



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 August 5, 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
Eduardo L. “Larry” Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Andrea E. Gonzales-Loya	Raymondville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
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:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Sylvia S. Lopez	Brownsville
Ruth Villarreal	Mission
Zach Zamora	Mission

The following staff members were present:

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.	Ramon Longoria
Efrain Garza	Jaclyn Buelow
Amanda Odom	Carmen Noriega
Marla Knaub	
Chief Steven Cortez	
Frank Trevino	
Marcos Flores	
Brenda De La Garza, Ed.D.	
Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ed.D.	
Jose Lucio	
Marco Zamora	
Cynthia Chairez, Ed.D.	
Eric Gutierrez	
Michele Guajardo, Ph.D.	

3. Pledges of Allegiance & District Call to Action.

The pledges and District Call to Action were led by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa

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, Amanda Odom recognized Health Professions graduate Ben Morocho for making history as the first STISD student athlete to sign a Division I athletic scholarship.

- B. Swearing in of STISD's Captain of the Police Department and Police Officers.

Chief Steven Cortez, swore in STISD's Captain and eight officers to the South Texas Police Department.

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 Educardo Rodriguez, approving the consent agenda. The motion was passed unanimously.

- 9. *Action: Review and act on the June 17, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

Andrea E. Gonzales Loya presented on the following items:

- A. *Action: Review and act on the 2025-2026 STISD Student Code of Conduct.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Report on 2025 Advanced Placement scores.

Efrain Garza, Deputy Superintendent reported on the 2025 AP scores.

- C. Report on the 2025-2026 Schedule of Formal Grade Reporting.

Efrain Garza reported on the 2025-2026 Schedule of Formal Grade Reporting.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Action: Review and act on the contract with Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the 2024-2025 Capital Projects.

A motion was made by Dr. Rick Villarreal, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving the contract with Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the 2024-2025 Capital Projects. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on approving the Substantial Completion of Health Professions Gymnasium project.

A motion was made by Dr. Rick Villarreal, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving the Substantial Completion of Health Professions Gymnasium project. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Dr. Noel 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 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.

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on approving 13 paychecks for new employees.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. *Action: Review and act on the bank resolution to update the campus bank signatures for Virtual Academy.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- G. *Action: Review and act on 2025-2026 school lunch and breakfast prices.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

1. Payment application #15 to The Warren Group, in the amount of \$7,172.20 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.
2. Payment application #7 to TelePro Communications, in the amount of \$177,811.88 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom project.
3. Payment application #8 to Holchemont, LTD, in the amount of \$161,284.64 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.
4. Payment application #10 to Gerlach Builders, in the amount of \$332,866.07 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.
5. Payment application #14 to Gerlach Builders, in the amount of \$1,548.00 for the New Health Professions Gymnasium project.
6. Payment application #11 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$6,596.24 for the Athletic Fields project.
7. Payment application #7 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$2,551.46 for the Audio/Video Intercom project.
8. Payment application #5 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$4,538.56 for the Restrooms/Concessions at the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.
9. Payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$18,900.00 for the Medical Professions Portable.

10. Payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc., in the amount of \$26,600.00 for the Edinburg Portable project.
11. Payment application #1 to Herrcon, in the amount of \$80,320.68 for the Science Academy CTE Expansion project.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- I. Action: Review and act on Resolution extending the district's bank depository with Plains Capital Bank for 2025-2027 biennium.

A motion was made by Rudy Ramirez, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving a Resolution extending the district's bank depository with Plains Capital Bank for 2025-2027 biennium. The motion passed unanimously.

- J. Report on the proposed preliminary general fund budget.

Marla Knaub, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations provided a report on the proposed preliminary general fund budget.

- K. Action: Review and act on approving the 2025-2026 Compensation Plan.

The Board held a Compensation Plan Workshop prior to the Board meeting to review options for the 2025-2026 Compensation Plan. A motion was made by Dr. Rick Villarreal, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the 2025-2026 Compensation Plan (to include a 4% salary increase from the midpoint for all eligible employees). The motion passed unanimously.

- L. Action: Review and act on the 2025-2026 Stipends.

A motion was made by E. Larry Cantu, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, approving the 2025-2026 Stipends. The motion passed unanimously.

- M. Action: Review and act on setting a date for a public meeting to discuss the 2025-2026 budget and proposed tax rate to be published on the notice of the public hearing.

A motion was made by Rudy Ramirez, seconded by Jaime Solis, setting the date of August 26, 2025 for the Public Hearing to discuss the 2025-2026 Budget and Proposed Tax Rate to be published on the notice of the public hearing. The motion passed unanimously.

