Minutes of Special Meeting - Grievance Hearing

The Board of Trustees
Leander Independent School District
STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF WILLIAMSON

A Special Meeting of the Board Grievance Committee of the Leander Independent School District was held on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, beginning at 6:15 PM in Linda Lippe Instructional Materials Center, 1775 W New Hope Drive, B1001.01 and B1001.02, Cedar Park, Texas 78613. The following members were present: Anna Smith, Sade Fashokun, and Trish Bode.

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM**
2. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

   Three citizens addressed the Board Grievance Committee.
3. **LEVEL III COMPLAINT**

   A. OPEN SESSION – Board Grievance Committee heard and deliberated Level III grievances by Paul Gauthier.

   B. CLOSED SESSION – The Board Grievance Committee went into closed session at 6:47 p.m. to consult with its attorney after the Presiding Officer, Anna Smith, announced the right to do so under Texas Government Code 551.071. The Board Grievance Committee returned to open session at 6:59 p.m.
4. **ACTION PURSUANT TO CLOSED SESSION**

   Trustee Fashokun moved that the committee consolidate and address the concerns raised in Mr. Gauthier's grievance dated July 22, 2026, in the decision pertaining to his June 4, 2026 grievance. The motion was seconded by Trustee Bode. The motion passed 3:0. Trish Bode: In favor, Sade Fashokun: In favor, Anna Smith: In favor.

   Trustee Bode moved that the committee adopt the attached written decision, which was read into the record. The motion was seconded by Trustee Fashokun. The motion passed 3:0. Trish Bode: In favor, Sade Fashokun: In favor, Anna Smith: In favor.
5. **ADJOURNMENT**

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, HAVING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, ADJOURNED THE MEETING.

Time: 7:19 PM

These minutes were read and approved by the Board of Trustees on the 17th day of August 2026.

_____ _____

President Secretary

Copies of Board information referred to are attached to the official minutes or filed in the office indicated.

Leander ISD Board Grievance Committee (Level III) Decision
Texas Education Code §26A.001(e)(6) – GF (LOCAL)

Committee Meeting: July 14, 2026 & August 11, 2026
Grievant: Paul Gauthier, Trustee – Place 7
Level I Hearing Officer: NA
Level II Hearing Officer: NA
Level III Grievance Committee Members: Trustees Smith – Place 4; Bode – Place 1; Fashokun – Place 5[1]
Grievance hearing in closed or open meeting: Open
Recording: Video

The Board Grievance Committee acts under authority of the LISD Board of Trustees, which delegated final decision-making authority to the committee in accordance with LISD Board Operating Procedures and Texas Education Code §26A.001(d). Per Education Code §26A.001(d), the board of trustees of a school district may delegate the authority to hear and decide a grievance to a committee of at least three members composed only of members of the board of trustees. A decision of the committee is a decision of the board of trustees. *Id*. A quorum for the LISD Board Grievance Committee is three members of the board.

This grievance is being initiated at Level III (bypassing Levels I and II), because it was filed by a trustee pursuant to Leander ISD Board Policy GF and seeks relief that, at least in part, can be granted only by the Board. A quorum of the Board Grievance Committee met on July 14, 2026, to hear Trustee Gauthier's grievance. The same Board Grievance Committee met again on August 11, 2026, to hear another grievance filed by Gauthier on July 22, 2026. The subject matter of the two grievances is related. The two grievances are hereby consolidated and addressed in this written decision.

