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**2019- 2020**  
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**Back to School Guide**  
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*Always Innovating*

**South  
Texas ISD**

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 7-12**

# Back to school guide

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**Leave your mark.**  
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## Welcome, STISD students and families!

It is a true honor to welcome you on behalf of the district in my first beginning-of-the-year season as your superintendent of schools.

We are excited to have you here for the 2019-2020 school year. As we begin the year, it is a great time to celebrate who we are and what we do here at South Texas Independent School District.

Since I came on board last fall, I have learned much about STISD and seen tremendous growth and success. At STISD, we have many things to be proud of – achievements in all areas – and exciting things up ahead. I hope that, as you walk through the doors on the first day, you realize that you are an important part of the success of our district and that we appreciate you being part of our district family.

Earlier this year, we unveiled our new district branding, which includes a new tagline of Always Innovating. Although this has been the case for our district for many years, we adopted this tagline as a demonstration of our commitment to continue our work to offer top-of-the-line opportunities for learning and life for our students.

**Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

On this note, our students have spoken, and we have listened. We are happy to share with you that we will have additional opportunities for district wide competition and camaraderie this year. We will be hosting a “Superintendent’s Cup,” which will consist of athletic and academic competitions throughout the year. You shared that you would like to see more athletic offerings, as well as fine arts and social events, and we intend to continue improving in this area moving forward.

Our campuses and district as a whole continue to achieve outstanding marks. The 2019 Texas State Accountability Ratings came out recently, and all campuses and the district as a whole received A ratings. In the Niche 2020 rankings released earlier this month, our campuses and district all ranked among the best in their respective categories again this year, including our South Texas ISD Rising Scholars Academy as the best middle school in the state. Congratulations!

I thank you for choosing South Texas ISD. We look forward to celebrating our successes and working together to create even more.

Please take a few moments to review this Back-to-School Guide, as it includes important information for the 2019-2020 school year.

Best wishes for a great school year!

Sincerely,

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.

## Campus Principals:



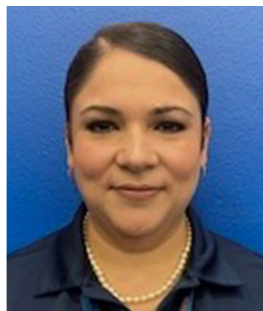
**Barbara Heater, Ph.D.**  
Health Professions  
Principal  
Mercedes



**Harry Goette**  
Medical Professions  
Principal  
Olmito



**Ana Castro**  
Preparatory Academy  
Principal  
Edinburg



**Criselda Rodriguez Flores**  
Interim Principal  
Rising Scholars  
San Benito



**Irma Castillo, Ed.D.**  
Science Academy  
Principal  
Mercedes



**Efrain Garza**  
World Scholars  
Principal  
Edinburg



# Get and stay connected

f t i @southtexasisd



Always Innovating

## South Texas ISD

RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 7-12

### + [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net)

Visit our district & campus websites for resources, news and up-to-date information.

### + District Councils & Committees

- Educational Improvement Council (EIC)
- Campus Parent Student Teacher Organization (PSTO)
- School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

For more information, please visit:  
[www.stisd.net-Parents & Family-Get Connected](http://www.stisd.net-Parents & Family-Get Connected)

### + e-newsletter

BeSTISD - **NEW** design coming soon

### + Parent Portal

Please be sure to keep all contact information up-to-date to ensure you receive communications from the district. Changes can be made in your Infinite Campus Parent Portal or with the campus PEIMS clerk.

### New campus handles:



Leave your mark in 2019-2020. | Document your days - - - #stisd & tag us @southtexasisd



## School Hours

### Regular Days

8:30 a.m. - 4:05 p.m., Monday - Friday  
Buses leave at approximately 4:15 p.m.

### Tutorial

4:15 - 5:15 p.m. on selected days  
Buses leave at approximately 5:20 p.m.



