

Belton Independent School District

Board Meeting Minutes

Regular Board Meeting, October 20, 2025 - 6:15 p.m.

Pittenger Fine Arts Center, 400 N. Wall Street, Belton, TX 76513

Board Members Present:

Manuel Alcozer
Chris Flor
Rucker Preston
Jeff Norwood
Brandon Bozon
Riley Beck

Board Members Absent:

Erin Bass

1. Call to Order, Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

Manuel Alcozer, Board President, called the regular meeting of the Belton Independent School District Board of Trustees to order at 6:28pm. He stated that a quorum of Board Members was present, noted Ms. Erin Bass was absent, that the meeting had been duly called, and notice of the meeting had been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Chapter 551.

2. Recognitions

Student Pledges – Hubbard Branch Elementary School

This evening, the pledges were led by Hubbard Branch Elementary students Logan Anderson, first grader, and Sophia Ladof, third grader.

Student Showcase – Lake Belton High School Floral Design

Belton ISD showcased the creativity and skill of Lake Belton High School's Floral Design students. In these courses, students learn design principles, color theory and floral techniques. Beyond the classroom, they explore the business side of the floral industry, gaining real-world skills in customer service, sales and event preparation. Belton ISD offers Floral Design, Advanced Floral Design and Practicum in Floral Design. Last year, more than 200 students earned Texas State Florists' Association certification, showcasing their creativity and career-ready skills.

Special Olympics Bocce Ball

The Board is proud to recognize the Belton Champion Special Olympics Team. On Saturday, September 27, the team competed in the Area 12 Bocce Competition in Waco and brought home six gold, three silver and two bronze medals. This achievement reflects not only the athletes' perseverance and teamwork but also the support of their coaches and sponsors, Lauren Marx, Misty Norwood and Donna Shriner. The Belton Champions will return to competition on Friday, October 24 for the Area 12 Bowling Competition at Fort Hood.

Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars

Belton ISD proudly recognized 248 high school students that were named Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars by the College Board for their outstanding performance on AP exams taken last spring. This year, 128 students earned the title of AP Scholar, 44 achieved AP Scholar with Honor and 76 were recognized as AP Scholars with Distinction. Students who achieve an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, along with scores of 3 or higher on four or more exams, earn the title of AP Scholar with Honor. In Belton ISD, this distinction was awarded to 44

students—2 from Belton New Tech @Waskow, 17 from Belton High School and 25 from Lake Belton High School.

BigFuture Merit Award Recipients

Belton ISD celebrated students from Belton High School, Lake Belton High School and Belton New Tech High School @Waskow who have been honored through the College Board's BigFuture Merit Awards for their outstanding academic achievements. This year, 163 Belton ISD students earned this distinction. Belton High School recognized 63 students, including 9 first-generation honorees and 54 for school achievement. Belton New Tech High School @Waskow celebrated 21 students, including 3 first-generation honorees and 18 for school achievement. Lake Belton High School recognized 79 students, including 11 first-generation honorees and 68 for school achievement.

National Merit Scholars

Belton ISD commended four outstanding students for their achievements in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program. Belton High School seniors Anahitaa Malhotra and Katherine Nickerson have been recognized as National Merit Commended Scholars for their exceptional academic promise, ranking among the top 50,000 students nationwide. Lake Belton High School seniors Dhruv Bhat and Alex Yuen have been named National Merit Semifinalists—an honor that places them among the top one percent of high school seniors nationwide. As semifinalists, they are now eligible to continue in the competition for two of approximately 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$30 million.

The Journey of a Graduate Milestones Award

Belton ISD is proud to introduce the Journey of a Graduate Milestones Award, a new recognition honoring middle school students who exemplify the district's core competencies—communication, collaboration, perseverance, adaptability, empathy and critical thinking. The Board recognized the first recipient, John Hodges, an eighth grader at Lake Belton Middle School, nominated by Sydney McAfee, a sixth-grade English Language Arts teacher and National Junior Honor Society sponsor, for his exceptional communication and collaboration skills.

