Killeen Independent School District

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, Regular Meeting
October 27, 2026, at 5 p.m. in the Killeen ISD Boardroom

Board Members Present

- Brett Williams, President
- Oliver Mintz, Vice President
- Brenda Adams, Secretary
- Susan Jones, Member
- Marvin Rainwater, Member
- Tina Capito, Member
- Rodney Gilchrist, Member
- **Board Member Absent:** None

Quorum: Established

Call to Order

The meeting of the Killeen Independent School District Board of Trustees was called to order by President Brett Williams at 5 p.m.

The meeting was recorded and streamed publicly.

Agenda Item 1: Public Forum

Speaker: Steve Huskei

During the public forum, Mr. Steve Huskei addressed the Board of Trustees regarding an artificial intelligence (AI) advising platform designed to improve student outcomes, increase operational efficiency, and support more effective use of district resources. He explained that the platform, originally developed for Texas State University, assists students with academic

scheduling and course selection while maintaining human oversight and involvement. Mr. Huskei shared an example involving his daughter at the University of Texas, who successfully generated three academic schedules in approximately three minutes using the technology, demonstrating its potential to streamline the advising process. He emphasized that the platform could reduce administrative workloads, allow advisors to devote more time to students, improve budget efficiency, and provide cybersecurity protections for sensitive student information. Mr. Huskei expressed interest in pursuing a sole-provider agreement with the district, proposed implementation before spring registration, and offered to meet with district representatives to further discuss the platform's capabilities and potential benefits.

Speaker: Keith Thompson

During the public forum, Mr. Keith Thompson, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of You Can Grieve, addressed the Board of Trustees regarding the importance of grief awareness, emotional well-being, and mental health support for students, teachers, and staff. He explained that grief extends beyond the loss of a loved one and may result from circumstances such as parental incarceration, military deployment, and other challenging life experiences that affect students emotionally and academically. Mr. Thompson introduced his 14-week You Can Grieve curriculum, which is designed to help individuals recognize their grief, understand their emotions, develop healthy coping strategies, and channel their feelings into positive actions. He emphasized his belief that providing students with appropriate emotional support could help reduce violence, substance abuse, suicide, and negative interactions with law enforcement while fostering a healthier school environment. Mr. Thompson encouraged the district to initiate meaningful conversations about grief and mental health among students and employees and expressed his commitment to continuing his advocacy to promote positive changes in school culture and the broader community.

Agenda Item 2: Closed Session

The Board entered closed session at **5:10 p.m.** for:

2A. Discussion Regarding the Deployment of Security Devices of Security Personnel (Texas Government Code 551.0761).

2B. Consultation with the District's Legal Counsel Regarding Pending Litigation, a Settlement Offer, or other Issues Confidential under the Attorney-Client Privilege
(Texas Government Code 551.071).

2C. Deliberate the Purchase, Exchange, Lease, or Value of Real Property
(Texas Government Code 551.072).

2D. Deliberate the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline, or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee
(Texas Government Code 551.074).

2E. Deliberate a Matter Regarding a Public School Student in which Personally Identifiable Information About the Student will Necessarily be Revealed
(Texas Government Code 551.0821).

No action was taken in closed session.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at **6:01 p.m.**

Invocation and Pledges

Invocation was led by Trustee **Marvin Rainwater.**
Pledges of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags were led by student **Desiree Gonzales and Naomi Tainatongo** from Iduma Elementary School.

Agenda Item 3: Honors and Recognition

Presenter: Karen Rudolph

During Honors and Recognitions, Ms. Rudolph introduced the celebration of Killeen ISD students, staff, and campuses for their academic accomplishments, service, and dedication to excellence. State Representatives Dr. Brad Buckley and Hillary Hickland recognized Early College High School, Pathways Academic Campus, Clark Elementary School, Oveta Culp Hobby Elementary School, and Harker Heights High School for earning A ratings in the 2026 Texas Education Agency accountability system, presenting resolutions honoring the collective efforts of students, educators, administrators, and school communities. The Board also recognized the Killeen ISD Finance Department for earning a Superior Achievement rating and a perfect score of 100 in the 2026 School FIRST financial accountability system, marking the district's 24th consecutive year of receiving the state's highest financial accountability distinction. Additional individual honors included Killeen Early College High School AVID teacher and Navy veteran Eric Fries, recipient of the U.S. Navy Impact Influencer Award for encouraging students to consider military service, and Killeen High School senior Harvey Morris, a 2026 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist. Thirty-one campuses received the Texas Education Agency Purple Star Campus designation for the 2026–2027 school year in recognition of their support for military-