## Library Hours

Hours available on the following websites:

- **Biblioteca Las Américas, Mercedes**  
[http://libraries.stisd.net/biblioteca\\_las\\_americas](http://libraries.stisd.net/biblioteca_las_americas)
- **Gateway to the World, Edinburg**  
[http://libraries.stisd.net/gateway\\_to\\_the\\_world](http://libraries.stisd.net/gateway_to_the_world)
- **Medical Academy Library, Olmito**  
[http://libraries.stisd.net/medical\\_academy\\_library](http://libraries.stisd.net/medical_academy_library)
- **Rising Scholars Academy Library, San Benito**  
[http://libraries.stisd.net/rising\\_scholars\\_library](http://libraries.stisd.net/rising_scholars_library)

# Nutrition

### Breakfast

- Full price: \$1.50
- Reduced price: \$.30
- Adult price: \$2.00

### Lunch

- Full price: \$3.00
- Reduced price: \$.40
- Adult price: \$3.50

Menus are posted monthly on the district website at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) under Departments – Nutrition.

To apply for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program, access the application through your Infinite Campus Parent Portal, download the form on the district website, or pick up the form from the cafeteria manager. Foods with minimal nutritional value (sodas, candy, popcorn, etc.) may only be purchased after school.

Parents who would like to make online deposits into their child's food service account can do so through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

**For more information, call Child Nutrition Director Oliver Galvan at 514-4236 or visit: [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) - Departments - Nutrition.**

# Transportation

STISD provides bus transportation for its students. Students are picked up and dropped off at their designated hometown location each school day. Students who live the furthest from their school will be picked up at an earlier time than those who live closer.

The bus leaves at approximately 4:15 p.m. each day. The tutorial bus leaves at approximately 5:20 p.m.

**The bus schedule for the 2019-2020 school year is posted online at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) - Departments - Transportation.**

For more information, contact the transportation manager at your child's campus:

World Scholars & Preparatory Academy (Edinburg): Rudy Hernandez at 318-8523 or 564-3627  
Health Professions & Science Academy (Mercedes): Norma Basaldua at 514-4240 or 376-3415  
Rising Scholars (San Benito): Eddie Guerra at 421-1223 or 532-1480  
Medical Professions (Olmito): Rick Ansiso at 214-6123 or 494-4986



## Grading System

- 90-100 = A • 80-89 = B • 75-79 = C
- 70-74 = D • Below 70 = F

(Students receive credit for a grade of 70 or higher.)

## Ranking System

A revised ranking policy was approved by the STISD Board of Directors during the 2015-16 school year. Students now need to opt-in to receive their ranking. In line with the board-approved policy, STISD will not recognize students by rank in publications or official events, with the exception of the Valedictorian and Salutatorian or as required by law. As part of the policy change, STISD also created a new Scholastic Honors program to recognize more deserving students for their accomplishments. For more information, please contact your child's school counselor.

The District categorizes and weights eligible courses as International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced, Honors, and College Preparation in accordance with provisions of Policy EIC(LOCAL) and as designated in appropriate District publications. Eligible IB courses shall be categorized and weighted as IB courses, with a weight of 1.15. Eligible Advanced Placement (AP), dual credit, and independent study courses shall be categorized and weighted as Advanced courses, with a weight of 1.10. Eligible Pre-AP courses and other courses locally designated honors shall be categorized and weighted as Honors courses, with a weight of 1.05. All other eligible courses shall be categorized and weighted as College Preparation courses, with a weight of 1.00.

**To see the updated policy, go to [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net), click on Policies and enter class ranking in the search engine.**

## Attendance

Attendance is crucial to a student's academic success. State law requires that a student be present at least 90 percent of the days the class is being offered in order to receive credit.

If a student is absent, the parent/guardian must call the school that day to report the reason for absence and then submit a written note for the absence within five days of the student's return. If a student is out within a school day for the purposes of a medical appointment, the student will not be marked absent as long as he or she attends school part of the day and provides a medical excuse. **For more information, speak with the PEIMS clerk at your child's campus.**

## Dress Code

The district's dress code is established to reinforce good grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, promote a disruption-free educational environment, avoid safety hazards and teach respect for authority. Students are expected to adhere to the following standards of dress and grooming:

- Students should come to school well groomed and appropriately dressed. Note: Examples of inappropriate dress include: backless or semi-backless blouses, see-through apparel, mesh stockings/blouses/shirts, low-cut blouses, jeans with cut-off waist bands, blouses with one shoulder only, excessively tight clothing, gang or cult-related clothing, rainbow-colored hair, absence of foundation garments, etc. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive.