Purple Star Campus Designations

Belton ISD is proud to recognize three new campuses that have earned the Purple Star Campus Designation from the Texas Education Agency: Chisholm Trail Elementary, High Point Elementary and Lake Belton Middle School. This honor recognizes schools that go above and beyond to support military-connected students and families. With nearly 30 percent of Belton ISD's students identified as military-connected, these campuses demonstrate the district's strong commitment to creating welcoming, supportive environments for all learners. These schools join Lakewood Elementary, Southwest Elementary, Belton Middle School and Belton High School, bringing Belton ISD's total to seven Purple Star campuses across the district—a proud reflection of the Big Red Community's continued dedication to serving those who serve our nation.

Temple Rotary Educator of the Month

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Ashley Miers as the Temple Rotary Club's Educator of the Month for September for her outstanding service to students in the Delta 18+ Program.

Now in her ninth year in education and second with Delta, Ashley brings passion and heart to her work every day. While raising her children, she served as a paraprofessional at Belton High

School and earned her degree and special education certification from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Belton Rotary Educator of the Quarter

Ms. Melissa Johnson is being recognized by the Belton Rotary Club as the Rotary Educator of the Quarter for her outstanding service to Belton ISD. She serves as a kindergarten teacher at Southwest Elementary School and is in her eighth year in education, including two years at Southwest.

Department Showcase - Principals Month

Each October, we join schools across the country in celebrating National Principals Month—a time to recognize the incredible leaders who make such a difference on our campuses every single day. We're proud to recognize our Belton ISD principals: Sheila Surovik, Cheyenne Babb, Ashlie Thomas, Sydnie Sewell, Courtney Brewer, Lexie Newberry, Holly Griffith, Amber Ross, Rebecca Vaughn, Felicia Gibson, Debi Younger, Brooke Itz, Megan Crook, Rachel Ramirez, Dominic White, Akeiah Cipolla, Claudia Knox, Steele Hantgin, Dr. Kimberly Winters, Tammie Baggerly and William Yuengel.

Community Partner Recognition – Lena Armstrong Public Library and the Friends of the Belton Public Library

The Board celebrated the Lena Armstrong Public Library and the Friends of the Belton Public Library as this month's Community Partner recipients. This partnership reflects the power of community support in fostering a love of reading and learning across Belton ISD. We are grateful to the Lena Armstrong Public Library and the Friends of the Belton Public Library for their dedication to our students and schools.

3. Public Comments Regarding Items on the Agenda

None.

4. Public Hearing

A. Public Hearing Regarding the 2024-2025 School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) Report

Melissa Lafferty, Chief Financial Officer, gave an overview of the Schools FIRST rating system, a report based on district staff, student, and financial data for the prior school year as reported to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), with the primary goal of reporting the overall financial health of a school district's financial resources.

Ms. Lafferty reviewed the 20 indicators in the worksheet for the report and noted that BISD received a rating of (A) Superior with a score of 98 for 2024-2025 based on 2023-2024 fiscal year data. She also explained that a public hearing is required for this report.

Mr. Alcozer opened the public hearing at 7:07 p.m. There were no comments during the hearing therefore the hearing was closed at 7:07 p.m.

Chris Flor expressed his sincere thanks to the Business Services team for their work on this annual report.

5. Action Item:

A. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding School Library Advisory Council Recommendation for Library Materials Purchase

Ms. Gabi Nino, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, provided a presentation on the School Library Advisory Council (SLAC) and the rigorous, multi-layered process librarians use for book selection, including reviewing multiple professional sources and considering age, interest level, and curriculum alignment. Ms. Nino presented the SLACs unanimous recommendation to approve 700 books for purchase, explaining the large list was due to consolidating orders delayed by the conclusion of the 89th Legislative Session and its impact on Senate Bill 13.

Mr. Riley Beck praised the SLACs proactive work, stating he was impressed that they were moving quickly to get books approved, which helps maintain student excitement about reading. He also clarified that multiple protective layers exist to address concerns about books.

Brandon Bozon made a motion, seconded by Rucker Preston, to approve the attached list of library books recommended by the School Library Advisory Council as presented. The motion passed unanimously, (6-0-0).

6. Reports:

A. Annual Emergent Bilingual Report

Ms. Nino highlighted that Belton ISD serves over 50 languages, primarily Spanish, through dual language (PreK-5) and ESL services. She justified the dual language model by citing research showing sustained academic growth for students through high school compared to transitional programs. Noting a sharp increase in Biology performance, Ms. Nino recommended expanding the use of hands-on, phenomenon-based learning across all content areas to enhance language acquisition, particularly in math where declines were observed. See report.