Background – June 4, 2026 Grievance

On June 4, 2026, Trustee Paul Gauthier filed a grievance about how he was treated by staff upon arrival at the Leander ISD Administration Building at 9:59 a.m. on May 27, 2026,[2] for a meeting with the Superintendent of Schools. Trustee Gauthier avers that he was treated differently than another trustee who arrived at approximately the same time. Specifically, Trustee Gauthier states that the other trustee was granted access to the secure area behind reception and allowed to go up unescorted, while Trustee Gauthier was made to

[1] While the Grievant complains of previous actions of the Leander ISD Board of Trustees as a whole, no specific member of the Board or this Board Grievance Committee was named as a subject of the grievance for purposes of recusal under Texas Education Code §26A.001(e)(2). To the extent the Grievant contends that it is a conflict of interest for Board members to hear a grievance concerning prior actions of the Board, he filed his grievance under local policy, which per state law requires the Board to ultimately address it.
[2] The Grievant listed an incorrect date of June 27, 2026; the actions in question occurred on May 27, 2026.

wait for a staff member to escort him to the Superintendent's office. Trustee Gauthier complains that he is the only trustee who has to be escorted to get in. This, he claims, is a violation of his civil rights under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Trustee Gauthier complains that there is a two-tier system of treatment and that he is treated differently than other trustees.

As relief, Trustee Gauthier requests:

1. A detailed list of all board members who arrive at central office;
2. The district's protocols for entry by the receptionists who let them in;
3. An apology for the 2-tier standard of treatment of himself v. other board members;
4. An apology for sexual harassment he claimed to have endured while on the board; and
5. To be put on board committees.

Decision, Basis for Decision, Relief Requested:

1. **A detailed list of all board members who arrive at central office:** Prior to the Level III presentation, the District provided Trustee Gauthier a list of visitors to central office, including board members. This list is included in the Level III record (Tab 6). Accordingly, this request for relief is moot as it has already been granted to Trustee Gauthier.

2. **The district's protocols for entry by the receptionists who let them in:** Prior to the Level III presentation, the District provided Trustee Gauthier with the district's protocols for entry to district facilities. The protocols are included in the Level III record. Tabs 1G; 7. Accordingly, this request for relief is moot as it has already been granted to Trustee Gauthier.

   Those policies and protocols are as follows and apply to <u>all</u> trustees as confirmed by Board Grievance Committee members:

Visits to District Facilities	A Board member who wishes to visit a campus or school facility in their official capacity shall notify the Superintendent. The Superintendent's office shall coordinate the visit with the principal or supervisor. A Board member shall adhere to any posted requirements for visitors to first report to the main office of a District facility, including a school campus. Visits during the school or business day shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or District operations. [See also GKC] At no time shall a Board member visit a campus, school program, or District facility in an attempt to evaluate personnel.

Visitors in the Workplace

Policy ***GKC***

All visitors are expected to enter any LISD facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on LISD premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge. Employees who are visitors to other campuses are required to sign in.

Security and Safeguarding District Property

All employees are responsible for safeguarding district property from loss or damages. Employees should:

- Safeguard keys, badge, and district technology resources from theft or misuse at all times by keeping them in sight or secured.
- Do not leave keys or badges lying on a desk or hanging on the wall.
- Do not loan keys or badges to anyone.
- Report lost keys or badges immediately to your campus or department office.
- Do not leave district technology resources in an unlocked car or building.
- Ensure exterior doors are locked and secured if kept locked during the day or if after hours.
- Do not prop open exterior doors; promptly report doors that do not secure properly.
- Question individuals without a badge or visitor identification by asking, "May I help you?" and directing/escorting them to the campus or department office.
- Report suspicious or threatening situations to the campus/department office. Be sure to note any details that may be needed. If necessary, or if after hours, call 911 to report, then call the facility's supervisor.

3. **An apology for the 2-tier standard of treatment of himself v. other board members:** This request is denied. The record contains protocols regarding trustees visiting school facilities; these protocols apply to all trustees. Trustees Fashokun and Bode explained that the above protocols are applied to them in the same manner and that they've had the exact same experience of being escorted in district facilities as Trustee Gauthier. There is no two-tier standard of treatment.