connected students and families, bringing the districtwide total to 34 designated campuses under an initiative led by Dr. Anjanette Wilkerson and the Community Relations Department. The district further celebrated student artists selected for the 2026 TEKS EDCON Exhibition, including Camara Cruz, Amelia Jimenez Marrero, and Nicole Wagner, and recognized Ellison High School's athletic program for receiving the National Strength and Conditioning Association's School of Distinction honor under Coach Walter Prater. The recognitions concluded with an observance of National Principals Month, during which district leadership expressed appreciation for campus principals' commitment, resilience, and continued efforts to support students, teachers, families, and school communities.

State Representatives Brad Buckley and Hillary Hickland Recognizing A Accountability Campuses

- Early College High School
    - Dr. Alime Sadikova
- Pathways Academic Campus
    - Miguel Timarky
- Oveta Culp Hobby Elementary School
    - Alena Thomas
- Clarke Elementary High School
    - Brittany Nault
- Harker Heights High School
    - Dr. Jorge Soldevila

FIRST Rating

- Kallen Vaden
- Sheila Ham
- Melanie Jones

Navy Recognition

- Early College High School
    - Eric Fries

National Merit Scholar Semi-Finalist

- Killeen High School
    - Harvey Morris

Purple Star Campuses

- Cedar Valley Elementary School
    - Phylicia Miner

- Clarke Elementary School
    - Brittany Nault
- Clear Creek Elementary School
    - Jessica Brading
- Clifton Park Elementary School
    - Dr. Wendy Haider
- Dr. Joseph A. Fowler Elementary School
    - Donna Hardy
- Harker Heights Elementary School
    - Dr. Tiphani Morris
- Hay Branch Elementary School
    - Crystal Smith
- Haynes Elementary School
    - Alice Baumann
- Iduma Elementary School
    - Katy Bohannon
- Ira Cross Jr. Elementary School
    - Jessica Askew
- Maude Moore Wood Elementary School
    - Rikki Harper
- Maxdale Elementary School
    - Bobbie Evans
- Meadows Elementary School
    - Kara Smith
- Montague Village Elementary School
    - Natalie Cue
- Mountain View Elementary School
    - Christy Galloway
- Nolanville Elementary School
    - Jenna McArthur
- Oveta Culp Hobby Elementary School
    - Alena Thomas
- Pat Carney Elementary School
    - Paige Gawryszewski
- Pershing Park Elementary School
    - Jessica Taylor
- Richard E. Cavazos Elementary School
    - Felecia Ware-Johnson

- Saegert Elementary School
    - Katie Hequembourg
- Audie Murphy Middle School
    - Christina Harris
- Charles E. Patterson Middle School
    - Latricia Brown
- Dr. Jimmie Don Aycock Middel School
    - Savannah Jimenez
- Libert Hill Middle School
    - Genevive Manning
- Live Oak Ridge Middle School
    - Kernisha Hill
- Roy J. Smith Middle School
    - Dr. Bobbie Reeders
- Union Grove Middle School
    - Ben Hess
- Chaparral High School
    - Dr. Elizabeth Cunningham
- Ellison High School
    - Joshua Rainwater
- Harker Heights High School
    - Dr. Jorge Soldevila

2026 txEDCON Exhibition TAEA

- Killeen High School
    - Kamara Cruse
- Ellison High School
    - Emilia Jimenez Marrero
- Chaparral High School
    - Myrnaliz Resto Cintron
- Harker Heights High School
    - Nayeli Waggoner

NSCA School of Distinction

- Ellison High School
    - Dr. Walter Prater

President Brett Williams called for a recess at 6:37 p.m.

The Board reconvened from recess at **6:42 p.m.**

Agenda Item 4: Public Forum (Continuation of 5:00 p.m. Public Forum)

No members of the public signed up to speak during the forum.