## Dress Code Cont.

- Caps may be worn in the halls. Each teacher has the right to have students remove their caps in his/her classroom.
- Female students are not allowed to wear short blouses that will reveal the waistline area.
- All students are required to wear appropriate footwear while on school premises. Note: Due to safety reasons in laboratory situations, students are discouraged from wearing shower or beach thongs to school. For more information, read the school handbook and Student Code of Conduct.

## Pick-up and Drop-off

To ensure student safety, please only use the designated pick-up and drop-off areas provided at each campus, and at the designated times during the school day. Please also be courteous to others.

## STISD Board of Directors

The STISD Board of Directors is comprised of 24 members from Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties, making it the largest school board in the nation.

Each county has four elected positions representing each County Commissioner's Precinct. In addition, each county judge appoints a member to represent every 100,000 people. Elections for the board are held the first Tuesday of November on a biennial basis. The next board election will be in November 2020.

Board meetings are open to the public and held at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of every month, except December. The schedule of board meetings is available on the district website.

**For additional information on the board, visit [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net)- About Us- Board of Directors, or call 514-4216.**

## STISD Board of Directors Members:

Doug Buchanan of Raymondville (President), Yolanda Cuellar of Progreso Lakes (Vice President), Henry LeVrier of Brownsville (Secretary), Graciela Camargo of Weslaco, Abiel J. Cantú of Raymondville, E. Larry Cantu of Los Fresnos, Martin Castillo, Jr., D.C., of Edinburg, Yolanda Chapa of McAllen, Javier Farias of McAllen, Richard Fleming, M.D., of Mission, Adrian Garcia of Brownsville, Homero Garcia of Weslaco, Margarita Garcia of San Juan, Sylvia Sánchez Garza, Ph.D., of Edinburg, Hector Gonzales of Lyford, Robert J. Lerma of Brownsville, Sylvia Lopez of Brownsville, Ramon Montalvo, III, of Weslaco, Irma Perez-Treviño of Harlingen, Israel G. Quintanilla of Raymondville, Eduardo Roberto Rodriguez of Brownsville, Jaime Solis of Edinburg, Becky Villarreal of Peñitas and Rick Villarreal, D.D.S., of Brownsville

# Programs & Services

## Online Gradebook

Parents and students may access grades and current assignments and even correspond with teachers through the Infinite Campus Student Information portal. The school will provide you with the web link and your user name and password.

## Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Initiative

Through this initiative, students can bring their own mobile devices to school to use as learning tools inside and out of the classroom, under the direction of their instructors. There are endless possibilities for integrating technology into the classroom to increase student achievement. The district values the knowledge of technology that our students possess; through the BYOD initiative, it facilitates the use of the tools with which students are most comfortable (smart phones, tablets, laptops, e-readers, etc.) to increase interest and success. Wi-Fi is available throughout the district facilities and on the buses.

For additional information on the guidelines in place for this initiative, reference pages 8-10 of the 2019-2020 Student Code of Conduct. All district acceptable use policies, guidelines and filtering will apply.

## Parent Connection

The Parent Connection program encourages parents to participate in the educational, social and emotional development of their son or daughter, and helps them create a support and networking system with each other.

A schedule of meetings for the 2019-2020 school year will be posted on the district website under Parents & Family-Parent Connection.

**For more information on the program, call Cindy Ponce at 383-1684, Candace Guillen at 421-1212, or Nancy Talavera at 574-3012.**

## Migrant Program

Every STISD school has a counselor and/or social worker that can assist children of migrant families with school enrollment, credit recovery, laptop and book loaning, social services and other related services.

## Support System

Students have a strong support system at STISD to help them with any academic, personal, medical, emotional or developmental challenges. All students have access to a counselor, nurse, wellness specialist, social worker and di-agnostician.

## Education Foundation of South Texas ISD

The Education Foundation of South Texas ISD is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising money for college scholarships and enrichment opportunities for STISD students. The Foundation accepts applications for its scholarships in the spring.

Senior scholarship application opens: March 2  
Scholarship application deadline: March 25 at 9 p.m.

The Education Foundation of South Texas ISD assists with funding the annual Youth Leadership Conference for rising 8th-graders and rising juniors. This summer conference is open to all STISD students within the two eligible grade levels.

