



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 October 28, 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
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Andrea E. Gonzales Loya	Raymondville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
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:

Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
Oscar Salinas	Edinburg
Ruth Villarreal	Mission

The following staff members were present:

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

3. Pledges of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Michel Bowman, Teacher at Rising Scholars Academy.

4. District Call to Action

The District Call to Action was led by Abiel J. Cantú.

5. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence and remembering Science Academy Colin Richard Donald Feltis, and keeping his family in prayers.

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.

Health Professions' conjunto group Grupo Mestenos performed for the Board and members of the public.

- B. Recognition of the district and campuses for ranking among the best in the state and nation in the Niche Best Schools Rankings for the twelfth year in a row.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Amanda Odom recognized the campus communities and district community for ranking among the best in the state and nation for the 12th consecutive year in the Niche Best Schools Rankings.

- C. Recognition of principals in honor of Principals' Month.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, campus principals were recognized and presented with tokens of appreciation in honor of Principals' Month. The Board President shared remarks of gratitude to the Principals for their hard work and dedication.

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 E. Larry Cantu, seconded by David Briones, approving the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

10. *Action: Review and act on the September 23, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

11. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee — David Briones and Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D., Co-Chairs

David Briones reported on the following item:

- A. Report on the Bilingual ESL Program Evaluation for 2024-2025.

Niranda Flores, Executive Director for Academic Excellence provided a report on the Bilingual ESL Program Evaluation for 2024-2025.

12. Buildings and Grounds Committee — Jaime Solis and Margarita Garcia, Co-Chairs

Jaime Solis reported on the following items:

- A. *Report on the following projects:
 - 1. Athletic Fields project
 - 2. Science Academy CTE Expansion project

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on the substantial completion of the the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. Action: Review and act on the contract with Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the 2025-2026 Capital Projects.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, approving the contract with Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. for the 2025-2026 Capital Projects. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Finance & Operations Committee — Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D. and Rudy Ramirez, 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 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 changes to the bank signers for World Scholars and Medical Professions.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. *Action: Review and act on approving the following donations:
 1. Donation from Global Viewer Enterprise (GVE) of a monitor for the AV Network valued in the amount of \$7,775.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- G. *Action: Review and act on the following payment applications:
 1. Payment application #14 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$28,882.27 for the Athletic Fields project.
 2. Payment application #13 to Gerlach Builders, LLC. in the amount of \$324,790.95 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.
 3. Payment application #11 to Holchemont, LTD. in the amount of \$150,861.90 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.
 4. Payment application #8 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$1,080.62 for the Restrooms/Concessions at the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.
 5. Payment application #4 to Herrcon in the amount of \$113,145.00 for the Science Academy CTE Expansion project.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- H. *Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
 1. General Fund (199) #1
 2. ESSA Title I Part A (211)
 3. Title 1 Part C Migrant (212)
 4. Title II Part A (255)
 5. Title III Part A (263)
 6. Title IV Part A (289)

7. Jet Grant (429)

Approved with the consent agenda.

- I. *Action: Review and act on the following requisition(s):
 - 1. Requisition #136194 to Doggett Heavy Machinery in the amount of \$62,500.00 for the purchase of a John Deere 325G tractor for the district.
 - 2. Requisition #136284 to Sames Bastrop in the amount of \$125,728.00 for the purchase of two Chevrolet 25004WD Crew Cab Trucks.
 - 3. Requisition #136489 to Barnes and Noble Booksellers in the amount of \$7,134.82 for the purchase of books for the library.
 - 4. Requisition #136494 to Follett Content Solutions in the amount of \$1,507.07 for the purchase of books for the library.
 - 5. Requisition #136515 to Follett Content Solutions in the amount of \$1,125.26 for the purchase of books for the library.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- J. *Action: Review and act on approving a salary adjustment for the Virtual Academy Acting Principal.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- K. Action: Review and act on change order #1 to the contract with Telepro Communications in the amount of \$100,000 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom System project.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving Change Order #1 to the contract in the credit amount of \$100,000 for the Medical Professions Audio/Video Intercom System project. The motion passed unanimously.

