



**SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

1450 Gillette Boulevard · San Antonio, Texas 78224 · (210) 977-7000 · Fax (210) 977-7017

Minutes of Regular Meeting

**The Board of Trustees
South San Antonio ISD**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of South San Antonio ISD was held Thursday, October 21, 2021, beginning at 6:00 PM in the ADMINISTRATION BUILDING 1450 Gillette Blvd. San Antonio, Texas 78224.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Trustee	Present	Absent	Departed Early
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		
Gina Villagomez	X		8:51 PM

- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- TEXAS PLEDGE
- PRAYER

Led by Michelle Martinez, Senior Executive Assistant
Mr. Arrellano, Board President, read board meeting rules of decorum aloud.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Dawn Thomas, South San Antonio High School English teacher, addressed the Board regarding the moral, leadership, and loss of direction at South San High School.
Tom Cummins, South San AFT representative, addressed the Board regarding more substitute teachers and increasing substitute teacher pay.

RECOGNITIONS

Cardboard Regatta Winners
Kevin Rasco, Consultant of Advanced Academics, was called to recognize students for their achievements.
National Principals Month
Theresa Servellon, Chief Academic Officer and Nneka McGee, Executive Director of Learning and Report, were called to recognize students for their achievements.

PRESENTATIONS

TEA Update: Monitor Assignment and Introduction of Dr. Abe Saavedra

Dr. Jeff Cottrill Deputy Commissioner of Governance and Accountability stated: Good evening President Arrellano, Superintendent Puig, members of the Board. My name is Jeff Cottrill, I'm Deputy Commissioner of Governance and Accountability at the Texas Education Agency. I will

share with you that it's always a pleasure to have the opportunity to come out to a school system. And for tonight, for me, to have the opportunity to have ten students and the celebration of as Mr. Rasco pointed out their industriousness and their amazing approach to just learning and building and being creative. It's always encouraging to see. In addition to that, we had the opportunity to celebrate 12 principals here in South San Antonio ISD which is also a great opportunity for us to acknowledge the hard working individuals that lift up these students on so many occasions. We'd be remised if we didn't actually acknowledge the parents that stand behind those students that lift them up to success as well as the assistant principals and staff that actually support those principals in doing great things for kids. Unfortunately, sometimes I come to school board meetings not just to enjoy the recognition of students and staff but also to recognize counter to positive things happening in school districts. We talked earlier, I heard Mr. Rasco point out that we had kids knocking it out of the park here in South San Antonio ISD. Love that. Unfortunately, I'm here today because we have statutory violations that exist with the governing team, the South San Antonio Independent School District Board of Trustees. Through those statutory violations, dating back to 2018, materializing in an investigation by the Texas Education Agency Special Investigations Unit, substantiated those allegations. As those allegations were substantiated, the Texas Education Agency elected to appoint, as a matter of sanction, to this school district, to this governing body, the appointment of a Texas Education Agency Monitor. Monitor is assigned to this school system to do just that, observe and report on their observations, monitor the conduct, monitor the actions or inactions that this governing team is engaged in. And so, very methodically, intentionally, we went about identifying the very best individual to serve this school system because this school system is about the kids here. It is about our kids. And in pursuit of identifying the proper, most appropriate individual to monitor the actions of this board, found it most appropriate to appoint an individual who has a working knowledge, an understanding of this school system and is a seasoned veteran educational leader across the state, well reputed, revered, so well reputed and revered by this school system that he was hired here as your Superintendent some 5 years ago. And so it is with great pleasure tonight that we bring Dr. Abe Saavedra back to you to serve as your support and an extension of the agency to assist you to move past-past statutory violations; and I want to make something very crystal clear tonight as well...we talk about these allegations that materialized in an investigation that brought about this sanction. We say that those existed, that complaint, that was initiated in 2018, Notice of Special Investigation that came to you in 2019. I want to make crystal clear that this isn't something that's dated, that this isn't something that's in the past. We have what I will classify as exceptionally egregious allegations of governance dysfunction and statutory violations in this school system that happened recently. So let's make this very clear, that this is not something that's dated to 2018 and 19 and the state is just now assigning a Monitor for that. Yes, that is true but what is equally true, is that unfortunate actions continue and persist to plague this school system and harm kids. That is unacceptable. School systems exist to improve student outcomes. School systems exist to improve student outcomes. And student interests and student outcomes should never be at the mercy, should never be at the mercy, of adult interests, adult convenience and adult wishes. And so I implore you to welcome a seasoned veteran of well reputed nature back to this school system to help you elevate your kiddos back on the pedestal that they belong and set your personal desires aside so we can once again continue to focus on students in this school system. And so with that said, I'm gonna invite Dr. Saavedra forward. He will introduce himself for those of you who don't know him, I believe Mrs. Prado he was here when you were on this board and so you are familiar with him I don't believe the rest of the board had the opportunity to work with Dr. Saavedra but Abe....