**For information, visit the Foundation website at: [www.edfoundationstisd.org](http://www.edfoundationstisd.org)**



# Important Dates

**First Day of School:** August 19 | **Last Day of First Semester:** December 19

**First Day of Second Semester:** January 7 | **Last Day of School:** May 29

**Other important dates will be posted on the district & campus websites.**



# 2019-2020 Calendar

## A Days

July 2019							August 2019							September 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					
October 2019							November 2019							December 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31				
Holidays							First Day of Instruction August 19							New Teacher Induction						
September 2 Labor Day							Last Day of Instruction May 29							August 5-6						
October 14 Columbus Day							Grade Reporting Periods End							Staff Development						
Nov. 25-29 Thanksgiving							October 10 March 13							August 7-9 and 12-15						
Dec. 20-Jan. 3 Christmas							December 19 May 29							Teacher Work Days						
February 17 President's Day							Exam Preparation Days							(No school for students on these days)						
March 16-20 Spring Break							Campus May Change The Dates							Credit by Exam Test Dates						
April 10, 13 Easter Break							December 12, 13 & May 21, 22							(Students attend school on these days)						
May 25 Memorial Day							Exam Early Release Days							Aug. 7-9; Dec. 4-6;						
Weather Make-Up Days (2)							December 16, 17, 18, 19							Feb. 19-21; June 3-5						
If Needed; Feb. 17, April 13							May 26, 27, 28, 29							Enrichment Days						
Instructional Design Days							STAAR, AP, & IB Assessment Days							(Students attend school on these days)						
(No school for students on these days)														Campus May Change The Dates						
November 11 & March 23														Oct. 15, Nov. 22, Jan. 20, April 29						
January 2020							February 2020							March 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4							1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	29	30	31				
April 2020							May 2020							June 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
							31													

South Texas ISD Board of Directors approved on April 23, 2019. Instructional time in this school calendar is 78,300 minutes. The state requirement is for 75,600 minutes minimum of instruction.

# Contacts

**Central Office** • Superintendent: Marco Antonio Lara, Jr., Ed.D.  
956-565-2454 or 800-217-8839  
100 Med High Dr., Mercedes, TX 78570  
www.stisd.net

**Health Professions** • Principal: Barbara Heater, Ph.D.  
956-565-2237 or 866-546-2263  
700 Med High Dr., Mercedes, TX 78570  
healthprofessions.stisd.net

**Medical Professions** • Principal: Harry Goette  
956-214-6100 or 800-784-7722  
10650 North Expressway 77/83, Olmito, TX 78575  
medicalprofessions.stisd.net

**Preparatory Academy** • Principal: Ana Castro  
956-381-5522 or 866-781-7872  
724 S. Sugar Rd., Edinburg, TX 78539  
preparatoryacademy.stisd.net

**Rising Scholars** • Interim Principal: Criselda Rodriguez Flores  
956-399-4358 or 877-563-1100  
151 S. Helen Moore Rd., San Benito, TX 78586  
risingscholars.stisd.net

**Science Academy** • Principal: Irma Castillo, Ed.D.  
956-565-4620 or 866-611-3622  
900 Med High Dr., Mercedes, TX 78570  
scienceacademy.stisd.net

**World Scholars** • Principal: Efrain Garza  
956-383-1684 or 800-474-6040  
510 S. Sugar Rd., Edinburg, TX 78539  
worldscholars.stisd.net

## Phone Numbers | Departments

• Business: Marla Knaub	514-4222
• Nutrition: Oliver Galvan	514-4236
• Enrollment: Amanda Odom	514-4255
• Half-Day Program: Cynthia De La Garza-Gonzales	514-4257
• Human Resources (Post-hire): Marla Knaub	514-4222
• Human Resources (Pre-hire): Jeff Hembree	514-4224
• Instruction/Curriculum: Jeff Hembree	514-4224
• Library Services: Ann Vickman	514-4268
• Maintenance/Operations: J.P. Villarreal	514-4211
• Public Information: Amanda Odom	514-4255
• Summer School: Jeff Hembree	514-4224
• Technology Services: Inquire at campus	
• Transportation: Victoria Salazar	514-4231

**Not sure which department or person you need?**  
Call 565-2454 or e-mail [info@stisd.net](mailto:info@stisd.net).

## Emergency Phone Numbers (after 5:00 p.m.)

• Health Professions	376-3415
• Medical Professions	494-4986
• Preparatory Academy	564-3627
• Rising Scholars	532-1480
• Science Academy	376-3415
• World Scholars	564-3627
• Back-up 1	376-3415
• Back-up 2	491-9056



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