- 14. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee — Eduardo R. Rodriguez and Robert J. Lerma, Co-Chairs
 - A. *Report on the status of TASB Policy Update.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on EIC Members for the 2025-2026 school year.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- 15. Community & Governmental Relations Committee — Sasha Crane and Yolanda Kamel, Co-Chairs

Sasha Crane 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: Update regarding STISD's Winter Fine Arts Academy Production of "The Trial of Santa"

Amanda Odom provided an update on the STISD Winter Fine Arts Academy Production of "The Trial of Santa."

16. 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. Apple Headquarters Visit, November 11, 2025, in Cupertino, CA.
- 2. American GeoPhysical Union 2025 Conference, December 15-19, 2025, New Orleans, LA.
- 3. National Association of School Psychologists Annual Convention, February 24-27, 2026 in Chicago, IL.
- 4. National Art Education Association Conference, March 5-7, 2026, Chicago, IL.
- 5. 2026 CEC Convention & Expo, March 11-14, 2026 in Salt Lake City, UT.

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. *Action: Review and act on approving employee for third party employment.

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. Director of Payroll and Employee Benefits
 - 2. Non-Professional:
 - 1. Employee Benefits Specialist

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by David Briones, approving the request for a Director of Payroll and Employee Benefits (Professional) position and Employee Benefits Specialist (Non-Professional) position for the 2025-2026 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy. 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.

A report on Student Support Services was provided to the Board.

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

Dr. Brenda De La Garza gave 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.

- 4. Chief of Police

- a. Action: Review and act on South Texas ISD's 2025-2026 Emergency Operations Plan.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Doug Buchanan, approving the South Texas ISD 2025-2026 Emergency Operations Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Report on status of Continuing Education of Board Members.

Board President Henry LeVrier publicly announced the continuing education training credit status of each individual board member for the period beginning November 1, 2024 through October 28, 2025 for the following training areas: Local District Orientation (New Board Members), Open Meetings Act (New Board Members), Public Information Act (New Board Members), Orientation to the Texas Education Code (New Board Members), Post-Legislative Update to the Texas Education Code (Experienced Board Members), Team Building (annual with entire board and superintendent), Additional Continuing Education (10 hours for New Board members, 5 hours, experienced), Evaluating Student Academic Performance and Setting Goals, Identifying and Reporting Abuse and Trafficking, School Safety, and Cybersecurity. The report will be uploaded to the district's website.

17. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on October 28, 2025 at 7:49 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 2025-2026 school year.
 - a. Teacher(s)
 2. Discussion with legal counsel on matters related to the proposed mid-year termination of the Chapter 21 term contract of employee Roel Flores, Jr. (TGC Code § 551.074 & 551.071)
 3. Discussion on retirement of Superintendent of Schools.
 4. Discussion on related matters regarding the transition related to the Superintendent retirement.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:17 p.m.

18. 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 2025-2026 school year.
 - a. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the retro-active employment of Alberto Kent Seibel as Teacher (10 months) and a recommendation for employment of Angela J. Villarreal as Teacher (10 months) for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.

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

2. Discussion and possible action to propose the mid-year termination of the Chapter 21 term contract of employee Roel Flores, Jr.

A motion was made by Doug Buchanan, seconded by David Suarez, approving the proposal of the mid-year termination of the Chapter 21 term contract of employee R.F. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion and action on the proposed retirement of the Superintendent of Schools.

No Action taken as per Attorney, Javier Villalobos. Board President, Henry LeVrier shared congratulatory remarks on behalf of the Board.

4. Discussion and action on related matters regarding transition related to Superintendent retirement.

No action taken.

19. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Zach Zamora, seconded by Jaime Solis, adjourning the meeting at 8:24 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.