



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 February 24, 2026, 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
Irma Garcia	McAllen
Margarita Garcia	San Juan
Noel Garza, DDS	Mission
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D.	Edinburg
Robert J. Lerma	Brownsville
Henry LeVrier	Brownsville
Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez	Brownsville
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
Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D.	Weslaco
Rodolfo “Rudy” Ramirez	Edinburg
Oscar Salinas	Edinburg
Zach Zamora	Mission

The following staff members were present:

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

3. Pledges of Allegiance

Fernando Grimaldo, Veteran and Science Academy Teacher, led the Pledges of Allegiance.

4. District Call to Action.

Doug Buchanan, Board Member, led the District Call to Action.

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.

8. Awards & Recognitions.
 - A. Recognition of STISD for being named a CTE District of Distinction by the Career and Technical Association of Texas.
 - B. Recognition of STISD for making the Educational Results Partnership's 2025 Honor Roll.
 - C. Recognition of Science Academy, Health Professions, and Medical Professions for being named to the 2025 AP School Honor Roll.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Amanda Odom recognized the District and its campuses for their achievements as presented.

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.

The Board President received a request from Board Member, Sasha Crane, to pull the following items from the consent agenda:

- 17.B. *Action: Review and act on the following out of district student/staff travel:
 1. ISC West, March 23-27, 2026 in Las Vegas, NV.
 2. #HouseOfCode Congressional App Challenge Winner Event, April 20-23, 2026, in Washington, D.C.

A motion was made by Sasha Crane, seconded by David Briones, approving the consent agenda and pulling items requested. The motion passed with two against (Dr. Rick Villarreal and Robert J. Lerma).

10. *Action: Review and act on the January 20, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

11. *Action: Review and act on the February 9, 2026, Special Called Board Meeting Minutes.

Approved with the consent agenda.

12. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee — Sandra Garza Ochoa, Ph.D. and Sue Ann Villarreal, Co-Chairs

- A. Public Hearing: 2025 Federal Report Card and Texas Academic Performance Report.

Niranda Flores, Executive Director for Academic Excellence reported on the 2025 Federal Report Card and TAPR Report. Report will be posted on the district's website.

- 13. Buildings and Grounds Committee — E. Larry Cantu and David Suarez, Co-Chairs
 - A. *Report on the following projects:
 - 1. CTE Automotive Expansion at Science Academy

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. *Action: Review and act on approving job order contracting as the procurement method for the Edinburg Intercom project.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- C. *Action: Review and act on approving job order contracting as the procurement method for the Medical Professions Athletic Fields project.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- 14. Finance & Operations Committee - Noel Garza, D.D.S. and Doug Buchanan, Co-Chairs
 - 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 the proposed 2026-2027 budget calendar.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

1. Payment application #9 to Telepro Communications in the amount of \$26,945.58 for the Audio/Video Intercom project.

Approved with the consent agenda.

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

1. General Fund (199) #2
2. Mental Health Grant (289) #1
3. Instructional Materials Allotment (410) #1

Approved with the consent agenda.

H. *Action: Review and act on the following requisition(s):

1. Requisition #139871 to Follett Content Solution in the amount of \$1,235.38 for the purchase of books for Biblioteca Las Americas.

Approved with the consent agenda.

I. *Action: Review and act on the following Request for Proposals (RFPs):

1. RFP 27-001 Property, Liability, and Auto Insurance
2. RFP 27-002 Third Party Administrator Services 403(b) and Roth 403(b).
3. RFP 27-003 General Veterinary Services
4. RFP 27-004 Technology Products, Services, Items & Etc.
5. RFP 27-005 DOT & Non-DOT Employment Physical Screening & Laboratory Testing Services

Approved with the consent agenda.

J. *Action: Review and act on approving revisions to the 2025-2026 Stipend Listing.

Approved with the consent agenda.

15. Policy, Planning, Projects & Partnerships Committee — Abiel J. Cantú and Oscar Salinas, Co-Chairs

A. *Action: Review and act on the academic calendar for the 2026-2027 school year and legend.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- B. Action: Review and act on a Resolution Regarding Senate Bill 11 Period of Prayer and Reading of the Bible or Other Religious Text.

A motion was made not to designate time within the school day for a period of prayer and reading of the Bible or other religious text, continuing to honor the moment of silence each school day. The motion passed with two against (Ruth Villarreal and Zachary Zamora).

- 16. Community & Governmental Relations Committee — Ruth Villarreal and Zach Zamora, Co-Chairs
 - A. *Report: Update regarding the current marketing campaign and future possibilities for student recruitment.

Approved with the consent agenda.

- 17. 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. ISC West, March 23-27, 2026 in Las Vegas, NV.

A motion was made by Robert J. Lerma, seconded by Jaime Solis, approving the staff travel request as presented. The motion passed with one against (Dr. Noel Garza).

- 2. #HouseOfCode Congressional App Challenge Winner Event, April 20-23, 2026, in Washington, D.C.

A motion was made by Robert J. Lerma, seconded by Zachary Zamora, approving the student travel request as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

- 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 the request for New Professional Position(s) for the 2025-2026 school year and the Announcement of Vacancy for the following:
 1. Accountant (1)
 2. Speech Language Pathologist Assistant Co-Op (1)
 3. Educational Diagnostician Co-Op (1)
 4. Special Education Instructional Specialist – Co-Op (1)
 5. School Psychologist – Co-Op (1)

A motion was made by Doug E. Buchanan, seconded by Dr. Rick Villarreal, approving the request for New Professional positions for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year and the 2026-2027 school year 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.

Mr. Marcos Flores gave an update on Student Support Services.

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

Dr. Brenda De La Garza provided a report on Special Programs.

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

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

- c. Action: Review and act on approving Monte Alto ISD as a South Texas Tri-County Special Education Cooperative Member.

A motion was made by Jaime Solis, seconded by E. Larry Cantu, approving Monte Alto as a South Texas Tri-County Special Education Cooperative Member. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Executive Director for Academic Excellence
 - a. Report on Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments & Bilingual/ESL Program.

Niranda Flores provided a report on Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments & Bilingual/ESL Program.

5. Chief of Police
 - a. Update on STISD Police Department.

Chief Steven Cortez provided an update on Safety and Security.

- D. *Action: Review and act on the following Board travel:
 1. ROSBA Conference, May 15-16, 2026, in South Padre Island, TX.

Approved with the consent agenda.

1. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board of Directors met on February 24, 2026 at 8:04 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. Speech Language Pathologist - Co-Op
 - b. Teacher(s)
 2. Recommendation of professional staff for the 2026-2027 school year.
 - a. School Psychologist Intern (Grant-Funded)
 3. Report on Level III Grievances for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, as requested by Board Member, Sasha Crane.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 8:42 p.m.

2. 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. Speech Language Pathologist - Co-Op
 - b. Teacher(s)
2. Action: Review and act on recommendation of professional staff for the 2026–2027 school year.
 - a. School Psychologist Intern (Grant-Funded)

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Liz Alejandra Feeney as Speech Language Pathologist - Co-Op (11 months) and Estevan Camarillo as Teacher (11 months) for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.

Dr. Tony Lara, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the employment of Araceli Arlette Zamora as School Psychologist Intern (11 months) for the 2026-2027 school year.

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

3. Adjournment.

The Board adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.