President Brett Williams called to move forward to Agenda item 5I.

Agenda Item 5: Information Items for Discussion

5I. Discussion of District Optimization Scenarios for Future Consideration

Presenter: Scott Hequembourg and Adam Rich

Mr. Hequembourg explained that declining enrollment, reduced revenue, rising operating costs, and underutilized facilities are affecting public school districts throughout Texas. He noted that Killeen ISD previously implemented Optimization 1.0 and has been working to dispose of surplus properties and maintain responsible financial practices. The presentation highlighted the District's comparatively low tax rate, continued early-payment tax discount, and absence of a bond election since 2018. Mr. Hequembourg described projected reductions in federal Impact Aid and the financial pressures associated with special education services, employee compensation, inflation, and unfunded mandates. He reported that District enrollment had declined by more than 5,000 students over three years, including approximately 2,600 students in the most recent year. He identified declining birth rates, transfers to other districts, charter and virtual schools, and changing military-connected enrollment as factors contributing to the trend. He discussed efforts to improve academic performance and recruit military families as strategies for attracting and retaining students. The District used a 70 percent campus utilization threshold to identify facilities requiring additional consideration, while noting that higher utilization is generally more efficient. He stated that community feedback had generally favored consolidation over reductions in educational programs and services. Mr. Rich then presented potential elementary school consolidation and attendance-boundary scenarios for Board consideration. One proposal involved closing Venable Village Elementary School and rezoning its students to Meadows, Maxdale, and Iduma elementary schools. Another proposal involved closing Willow Springs Elementary School and adjusting several southwest-area attendance boundaries to distribute students among nearby campuses. Mr. Rich also reviewed a proposed Hay Branch Elementary School closure with students reassigned to Cavazos, Brookhaven, and Ira Cross elementary schools. He revisited the previously approved Cedar Valley Elementary School closure and described proposed refinements to the associated rezoning plan. A separate

boundary adjustment involving Nolanville and Skipcha elementary schools was presented to accommodate anticipated residential growth. Mr. Rich explained that the elementary scenarios were designed to improve building utilization and avoid future operating, maintenance, and renovation expenses. During the discussion of District Optimization 2.0. Mr. Rich presented options for Ellison High School, including attendance boundary adjustments, relocating Early College High School to Ellison as a school-within-a-school, and potentially closing Ellison for the 2028–2029 school year. He explained that maintaining Ellison would require substantial facility improvements, with a preliminary renovation estimate of approximately $103 million to address building systems, safety, instructional spaces, and other needs. The proposed Early College High School relocation would bring approximately 574 ninth- and tenth-grade students to Ellison, increasing campus utilization from approximately 65% to 85% while improving transportation efficiency. Under the closure scenario, Ellison students would be reassigned to other high schools, with projected five-year operating savings of $22.6 million and avoided near-term facility replacement costs of $8.1 million, although some families would face longer travel distances. Another alternative considered relocating Early College High School freshmen and sophomores to the Willow Springs facility following a possible elementary school closure and renovation. Mr. Rich estimated that approval of all proposed facility closures could yield approximately $43.9 million in five-year operating savings and avoid $28.6 million in lifecycle replacement costs. He further identified approximately $200 million in potential future renovation projects that could be avoided under the combined scenarios. The proposed engagement process included November community town halls, a return to the Board in December for further review, and subsequent implementation planning if proposals were approved. Board members discussed the financial implications, educational impacts, feeder patterns, student transitions, community impact, and alternative uses of Ellison High School. They also raised questions and concerns regarding projected renovation costs, utilization standards, equity, community input, and the need for careful consideration before any future decisions.

President Brett Williams called to move back to Agenda items as posted.