Dr. Abe Saavedra, Sanctioned Texas Education Monitor stated: Thank you Dr. Cottrill. Well, I'm back, and I look forward to working with y'all, with everyone. It is a monitor assignment as Dr. Cottrill stated, my job is to observe and report. And I look forward working with you and hopefully we can improve the system and provide a better education for our kids. If I can take a personal moment, I would like to congratulate the principals and the teachers. Seven years ago when I was first appointed as Superintendent, as Mrs. Prado and others that were here at the time recall, I was initially hired as an Interim Superintendent. As y'all did a search, the Board at the time did a search,

and quite frankly I fell in love with the community, I fell in love with the schools with the people I was working with and within a few months I said you know if you want to hire me I'll do it. And worked with y'all for 5 years. A big part of that was working with the teachers, the principals, the schools. There's great people in South San and there is wonderful people out at the schools working very hard every single day providing education to our young people so. I won't take any more time. Again, I look forward to working with you and congratulations to the principals that were recognized. Thank you.

Dr. Jeff Cottrill Deputy Commissioner of Governance and Accountability stated: So as I shared, Dr. Saavedra will be providing monitoring, observations of what is transpiring here within the school system. He will likely frequently visit with you Board President Arrellano, with you Superintendent Puig to get your feedback, observations, and also to assist in making recommendations that can come to assist and support a laser like focus on student outcomes. And so, with that said, happy to take any questions on what you can expect from Dr. Saavedra or what you can expect from the Texas Education Agency. But what you can expect, is as was laid out in communication to Mr. Arrellano and Dr. Puig recently, is that there will be a standing agenda item where Dr. Saavedra would be afforded the opportunity to address the board with those observations. I believe that in years past, there was some issues relating to that, where the agency's assigned Monitor was actually excluded from being able to provide public reports which then masked and did not allow for transparency. And so my request of you is to allow transparency into this school system for your parents, for your community, so that they may be afforded the opportunity to understand exactly why the agency is here and whether we are on track to move forward. So I'll pause and welcome any questions, I'm sure you have some.

Board President Arrellano stated: Thank you sir. Does anybody have any questions, comments, questions, Dr. Puig? No? I don't have any questions. I'll reserve my remarks during the President's remarks but thank you. I will say this, thank you Dr. Saavedra for coming and trying to help us get past these issues that we currently have.

Dr. Jeff Cottrill Deputy Commissioner of Governance and Accountability stated: That's great. Well thank you and that is the first step is acknowledging that we do have issues so I'm encouraged by that comment sir, so thank you.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REMARKS (NO ACTION / REPORT ONLY)

Dr. Marc Puig, Superintendent of Schools, addressed the Board and audience regarding student outcomes, disseminating the last received accountability report card to the Trustees at the dais. He pointed out that we did not receive a TEA rating in 2020 nor in 2021. He informed that 12 out of 13 campuses are unacceptable. They have been targeted for intervention and communicated that this did not happen this year or last but has been happening for years here. He stated this is a great opportunity to, support our campuses with targeted resources. He stated there have been decades of educational malpractice. He stated that fortunately, there has been an urgency and zeal to address student outcomes. He informed that the instructional playbook is at each board members seat at the dais and that in the last 16 months we have discussed it on 37 occasions; in board meetings, board trainings, with Moak Casey, with the community. He stated the instructional playbook is research based; aligning the curriculum, formative assessments, professional learning communities, and executive coaching. He stated that on the back of the instructional playbook document at the dais, there is the framework to support the instructional playbook which is the Fundamental 5. He informed that each board member received a book on said framework. Dr. Puig said that if we continue the laser focus our results will dramatically improve. He informed that the accountability system in the state has changed. In 2022 there will no longer be assignments of D's or F's when earned, schools will receive a Not Rated(NR). He reminded the Board of information he provided them weeks ago with regard to House Bill 4545 and assured that we are addressing accelerated learning. We further reminded that we have the opportunity to participate in virtual learning. He