B. Goal 5 Teacher Incentive Allotment Report

Mr. Todd Schiller, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, provided an update on the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) data capture year for the 25-26 school year, noting that data on student growth (STAR Renaissance) and teacher evaluation (T-TESS) will be submitted to the Texas Tech University in late 2026, with the first payments anticipated in June 2027. He presented the anticipated funding ranges for designated teachers, emphasizing that the dollar amounts are determined annually by TEA based on campus economic disadvantage and are subject to change. Mr. Schiller outlined the proposed spending plan, which reserves 90% of the allotment for teacher compensation and holds back the remaining 10% for administrative costs, professional learning, and developing assessments. See report.

C. School Health Advisory Council Report

Dr. Cassandra Spearman, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, presented the annual report for the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), a body that vets wellness curriculum and makes policy recommendations for school health. She reported that SHAC completed a triennial assessment and achieved a comprehensive score of 70 (well above the national average of 54). The assessment revealed areas where the district needed to codify existing practices, such as ensuring written policy on the availability of water and confirming that recess cannot be taken for punishment. SHAC updated the wellness plan based on these findings and will focus in the upcoming year on studying legislative changes regarding consent forms and continuing community health partnerships. See report.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Malinda Golden shared highlights from across the District to include the Delta program open house and recent campus visits with board members (Sparta, Leon Heights, High Point, Charter Oak). Dr. Golden shared that she participated in a routine with the Magic Bells dance program and launched the first Superintendent Student Advisory Council meeting of the year, which will help develop a student leadership profile aligned to the District's definition of leadership.

D. Board Highlights

Chris Flor led the conversation by noting the Delta Program ribbon-cutting, the Men's Breakfast at First Methodist Church, the Temple Public Policy meeting and the Belton Chamber event. Jeff Norwood encouraged Board members to attend Camp Champion and Special Olympic events, stressing the amazing impact these experiences have with everyone involved, specifically general education students. He gave a special thanks to the "unseen people"—volunteers, parents, staff, and teachers—who work behind the scenes at school events (like concession stand workers and ticket takers) because, without their dedication, the events would not happen. Brandon Bozon commented on the Belton Education Foundation Red Carpet Event and thanked their committee leaders for all of their hard work. Rucker Preston detailed attending campus visits, a Lake Belton High School game (where he observed the Stampede band), a tennis team send-off at Belton High School, and the Belton High School production of *Witches and Salem*, and Riley Beck reported on his campus visits (Hubbard Branch, Southwest, Sparta, and Leon Heights). He was particularly impressed by one elementary school's dedicated win-time used for differentiated learning, which he viewed as a successful, large-scale implementation of differentiated learning.

7. Consent Agenda: Consider and Take Appropriate Action

A. Minutes of Previous Meetings:

1. September 15, 2025 - Workshop Minutes
2. September 15, 2025 - Regular Minutes
3. September 24, 2025 - Special Minutes

B. Unaudited Financial Report for the Month Ending September 30, 2025

C. Gifts, Grants, and Bequests

D. Budget Amendment #1 for 2025-2026

E. Expenditures over \$50,000

1. CEV Multimedia, LLC for Instructional Materials
2. CDW-G for Paraprofessional Staff Device Refresh
3. Sustained Leaders for Strong Foundations LASO Grant
4. Hellas Construction, Inc. for Tiger Field Stadium Lighting
5. Renewal of SHI Government Solutions, Inc. for Microsoft Office 365 Renewal

F. Supply, Equipment, and Service Bids

1. RFQ #2509-600-392 - Project Management Services
2. RFP #2509-475-393 - HVAC Unit Replacements (Various Campuses) 2022 Bond Project

G. Appointment of 2025-2026 School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

Rucker Preston made a motion, seconded by Jeff Norwood, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously, (6-0-0).

8. Public Comments Regarding Non-Agenda Items

Gary L. Kent - Board Appreciation

9. Closed Session (Texas Government Code, Subchapters D and E)

The Board went into closed session at 8:38 p.m.

- A. Student Disciplinary Matter - Texas Government Code, Section 551.082
- B. Personnel - Texas Government Code, Section 551.074
- C. Consultation with Attorney - Texas Government Code, Section 551.071

10. Reconvene in Open Session

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 8:48 p.m.

11. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Manuel Alcozer, President

Erin Bass, Secretary