5A. Discussion Regarding Memorandum of Understanding with the Killeen ISD Education Foundation Triennial Review and Renewal

Presenter: Leslie Gilmore

Ms. Gilmore presented the triennial review and renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between Killeen Independent School District and the Killeen ISD Education Foundation,

explaining that the agreement has been in place since 2014 and that the proposed revisions were limited to correcting the Foundation's charter year to 2001, updating the effective date, and identifying its current officers. She reported that Erin Mills serves as Foundation President and Michelle Williams serves as Secretary and highlighted the Foundation's annual meeting, during which members reviewed programs, planned events, and established funding opportunities for the upcoming year. Ms. Gilmore shared that the Foundation distributed approximately $434,000 during the previous school year through scholarships, campus engagement initiatives, professional learning grants, recognition programs, and other contributions, bringing its cumulative support for district students, employees, and schools to more than $4.7 million. The Board requested an annual report summarizing the Foundation's distributions, Ms. Gilmore agreed to provide the information, and the item was recommended for placement on the Consent Agenda.

5B. Discussion of Proposed District Academic Calendar for the 2027-2028 School Year

Presenter: Will Baker and Dr. Rachelle Ysquierdo

Mr. Will Baker presented the proposed Killeen ISD academic calendar for the 2027–2028 school year, explaining that a committee led by Kristina Carter developed two calendar options following input from senior staff, district committees, and other stakeholders. He presented Option A proposed August 17, 2027, as the first day of school and May 26, 2028, as the last day, with 185 teacher contract days, 168 instructional days, and 76,536 instructional minutes, exceeding the state's minimum requirement and Option B proposed an August 18 start date and a different November workday arrangement, while both options incorporated feedback from Fort Hood and coordinated spring break with Central Texas College. Following a districtwide vote in which approximately 75 percent favored Option A, Mr. Baker recommended its approval and requested that the proposed calendar be placed on the Consent Agenda for the next Board meeting.

5C. Board Update – Human Resources

Presenter: Will Baker

Mr. Baker presented the Human Resources Board Update, outlining four primary areas of focus: compensation, staffing, professional development, and employee feedback and evaluation. He explained that the District is working with the Texas Education Agency and Steady State Impact to develop a strategic, performance-based compensation system that rewards teacher and campus administrator effectiveness rather than relying primarily on years of service. The proposed system would incorporate student achievement, evaluation results, campus

performance, and other measurable indicators while expanding eligibility for the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) program. Mr. Baker stated that the District hopes to qualify for enhanced TIA funding by the 2028–2029 school year and gradually implement the new compensation structure through evaluation, data collection, and transition periods. He reviewed the existing TIA distribution model, explaining that 90 percent of each allotment is awarded directly to the designated teacher while the remaining 10 percent supports team incentives or campus professional development under specified conditions. He also identified financial challenges associated with the current program, including approximately $500,000 in employer contributions and additional expenses for assessments, personnel, and data management. Trustees discussed the importance of recognizing effective educators, accounting for administrative costs, ensuring equitable participation, and acknowledging the contributions of instructional support personnel. Mr. Baker reported that starting hourly wages for non-exempt employees have increased to $14 and emphasized the District's commitment to maintaining competitive compensation and benefits. He highlighted the District's monthly health insurance contribution of $425, along with dental, vision, life insurance, employee assistance, and other voluntary benefits. Regarding staffing, Mr. Baker identified increasing the number of fully staffed campuses at the beginning of each school year and achieving 95 percent teacher certification as major district goals. He reported an 86 percent teacher retention rate and approximately 95 percent overall teacher staffing at the beginning of the 2026–2027 school year. He further explained that the number of teachers serving under District of Innovation permits had decreased to approximately 155, representing less than 6 percent of the teaching workforce. In response to Trustee questions about district optimization, Mr. Baker indicated that existing vacancies and positions currently filled by uncertified instructors could provide opportunities to reassign certified teachers affected by potential campus consolidations. He described ongoing recruitment and certification initiatives, including visiting international teachers, the KISD Teach program, teacher residencies, and paraprofessional apprenticeships. Mr. Baker reported that 19 participants in the KISD Teach program had graduated and highlighted expanded partnerships with universities and other organizations to strengthen the district's teacher pipeline. Dr. Rachelle Ysquierdo then presented the district's leadership development initiatives, introducing the Aspire Principal Academy and Emergent Leaders Academy as structured opportunities to prepare current employees for future leadership positions. She explained that 20 participants were selected for the Aspire Principal Academy and 25 participants were selected for the Emergent Leaders Academy through application reviews and leadership-readiness criteria. Dr. Ysquierdo outlined the academies' professional learning, coaching, campus-based assignments, and culminating leadership projects, emphasizing that scheduled sessions would not interfere with classroom instruction. Trustees requested clarification regarding participant selection, evaluation, career advancement opportunities, individualized feedback, and methods for measuring the programs' long-term effectiveness. Mr. Baker concluded by reporting that the District had implemented a

standardized evaluation form for non-campus professional employees across divisions, and Trustees expressed appreciation for the clarity and comprehensive nature of the Human Resources presentation.

