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**South
Texas ISD**

RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 6-12

Minutes of Special Meeting

The Board of Directors South Texas ISD

A Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of South Texas ISD was held December 2, 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
Adrian Garcia	Brownsville
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Andrea E. Gonzales-Loya	Raymondville
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Oscar Salinas	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:

Douglas E. Buchanan	Raymondville
Eduardo L. "Larry" Cantu	Los Fresnos
Sasha Crane	McAllen
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Yolanda Kamel	McAllen
Rodolfo "Rudy" Ramirez	Edinburg
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	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.

The pledges were led by Veteran Jason Rivera, South Texas ISD Police Officer.

4. District Call to Action.

The District Call to Action was led by Sue Ann Villarreal.

5. Moment of Silence.

The Board held a moment of silence.

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. Receipt of resignation from Yolanda Kamel for the At-Large position on the South Texas ISD Board of Directors.

The Board acknowledged receipt of Yolanda Kamel's resignation from the At-Large position on the South Texas ISD Board of Directors.

9. Public Hearing on the 2023-2024 Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) Report.

Marla Knaub, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, provided an overview of the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas report for South Texas ISD. The FIRST report included the following disclosures as per Title 19 Texas Administrative Code:

- Superintendent's employment contract is posted on the district's website.
- Reimbursements received by the Superintendent and Board Members for the twelve month period ended August 31, 2024 (Page 7 of FIRST Report).
- The Superintendent had no outside compensation for Professional Consulting and/or other Personal Services in Fiscal Year 2024 (Page 9 of FIRST Report).
- Gifts received by the Executive Officer and Board Members (and First-Degree Relatives, if any) in Fiscal year 2024 (Page 9 of FIRST Report).
- Business Transactions between School District and Board Members for Fiscal Year 2023 for the twelve-month period ended August 31, 2024 (Page 10 of FIRST Report).

For the 18th year in a row, South Texas Independent School District has received a rating of "Superior Achievement" under Texas' school finance accountability rating system.

10. Awards & Recognitions.

- A. Recognition of STISD students for excellence in academic, athletic and/or extracurricular endeavors.
- B. Recognition of the Finance Department for their participation in the BuyBoard Local Purchasing Cooperative.

11. 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.

12. *Action: Review and act on the October 28, 2025 Board Meeting minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

13. *Action: Review and act on the November 13, 2025 Special Called Board Meeting minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

14. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee — David Briones and Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, Co-Chairs

- A. *Action: Review and act on the 2025-2026 Gifted/Talented Manual.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

- A. *Report on the following projects:

1. Athletic Fields project
2. Science Academy CTE Expansion project

Approved with the consent agenda.

16. Finance & Operations Committee — Rudy Ramirez and Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Co-Chairs

Dr. Sylvia Sánchez 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 the following payment applications:

1. Payment application #12 to Holchemont, LTD in the amount of \$24,880.50 for the Edinburg Athletic Fields project.
2. Payment application #1 to Gomez Mendez Saenz, Inc. in the amount of \$25,578.27 for the Edinburg Athletic Field project.

3. Payment application #5 to Herrcon in the amount of \$114,285.00 for the Science Academy CTE Expansion project.
4. Payment application #14 to Gerlach Builders in the amount of \$236,663.63 for the Mercedes Athletic Fields project.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- D. *Action: Review and act on the following budget amendment(s):
1. EAF Grant (244)

Approved with the consent agenda.

- E. *Action: Review and act on the following requisition(s):
1. Requisition #137910 to Safeware, Inc in the amount of \$53,646.43 for the purchase of a mobile surveillance trailer for district use.
 2. Requisition #137990 to Follett Content Solutions in the amount of \$1,662.56 for the purchase of books for the library.
 3. Requisition #137193 to Follett Content Solutions in the amount of \$1,579.82 for the purchase of books for the library.
 4. Requisition #137714 to Follett Content Solutions in the amount of \$6,037.10 for the purchase of books for the library.
 5. Requisition #137194 to Rush Truck Center in the amount of \$788,025.00 for the purchase of five new buses for the district.
 6. Requisition #137154 to Overdrive, Inc. in the amount of \$8,000.00 for the purchase of books for the library.
 7. Requisition #137190 to Follett Content Solutions in the amount of \$2,421.52 for the purchase of books for the library.
 8. Requisition #138216 to Barnes and Noble in the amount of \$181.88 for the purchase of books for the library.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- F. Action: Review and act on a request for use of funds from MacKenzie Scott donation for Fine Arts for all campuses.

A motion was made by Dr. Sylvia Sánchez Garza, seconded by Dr. Noel Garza, approving the request for use of funds from Mackenzie Scott donation for Fine Arts for all campuses. The motion passed unanimously.

17. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee — Robert Lerma and Eduardo Rodriguez, Co-Chairs

Mr. Abiel J. Cantú reported on the following items:

A. Review of TASB Local Policy Update 126 (First Reading).

Mr. Efrain Garza reported on a review of the TASB Local Policy Update 126.

18. Community & Governmental Relations Committee — Sasha Crane and Ruth Villarreal, Co-Chairs

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

Approved with the consent agenda.

19. 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. Action: Review and Act on approving the request for New Non-Professional Position(s) for the 2025-2026 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
 1. Classroom Aide, Self-Contained (1)

A motion was made by Oscar Salinas, seconded by Zach Zamora, approving the request of a New Non-Professional Position of Classroom Aide, Self-Contained (1) 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.

Mr. Marcos Flores provided a report on Student Support Services.

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

Dr. Brenda De La Garza 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 Safety and Security.

Chief Steven Cortez provided a report on Safety and Security.

- C. *Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
 1. 2026 National Association of Broadcasters Show, April 14-22, 2026, in Las Vegas, NV.

Approved with the consent agenda.

1. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on December 2, 2025 at 7:31 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:**

- D. 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. Police Officer/K9 Handler
 - b. Teacher(s)

2. Discussion on possible termination of the Chapter 21 term contract of Teacher for good cause (R.F.).
 3. Discussion regarding Superintendent's retirement and related actions as requested by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa.
 4. Discussion on superintendent search.
- E. 551.071 Private Consultation with Attorney
1. Discussion with counsel on Cause No. 2025-DCL-05178; 2024-CCL-00247
 2. Discussion with legal counsel on Cause No. 2023-CV-0282
- F. 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 8:31 p.m.

20. 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. Police Officer/K9 Handler
 - b. Teacher(s)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Armando Pena as Police Officer/K9 Handler (12 months) and Hector C. Rendon as Teacher (10 months) for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, approving the recommendation of professional staff as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and possible action to terminate the Chapter 21 term contract of Teacher for good cause (R.F.).

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa, to terminate the Chapter 21 term contract of a Teacher for good cause (R.F.). The motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion and possible action regarding Superintendent's retirement and related actions as requested by Dr. Sandra Garza Ochoa.

A motion was made by David Suarez, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, authorizing the Board President and Legal Counsel to amend the Superintendent's retirement as discussed in Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion and possible action regarding superintendent search.

No action taken.

B. Discussion and possible action on Cause No. 2025-DCL-05178; 2024-CCL-00247

No action taken.

C. Discussion and possible action on Cause No. 2023-CV-0282

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by Abiel J. Cantú authorizing Legal Counsel (Javier Villalobos) to take action as discussed in Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Discussion and possible action regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by David Suarez, approving the Superintendent's recommendation with the respect to the purchase of real property. The motion passed unanimously.

21. Adjournment.

The Board adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.