional positions for the 2025-2026 school year:
 1. Assistant Principals (3)
 2. Counselor (1)
 3. Teachers (8)
2. Non-professional positions for the 2025-2026 school year:
 1. Custodians (12)

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, approving the request for New Professional Position(s) for the 2025-2026 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for Assistant Principals (3), Counselor (1), Teachers(8), and Custodians (2). 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.

Marcos Flores, Executive Director for Student Support, provided a report 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 a report on Special Programs.

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

Dr. Brenda De La Garza gave a report on the South Texas Tri-County Special Education Co-Op.

4. Chief of Police
 - a. Report on Safety and Security.

Steven Cortez, Chief of Police, provided an update on Safety and Security.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on May 20, 2025 at 8:32 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. 551.071 and 551.074, Personnel Matters and consultation with school attorney regarding Personnel Matters: Closed Meeting
 - 1. Recommendation of professional staff for the 2025-2026 school year.
 - a. Chief Academic Officer
 - b. Dean of Instruction
 - c. Educational Diagnostician Co-Op
 - d. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
 - e. Instructional Technology Specialist
 - f. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern (UTRGV only)
 - g. Special Education Instructional Specialist Co-Op
 - h. Speech Language Pathologist Co-Op
 - i. Teacher Incentive Allotment Coordinator
 - j. School Nurse
 - k. Counselor
 - l. Teacher(s)
- B. 551.076 Security
 - 1. Discussion and consideration regarding the TEA District Vulnerability Assessment.
- C. 551.072 Real Property
 - 1. Deliberation regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.
 - a. Report on the purchase of approximately 62.5 acres located in San Benito, Texas, 78586, and authorize the Superintendent to complete the transaction, including tendering the purchase price for the property, and executing the closing documents and all other documents necessary to effect the purchase.
- D. Sections 551.071, 551.074 and 551.0821, Consultation with attorney
 - 1. Consultation with legal counsel regarding pending or threatened litigation.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 9:01 p.m.

Yolanda Kamel, Ruth Villarreal, and Robert Lerma left the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

17. OPEN SESSION: Action on any Item Deliberated in Closed Meeting

A motion was made by Henry LeVrier, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, to reconsider item 9. Approval of Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving the minutes as discussed in executive session. The motion passed unanimously.

- A. 551.071 and 551.074, 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. Chief Academic Officer
 - b. Dean of Instruction
 - c. Educational Diagnostician Co-Op
 - d. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
 - e. Instructional Technology Specialist
 - f. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern (UTRGV only)
 - g. Special Education Instructional Specialist Co-Op
 - h. Speech Language Pathologist Co-Op
 - i. Teacher Incentive Allotment Coordinator
 - j. School Nurse
 - k. Counselor
 - l. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Rose Nelda Hernandez as Educational Diagnostician Co-op (11 months), Christian Paul Saavedra as Teacher (10 months), Janie Hidalgo as Teacher (10 months), Patrick Zapien as Teacher (10 months), Michael Edward Galvan as Teacher (10 months), Eduardo Garcia as Teacher (10 months), Jenise Lynette Fuerte-Luna as Dean of Instruction (12 months), Michelle Davies as School Nurse (11 months), Gloria Elizabeth Valdez as Teacher (10 months), Margeaux Ailie De La Rosa as Teacher (10 months), Sandra Esparza as Teacher (10 months), Richard De La Riva as Teacher (10 months), Victor Quenton Hernandez as Teacher (10 months), Tracy Anne Belew Cadena as Teacher (10 months), Juan Gabriel Recio Jr. as teacher (10 months), George Ives Soto as Teacher (10 months), Alejandro Ysquierdo Jr. as Teacher (10 months), Vanessa Jacqueline Sanchez as Teacher (10 months), Baldomero Ramos as Teacher (10 months), Kenevie S. Bryan-Solis as Teacher (10 months), Belen Itzel Sanchez as Dean of Instruction (12 months), Imelda Anabel Mora as Dean of Instruction (12 months), Janet Marie Ortega as Teacher (10 months), Sophia L. Artiaga as Teacher (10 months), Denise Davila as Teacher (10 months), Amelinda Antonia Reyes as teacher (10 months), Ryan Dakota Trevino as teacher (10 months), Margot Salas Watson as Counselor (11 months), and Maribel L. Rodriguez as Teacher Incentive Allotment Coordinator (12 months).

- B. Discussion, consideration, and possible action on the purchase of approximately 62.5 acres located in San Benito, Texas, 78586, and authorize the Superintendent to complete the transaction, including tendering the purchase price for the property, and executing the closing documents and all other documents necessary to effect the purchase.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving the purchase of approximately 62.5 acres located in San Benito, Texas, 78586, and authorize the Superintendent to complete the transaction, including tendering the purchase price for the property, and executing the closing documents and all other documents necessary to effect the purchase. The motion passed with one abstention (Oscar Salinas).

18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, adjourning the meeting at 9:29 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.