President Brett Williams called for a recess at 9:50 p.m.

The Board reconvened from recess at **10:03 p.m.**

5D. Discussion of Liberty Hill Middle School and Killeen Elementary School Targeted Improvement Plans for the 2026-2027 School Year and Public Hearing

Presenters: Dawn Sills, Dr. Keonna White, Tomas Sias, Shakira Bodon, and Genevieve Manning

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At the Start of Presentation of Agenda Item 5D the Board Returned to Agenda Item 2: Closed Session as allowed by Texas Government Code 551.074

The Board entered closed session at **10:14 p.m.** for:

No action was taken in closed session.

The Board reconvened in open session at **11:38 p.m.**

Continuation of 5D. Discussion of Liberty Hill Middle School and Killeen Elementary School Targeted Improvement Plans for the 2026-2027 School Year and Public Hearing

Administration presented the proposed 2026–2027 Targeted Improvement Plans for Liberty Hill Middle School and Killeen Elementary School, emphasizing stronger instructional practices, leadership capacity, and student achievement. The presentation reviewed the accountability data underlying both campuses' identification for Comprehensive Support and Improvement under federal accountability requirements. Killeen Elementary School's Closing the Gaps score declined from 77 in 2025 to 48 in 2026, below the state's cutoff of 56, and its overall F rating also represented one year of unacceptable performance under state accountability. Liberty Hill Middle School's Closing the Gaps score declined from 82 to 55, resulting in a federal improvement designation, although its overall D rating did not trigger the same state designation. Administration explained that both campuses must remain outside the lowest five percent for two consecutive years and improve their Closing the Gaps scores above their identification-year results to exit federal improvement status. Trustees raised concerns about the underlying causes of declining performance, the particular needs of Killeen Elementary students, and whether district support adequately addressed those challenges. Administration

described districtwide instructional supports that include high-quality curriculum implementation, professional learning communities, lesson rehearsals, classroom observations, and individualized coaching. She explained that campus leaders are expected to complete at least six classroom walkthroughs and two coaching sessions, supplemented by weekly principal coaching and differentiated assistance for teachers requiring additional support. Killeen Elementary School receives additional instructional coaching, bilingual learning support, frequent progress monitoring, and weekly professional learning community meetings to strengthen classroom instruction and student interventions. Liberty Hill Middle School uses daily professional learning community cycles, regular assessment reviews, targeted teacher feedback, and dedicated district instructional coaches in reading and mathematics. Staff outlined ten milestones for each campus, centered on instructional leadership, curriculum fidelity, effective coaching, student interventions, and ongoing monitoring of implementation and results. Campus leaders described regular check-ins, classroom walkthroughs, analysis of student performance data, and adjustments to instructional practices as mechanisms for measuring progress toward their goals. During Board discussion, staff clarified that Killeen Elementary's goal is to achieve at least a C rating, while Liberty Hill's internal goal is a B, with improvement to a C identified as the nearer-term expectation. The targeted improvement plans were identified for consideration as an action item on November 10, and the associated public hearing was opened and closed without any registered speakers.

5E. Report on Board Audit Committee Meeting on September 29, 2026

Presenter: Board Vice President Mintz

Vice President Mintz provided a report on the September 29, 2026, Board Audit Committee meeting, which lasted approximately 90 minutes and included substantial discussion regarding the committee's direction, its responsibilities, and the scope of future audit activities. He explained that discussions with the district's audit consultants, were anticipated before the next Board meeting, when a proposed audit plan and associated costs would be presented for Board consideration, and clarified that the report was provided for informational purposes only.

