

Belton Independent School District
Board of Trustee Meeting Agenda Item
September 21, 2026

Item: Recognitions

Contact Person: Christine Parks

Presented for: ☐ Action ☒ Report Only

Supporting Documents: ☒ None ☐ Attached ☐ Provided Later

District Priority or Strategic Objective:

Priority 1: Students - Ensure exceptional learning experiences that bring our “Journey of a Graduate” to life for each and every student.

Priority 2: Staff - Attract, support, and retain exceptional educators and staff to ensure every student is guided and supported by an outstanding team.

Background Information:

Student Pledges – Lakewood Elementary School

This evening, the pledges were led by first grader Eleanor Graham and fourth grader Hank Swindle from Lakewood Elementary School.

Eleanor's favorite subject is science because she loves doing experiments, especially ones that explode! Outside of school, she enjoys playing on her playground at home. Her friends describe her as kind, sweet and a great friend.

Hank and his brother, Luke, are both new to Lakewood this year after moving from Kansas. Hank's favorite subject is also science because he enjoys using cool tools. Outside of school, he loves eating pizza, spending time with his family and watching TV. His friends describe him as kind, helpful and respectful.

Student Showcase - BeginFin

Tonight's Student Showcase featured Lake Belton High School seniors Vishnu Kakarla, founder, and Kruz Smith, co-founder, creators of BeginFin, a student-created financial literacy platform designed to make personal finance more interactive, accessible and engaging.

What began as preparation for a Business Professionals of America competition has grown into a global resource reaching users in more than 25 countries. BeginFin is now integrated with Google Classroom and has expanded beyond K-12 education, with college professors also using the platform with their students.

The continued growth of BeginFin showcases the innovation, entrepreneurship and real-world problem-solving happening in Belton ISD classrooms.

Second Grade National Math Stars Qualifiers

Tonight, we recognize Belton ISD third-graders whose exceptional performance in mathematics as second graders placed them among the top 5% of students nationally.

Last year, 72 second-graders reached that distinction on the Renaissance Star Assessment in math, qualifying them for the opportunity to apply to the National Math Stars program.

Their achievement is part of a much bigger story in Belton ISD, where exceptional young mathematicians are being identified early and given opportunities to grow their talents.

Third Grade National Math Stars Qualifiers

Belton ISD is also celebrating 89 fourth-graders who earned the opportunity to apply for the National Math Stars program after outstanding performance on the Renaissance Star Assessment in math.

These students scored among the top 5% nationally, contributing to a combined 161 Belton ISD second- and third-graders who reached that level of mathematical achievement this year.

Tonight, we celebrate these students for their hard work and achievement as they continue to be challenged, grow and pursue their talents in mathematics.

National Math Stars

Tonight, we celebrate six Belton ISD elementary students named 2026 National Math Stars finalists: Apollo Barth, Brayden Marin and Hazel Sanderford of Lakewood

Elementary; Brodie Durfee of Joe M. Pirtle Elementary; and Katie He and Yunjae Jeong of Sparta Elementary.

From this group, Apollo and Katie advanced to become National Math Stars, joining just over 600 students selected from nearly 9,000 nationwide. They will receive 10 years of individualized support, including academic advising, tutoring, technology and enrichment opportunities.

From 161 students performing among the top 5% nationally to six finalists and two National Math Stars, Belton ISD is identifying exceptional young mathematicians early and giving them opportunities to see just how far their talents can take them.

Purple Star Campus Designations

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Hubbard Branch Elementary and James L. Burrell Elementary for earning the Purple Star Campus Designation from the Texas Education Agency. As the district's two newest campuses, both earned this distinction less than three years after opening.

The Purple Star designation recognizes schools for their commitment to meeting the unique needs of military-connected students and families. With nearly 30 percent of Belton ISD students identified as military-connected, this recognition reflects the intentional work happening on our campuses to help students feel welcomed, connected and supported.

Hubbard Branch and Burrell join Belton High School, Lake Belton Middle School, High Point Elementary and Charter Oak Elementary as Belton ISD's six currently designated Purple Star campuses, continuing the district's commitment to serving those who serve our nation.

Department Showcase: Safety & Security

Tonight's department showcase highlights the Belton ISD Safety and Security team, which works each day to provide safe and secure learning environments across the district.

Led by Director Doug Taylor, the team includes 34 crossing guards, 10 school resource officers and 19 armed security guards. Beyond campus safety, team members build relationships with students and serve as an important connection between our schools and community.

We thank the Safety and Security team for their commitment to protecting and supporting each and every student.

Community Partner Recognition – American Heart Association & Casey's General Stores

Tonight, we are proud to recognize the American Heart Association and Casey's General Stores for their partnership and investment in the safety of Belton ISD students and staff.

Through our partnership with the American Heart Association and a generous gift from Casey's General Stores, Belton ISD received 12 CPR in Schools Kits valued at more than \$8,700. These kits provide hands-on CPR training resources for campuses across the district, expanding access to lifesaving skills for students and staff.

We are grateful to the American Heart Association and Casey's General Stores for helping equip our schools with resources that can make a difference when every second counts.

Fiscal Implications:

None.

Administrative Recommendation(s):

None.