stated that improving results will improve morale. He stated that ratings in person as well as virtual, will be included in the accountability ratings in 2022. The stated that the virtual will have its own rating in the Fall of 2022.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REMARKS (NO ACTION / REPORT ONLY)

Ernesto Arrellano Jr., Board President, addressed Dr. Cottrill, thanking him for giving the Board the low down on what TEA sees and for assigning Dr. Saavedra. He stated that his youngest son was in school here when he was Superintendent and things were fine. He welcomed Dr. Saavedra and stated that he and Dr. Puig have already had an agenda setting meeting with him and asked him for his opinion a couple of times. Mr. Arrellano stated that he is going to focus on student outcomes tonight and that he is truly concerned with the first 9 weeks, and the numbers are pretty bad at South San Antonio High School. He stated that the elementary schools are doing awesome and thanked the teachers and principals. He stated that his concern is mostly at the high school level and some at the middle school level. He said that compared to 2019, some have gone up, and some have gone down quite a bit. He stated that when he sees our flagship high school is 49% failing, it is upsetting. He said that it gets his blood to boil. He said that West Campus is better but when you have 24% of the students failing it's still not good. Mr. Arrellano said that something needs to be done, and Dr. Puig just talked about the plan, and said that in his view that plan is something that the district is going to use and is probably a good plan and it will work for those that are in the middle schools and elementary schools, but his concern is about the 9th – 12th graders. He stated that the seniors are doing a 65% pass rate and 35% failure rate at the 9-week level. He said although this is probably a good plan for the future, what are we going to do for the seniors and the juniors or even the freshmen. He stated that students are going to try to apply for colleges and questioned what do you think their acceptance rate will be when our overall percentage at the high school is as low as it is. He stated that it's a crisis to him and something needs to be done for the high school kids. He said that the juniors are plagued with trying to apply for colleges because they might be doing well but the overall issue at the high school is going to follow them. He stated I don't want that. He shared that he graduated in 1981 from South San High School and that's why its hitting him so hard. He said he applied to 5 colleges and got into his 3rd choice. He stated it would be difficult for those that are looking to go into the military, that it will be difficult for them to get the jobs that they want, they will have to settle for something less. He stated that he thinks there should be a 2 tier approach. Mr. Arrellano stated that his concern today is the Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors. He said if this is the baseline we can only go up. He said when the San Antonio Report showed South San Antonio School District last year, and we were second to the bottom in student outcomes. He stated that this district has never been that low, never. He stated that there has to be immediate plans on top of what this is. He shared that he went 2 weeks ago and to hit tennis balls and talked to student and got an outcry from the senior. He said the student wants to be an IT engineer and he said sometimes he goes to class and has to go sit at the gym because he doesn't know what's going on. He said he expects, and this board should expect a plan for the Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors, who are probably not going to benefit from this plan. He implored the board and administration to set up a plan for the high school students, especially the ones at South San High School. He stated we cannot accept what's going on right now, we just cannot.

CONSENT

Policy BE (Local) states that the consent agenda shall include items of a routine and/or recurring nature grouped together under one action item. All such items shall be acted upon by one vote without separate discussion, unless a Board Member requests that an item be withdrawn for individual consideration. The remaining items shall be adopted under a single motion and vote.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

August 18, 2021 Regular Called

August 19, 2021 Special Called

August 31, 2021 Special Called

September 9, 2021 Special Called
 September 15, 2021 Regular Called
 September 30, 2021 Special Called
 Remote Learning Program Resolution
 Nearpod
 Follett Destiny
 2022-2023 Head Start Non Competitive Grant Renewal
 Roy P. Benavidez ES Playground Renovation

Mrs. Alderete moved to approve the consent agenda items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 as presented, Mr. Rodriguez seconded and the Board of Trustees voted 7/0 to approve the item as presented. Motion passed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		
Gina Villagomez	X		

CONSENT Items pulled

Item #3- Nearpod

Theresa Servellon, Chief Academic Officer, was called to present and answer questions related to this item.