5F. Discussion Regarding a Resolution Approving the Sale of the Real Property (surface only), Together with Any and All Improvements for the Property Commonly Known as Former Gateway, 4100 Zephyr Rd., Killeen, Texas

Presenter: Adam Rich

Mr. Rich presented the proposed resolution authorizing the sale of the former Gateway property, located at 4100 Zephyr Road. He reported that the property is no longer needed for District operations following Gateway's relocation to the former Palo Alto Middle School and noted that maintaining decommissioned properties typically costs the District approximately $90,000 to $100,000 annually. Mr. Rich explained that the district's Police Department is expected to relocate from the property in June 2027 and that the proposed resolution would designate the property as surplus effective July 1, 2027, with any sale closing occurring after

that date. He outlined the required notification to charter schools, property advertising, competitive bidding process, and anticipated Board consideration of bids in spring 2027, and recommended placing the resolution on the next Consent Agenda for approval.

5G. Discussion Regarding a Resolution Approving the Sale of the Real Property (surface only), Together with Any and All Improvements for the Property Commonly Known as Killeen Learning Support Services, 902 N 10th St., Killeen, Texas

Presenter: Adam Rich

Mr. Rich presented the proposed resolution declaring the Killeen Learning Support Services property, located at 902 North 10th Street in Killeen, Texas, surplus to District needs and authorizing staff to begin the property sale process through advertising and an invitation for bids. He explained that the relocation of district administrative staff to the new Administration Building and the district's data center to Alice W. Douse Elementary School eliminated the need for the property, and administration recommended placing the resolution on the next Consent Agenda for Board approval.

5H. Discussion Regarding a Resolution Approving the Sale of the Real Property (surface only), Together with Any and All Improvements for the Property Commonly Known as Peebles Elementary School, 1800 N WS Young Dr., Killeen, Texas

Presenter: Adam Rich

Mr. Rich presented the proposed resolution declaring the former Peebles Elementary School property, located at 1800 North W. S. Young Drive in Killeen, Texas, surplus to District needs, allowing staff to initiate the sale process through property advertising and an invitation for bids. He explained that the property would no longer be needed for District purposes following the school's closure after the 2025–2026 school year and recommended placing the proposed resolution on the next Consent Agenda for Board consideration.

Agenda Item 6: Consent Agenda

6A. Receive and Approve Minutes for September 29, 2026, Regular Meeting
6B. Receive and Approve Minutes for October 6, 2026, Workshop Meeting
6C. Consideration of District, Campus, and Local Improvement Plans for the 2026-2027 School Year

6D. Consideration of Quarterly and Annual Investment Reports for the Periods Ending August 31, 2026.

- **Motion:** Brenda Adams
- **Second:** Tina Capito
- **Vote:** 6-0-1-0
    - **For:** Oliver Mintz, Brenda Adams, Susan M. Jones, Marvin Rainwater, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
    - **Against:** None
    - **Abstained:** Brett E. Williams
    - **Absent:** None

Agenda Item 7: Discussion of Future Board Meeting Agendas and Trustee Remarks

Trustee Tina Capito expressed appreciation to District staff for their dedication and hard work throughout the District optimization process. Trustee Rodney Gilchrist echoed her appreciation, acknowledging the challenges facing the District and recognizing employees for their efforts in preparing for the transition to the new Administration Building. He also noted the significance of the meeting being the Board's final meeting in its current location and commended staff for their contributions to the relocation. Board President Brett Williams recognized Breast Cancer Awareness Month, encouraged individuals to remain proactive about cancer screenings, and offered encouragement to those battling cancer. President Williams also expressed gratitude to former Board members for their leadership, financial stewardship, and decisions that made the District's transition to a new Administration Building possible. The remarks concluded with additional expressions of appreciation for District employees and leadership as the Board prepared to begin conducting meetings in its new location.

Agenda Item 9: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

- **Motion:** Rodney Gilchrist
- **Second:** Tina Capito
- **Vote:** 7-0-0-0
    - **For:** Brett E. Williams, Oliver Mintz, Brenda Adams, Susan M. Jones, Marvin Rainwater, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
    - **Against:** None
    - **Abstained:** None
    - **Absent:** None

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at **12:08 a.m.**

Signatures

Brett E. Williams	Brenda Adams
Board President	Board Secretary