- N. Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 1. General Fund (199) #7
 2. MacKenzie Scott (485) #1

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving budget amendments: General Fund (199) #7 and MacKenzie Scott (485) #1. The motion passed unanimously.

- O. Action: Review and act on Request for Proposals:
 - 1. RFP 26-030 Special Event Production, Rental Equipment, and Related Items
 - 2. RFP 26-031 College Readiness Support Services, Dual Enrollment Materials, Textbooks and Testing
 - 3. RFP 26-032 Video Productions Photography Services
 - 4. RFP 26-035 Ground Services & Items

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by David Briones, approving the Request for Proposals as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- P. Action: Review and act on Requisition #133844 to Thomas Bus in the amount of \$479,600 for the purchase of two activity buses.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving requisition #133844 to Thomas Bus in the amount of \$479,600 for the purchase of two activity buses. The motion passed unanimously.

- Q. Action: Review and act on allotting COVID leave for employees.

A motion was made by Dr. Noel Garza, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, tabling this item to the next Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Eduardo R. Rodriguez reported on the following items:

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Action: Review and act on Policy Update 125.

A motion was made by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving Policy Update 125. The motion passed unanimously.

- C. Action: Review and act on changes to Policy as per Legislative Updates.

A motion was made by Eduardo R. Rodriguez, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú, approving changes to Policy as per Legislative Updates. 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.

- B. *Action: Discussion and possible action to consider and approve the Superintendent's recommendation regarding designation of remaining nonbusiness Public Information Act days for Public Information Act requests during calendar year 2025.

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. 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. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for New Professional and Non-Professional Position(s) for the 2025-2026 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
 - 1. Professional:
 - 1. Virtual Instructional Strategist (1)
 - 2. Non-Professional:
 - 1. Child Nutrition Worker (2)
 - 2. Bilingual/ESL Program Secretary (1)
 - 3. Attendance Clerk (1)

A motion was made by Dr. Rick Villarreal, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the request for New Professional and Non-Professional Position(s) for the 2025-2026 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for Virtual Instructional Strategist (1), Child Nutrition Worker (2), Bilingual/ESL Program Secretary (1), and Attendance Clerk (1). The motion passed with one abstention (Andrea E. Gonzales Loya).

- e. Action: Review and act on the appointment of Teacher Appraisers for the 2025-2026 school year.

A motion was made by Rudy Ramirez, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving the appointment of Teacher Appraisers for the 2025-2026 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

- 2. Executive Director for Student Support
 - a. Action: Review and act on approving the 2025-2026 Physician's Standing Orders.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantu, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the 2025-2026 Physician's Standing Orders. The motion passed with one abstention (Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa).

- 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 the Special Programs department.

- 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. Update on the South Texas ISD Police Department.

Chief Steven Cortez provided an update on the South Texas ISD Police Department.

- C. *Action: Review and act on the following staff travel:
 1. 2025 Advancing School Mental Health Conference, December 2-4, 2025, in Orlando, FL.

Approved with the consent agenda.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on August 5, 2025 at 8:19 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 2025-2025 school year.
 - a. Educational Diagnostician Co-Op
 - b. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
 - c. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (UTRGV)
 - d. Social Worker
 - e. Special Education Counselor Lead
 - f. Teacher(s)
- B. 551.072 Real Property
 1. Discussion and consultation with attorney regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:33 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. Educational Diagnostician Co-Op
 - b. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
 - c. Licensed Specialist in School Psychology Intern (UTRGV)
 - d. Social Worker
 - e. Special Education Counselor Lead

f. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Alvaro Marquez, Jr. as Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (11 months); Annabel Munoz Uribe as Special Education Counselor Lead (11 months); Kimberly Garcia as Teacher (10 months); Bobby Garza, Jr. as Teacher (10 months); Michael Anthony Bowman as Teacher (10 months); Juan Antonio Vazquez, Jr. as Teacher (10 months); Steven Vela as Teacher (10 months); Alexa Marhie Gonzalez as Teacher (10 months); Erick Castillo as Teacher (10 months); Dafne Astrid Carapia as Teacher (10 months); Daniella Nayellie Reyes as Teacher (10 months); Alma D. Ramirez as Educational Diagnostician (11 months); Veronica Barba as Teacher; Raul Rodolfo Rodriguez as Teacher (10 months); Ruben Colorado as Teacher (10 months); Juan Benavides III as Teacher (10 months); and Jacob Lee Borjas as Teacher (10 months).

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, approving the recommendation of professional staff as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Abiel J. Cantú, seconded by Rudy Ramirez, adjourning the meeting at 8:33. The motion passed unanimously.