Mr. Flores moved to approve consent item #3 as presented, Mr. Rodriguez seconded, and the Board of Trustees voted 7/0 to approve the item as presented. Motion passed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		
Gina Villagomez	X		

REPORTS

Academic Health Report

Theresa Servellon, Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Marc Puig, Superintendent, Kevin Rasco, Consultant of Advanced Academics, Nneka McGee, Executive Director of Learning & Innovation, Amanda Kingman, Outdoor Education and Excursion Teacher, were called to present and answer questions related to this item.

Recess: 8:32 PM - 8:39 PM

2021-2022 Enrollment Update

Dolores Sendejo, Deputy Superintendent, and Dr. Marc Puig, Superintendent, were called to present and answer questions related to this item.

September 2021 Financials

Tony Kingman, Chief Financial Officer, was called to present and answer questions related to this item.

Board of Trustees Continuing Education Credits 2021

Ernesto Arrellano Jr., Board President, was called to present and answer questions related to this item.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Competitive Sealed Proposal Method for the District Wide HVAC Upgrade Project

Dr. Marc Puig, Superintendent, was called to present and answer questions related to this item.

Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the item as presented, Mrs. Alderete seconded, and the Board of Trustees voted 6/0 to approve. Motion passed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		

Creation of a Redistricting Committee

Ernesto Arrellano Jr., Board President, Dr. Marc Puig, Superintendent, Mark Sanchez, Legal Counsel, and Dr. Abe Saavedra, TEA Monitor, were called to present and answer questions related to this item.

Mr. Flores made a motion: I want to make a motion that we say yes to a committee being formed, Mrs. Prado seconded

Dr. Saavedra, TEA Monitor stated: At the agenda preparation meeting, Dr. Puig did bring up the discrepancy, pointed out to Mr. Arrellano as well as the lawyer, that the local policy had not been followed in forming a committee and I would tend to agree with the lawyer that there is no violation of law. It's not a situation that's illegal. Had you moved forward with it, it would have been a violation of your local policy but not necessarily a violation of the law. It's appropriate that it be corrected. I believe that's what you're trying to do at this point, and move forward from this point.

Dr. Saavedra, TEA Monitor stated: I commented earlier on the formation of the committee and how you plan to correct it. I agree with that. What I don't agree on is that the Board took on an administrative function of requesting that the lawyer go out for RFQ's. That's an administrative function. That's not within the responsibility of the Board, it belongs to the Administration. So that part, that part of it I think would still need to be corrected at some point.

Mrs. Alderete made a substitute motion: with that substitute motion I would like Mr. Rodriguez to be named Chair of the Redistricting Committee in order to be sure that it is done legally and within policy, Mr. Rodriguez seconded

Vote on the substitute motion: The Board of Trustees voted 2/4. Motion failed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado		X	

Shirley Ibarra		X	
Homer Flores		X	
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.		X	

Original motion: The Board of Trustees voted 4/2 to approve. Motion passed.
(Original motion by Mr. Flores: that we say yes to the committee being formed, Mrs. Prado seconded)

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete		X	
Gilbert Rodriguez		X	
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		

Mr. Arrellano stated: And since now that we have a committee, for the record, the Chairman of the committee is Mr. Flores and myself and Mrs. Prado are the other 2 Board members that are serving and ex officio of course is Dr. Puig.

Budget Amendment

Tony Kingman, Chief Financial Officer, was called to present and answer questions related to this item.