4. **An apology for sexual harassment he claimed to have endured while on the board:** The Board denies Trustee Gauthier's claims of sexual harassment. Trustee Gauthier's claims have been investigated by local police and have also been the subject of a prior complaint to the Texas Education Agency, which was dismissed. Additionally, Trustee Gauthier was previously given the opportunity to address this matter with the Board of Trustees. These claims have no merit. Accordingly, his request for an apology is denied.

5. **To be put on board committees:** Leander ISD Board Operating Procedures provide that trustees may be removed from board committees for failure to comply with board policies and procedures. At a meeting held by the Leander ISD Board on May 23, 2024, the Board considered and took action on a subject on the agenda entitled, "Authority of Trustee Paul Gauthier – Access to District Facilities & Employees," because Trustee Gauthier was not following board procedures—namely

that he repeatedly showed up to district facilities and attempted to gain unauthorized entry to school facilities and access to staff in order to "evaluate" staff. At the July 14, 2026 grievance hearing, Trustee Smith reviewed some of the circumstances that resulted in the Board taking this action including that Trustee Gauthier showed up unannounced to the Transportation Department during a transportation staff meeting where he insisted on joining a staff meeting, proceeded to sit on the floor, cried, and generally disrupted the meeting for over an hour. Transportation had to stop the meeting to deal with Trustee Gauthier. On another occasion, Trustee Gauthier went to Rouse High School at the back gate where he demanded that a student let him, which is a violation of safety/security protocols. When the student expressed hesitation for violating safety protocols, Trustee Gauthier told the student, "Let me in. Do you know who I am?" On other occasions, Trustee Gauthier went to Larkspur Elementary, Vandergrift High School, Henry Middle School, North Elementary, Cox Elementary, and Transportation Central all without following protocol. Trustee Gauthier has also attempted to intimidate other board members by showing up at schools their children attend. Trustee Gauthier has stated that the purpose of these unannounced visits is to "evaluate" staff and "find dirt." These actions do not comport with adopted policy, protocol, or Board Operating Procedures (BOPs) for Leander ISD trustees.

Accordingly, the Board acted to address Trustee Gauthier's authority as a school board member and noncompliance with district protocols. The board's action is reflected in the minutes of the May 23, 2024, meeting and included in the Level III record for this grievance (Tab 4):

"In light of Trustee Gauthier's continued willful disregard for the LISD Board Operating Procedures, I move that: Board Policy B[B]E(LOCAL) be amended to include language from the Board Operating Procedures about trustee visits to District facilities; and Paul Gauthier be removed from all District and Board committees; and the Board hereby authorize the Superintendent or other appropriate administrators to file criminal trespass complaints against Trustee Gauthier if he continues to attempt to gain unauthorized entry to school facilities; and the Board direct the Superintendent to notify all district administrators and supervisors that Paul Gauthier is not permitted to attend staff meetings or otherwise enter classrooms or buildings unless he has made prior arrangements through the office of the Superintendent; and that Board Officers work with the District's communication team to deliver messaging to the staff about the appropriate role of school board trustees. This motion, made by Christine Mauer and seconded by Francesca Romans, passed six in favor and one, Paul Gauthier, opposed."

Additionally, Trustee Gauthier's defiant refusal to complete board training as required by state law continues to be the reason he is not appointed to board committees. Board training is required by state law, and during trustees' oath of office they pledge to uphold the laws of the state. Board Policy BBD(LEGAL) reflects state training requirements. For example, "A trustee must complete any training

required by the State Board of Education (SBOE). *Education Code 11.159*." The purpose of such trainings is to help trustees fulfill their responsibilities as trustees. Trainings are to be completed annually. Additionally, trustees are also supposed to be trained on how to evaluate student academic performance, setting individual campus goals for early childhood literacy, mathematics, and college and career readiness. Such training provides research-based information to board members that is designed to support the oversight role of school boards as outlined in Education Code 11.1515. Also, the purpose of the continuing education is to facilitate board meetings. Furthermore, the minimum continuing education requirements include instruction in school board behaviors that are correlated with improved student outcomes. BBD(LEGAL); 19 TAC 61.1.