Mr. Rodriguez moved to approve the item as presented, Mrs. Alderete seconded, and the Board of Trustees voted 6/0 to approve. Motion passed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		

CLOSED / EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOTICE: The Board of Trustees may elect to go into Closed Meeting any time during the meeting to discuss matters listed on the Agenda when authorized by the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code. In the event the Board of Trustees elects to go into Closed Meeting regarding an Agenda Item, the Board of Trustees will hold a Closed Meeting to discuss individual personnel matters including termination, litigation and other matters the Board deems necessary. Upon completion of Closed Meeting, the Board of Trustees may, in the open session, take such action as appropriate on items discussed in a Closed Meeting. If, during the course of the meeting, any discussion of any item listed on the agenda should be held in Closed Meeting, the Board will convene in such Closed Meeting in accordance with Texas Government Code Sections 551.001 - 551.088. The Board members may take action in the open portion of the meeting on items discussed in the Closed Meeting but no action will be taken in closed session.

The Board will return to open session and take appropriate action, if any, on items discussed in closed session. No Action will be taken in closed session. Further, Board Members are reminded that all items discussed in closed session must remain confidential so as to avoid liability to the district. The Board will consider and discuss, the following items:

Closed Meeting pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code

§§ 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.076, 551.082, and 551.0821

Discussion concerning personnel matters pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074.

Discussion of forensic audit of expenses incurred by Superintendent under District Policy CH.

Start time: 10:40 PM

End time: 11:33 PM

OPEN SESSION

Reconvene from Executive Session for action relative to items considered during ExecutiveSession

Ms. Ibarra made a motion: I have a motion that the South San ISD Board of Trustees direct the Board’s outside auditors to perform an examination audit of the Superintendent expenditures under the district policy CH and legal will serve as a point of contact, Mrs. Prado seconded

Mrs. Alderete made a substitute motion: I make a substitute motion that this item be removed or tabled, seconded by Mr. Rodriguez, and the Board of Trustees voted 2/4. Motion failed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete	X		
Gilbert Rodriguez	X		
Connie Prado		X	
Shirley Ibarra		X	
Homer Flores		X	
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.		X	

The Board of Trustees voted 4/2 to approve. Motion passed.

(Original motion by Ms. Ibarra: I have a motion that the South San ISD Board of Trustees direct the Board’s outside auditors to perform an examination audit of the Superintendent expenditures under the district policy CH and legal will serve as a point of contact, Mrs. Prado seconded)

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete		X	
Gilbert Rodriguez		X	
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		

Ms. Ibarra made a motion: I motion that the South San Independent School Board of Trustees direct legal counsel to submit a written request to Juan Cruz & Associate for all information and document related to Superintendent procurement of Juan Cruz & Associates for any legal services rendered and such documents will be delivered to the outside auditors, Mrs. Prado seconded, and the Board of Trustees voted 2/4 to approve. Motion passed.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstained
Stacey Alderete		X	
Gilbert Rodriguez		X	
Connie Prado	X		
Shirley Ibarra	X		
Homer Flores	X		
Ernesto Arrellano Jr.	X		

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Alderete moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Rodriguez seconded, and the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:43 PM.

ATTEST

Ernesto Arrellano Jr., Board President

Shirley Ibarra, Board Secretary

NOTICE: This meeting of the Board of Trustees is authorized in accordance with the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.001 - 551.146. Verification of Notice of Meeting and Agenda are on file in the Office of the Superintendent. Closed meeting, if required and if authorized by the statute, will be conducted prior to the conclusion of the meeting for any item listed on this agenda.

NOTICE: The Board of Trustees may elect to go into Closed Meeting any time during the meeting to discuss matters listed on the Agenda when authorized by the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code. In the event the Board of Trustees elects to go into Closed Meeting regarding an Agenda Item, the Board of Trustees will hold a Closed Meeting to discuss individual personnel matters including termination, litigation and other matters the Board deems necessary. Upon completion of Closed Meeting, the Board of Trustees may, in the open session, take such action as appropriate on items discussed in a Closed Meeting. If, during the course of the meeting, any discussion of any item listed on the agenda should be held in Closed Meeting, the Board will convene in such Closed Meeting in accordance with Texas Government Code Sections 551.001 - 551.088. The Board members may take action in the open portion of the meeting on items discussed in the Closed Meeting but no action will be taken in closed session.