"The continuing education required under Education Code 11.159 applies to <u>each</u> member of the board." See BBD(LEGAL); 19 TAC 61.1. "At the last regular board meeting before an election of trustees, the board president shall announce the name of each board member who has completed the required continuing education, who has exceeded the required hours of continuing education, and who is deficient in meeting the required continuing education as of the anniversary of the date of each board member's election or appointment to the board or two-year anniversary of his or her previous training, as applicable." See BBD(LEGAL); 19 TAC 61.1; Education Code 11.159. Trustee Gauthier has been deficient in board training for years, despite efforts by the Board President to make Trustee Gauthier aware of different types of training opportunities. Tab 5. When asked why he has not completed the required training, Trustee Gauthier responded that there is no penalty under the Education Code and that he cannot be removed from office for not getting required training. Trustee Gauthier appears to remain defiant about completing training as required by state law for school board trustees, because he thinks the Texas Education Agency cannot or will not do anything to him.

Additionally, through the adoption of the Leander ISD Board Operating Procedures (BOPs), the LISD board has underscored the importance of training. The BOPs address trustee violations of expectations. The Board may implement corrective actions, including imposing additional training requirements and removal from committees, among other actions. The BOPs provide that trustees shall not use their position to coerce or intimidate staff, students, or members of the community. Nor shall trustees use their position to interfere with the day-to-day operations of the district.

The Board values these required trainings, because they inform the work of trustees when they serve on committees. It is within the Board's authority to require training to serve on committees and to deny a trustee's ability to participate on committees, especially when, year after year, a trustee is deficient in required trainings.

Under BBE(LOCAL), a trustee who wishes to visit a campus or school facility in his or her official capacity shall notify the Superintendent. The Superintendent's office shall coordinate the visit with the principal or supervisor. A Board member shall adhere to any posted requirements for visitors to first report to the main office at a District facility, including a school campus. At no time shall a Board member visit a campus, school program or District facility in an attempt to evaluate personnel. See BBE(LOCAL). Trustee Gauthier has not complied with this policy.

Under BBF(LOCAL), Leander ISD trustees have adopted policy pertaining to the ethics of trustees including several provisions that are relevant to this grievance:

- I will govern with excellence, which means adherence to policy-making principles, respect of roles, active participation in the monitoring process, and ensure effective governance capability into the future.
- This self-discipline of excellence applies to my attendance, assisting in meetings beginning on time, and being prepared for all meetings.
- I will work for the benefit of all students, not focusing on the needs of any one group to the exclusion of others.
- I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance or my responsibilities.
- I will not use my position for personal gain or exert undue influence over others.
- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
- I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

Trustee Gauthier claims to have been treated differently; however, he did not claim to have been treated differently based on a class protected by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Trustee Gauthier was treated the same as other trustees. Paradoxically, Trustee Gauthier actually seeks to be allowed privileges that other trustees are not– being able to enter district facilities in ways that violate the district's safety and security protocols and the Board's rules for visiting facilities, and by being allowed to be on board committees while flouting state requirements for board trainings and the Board's ethical standards. For these reasons, all other relief sought by Trustee Gauthier is denied.

Background – July 22, 2026 Grievance

On July 22, 2026, Trustee Gauthier filed another grievance claiming that his civil rights grievance (June 4, 2026 grievance) should have been heard by the Texas Education Agency "as the panel of board members were also the accused." Yet, Trustee Gauthier did not file

these grievances with TEA. Moreover, the June 4 grievance did not identify individual trustees as the subject of the grievance.

By invoking the procedures of the District's local grievance process, which culminates in a hearing before the LISD board, Trustee Gauthier's position is internally inconsistent. He cannot properly ask the Board to decide a matter and, in the next breath, argue that the Board acted improperly by taking up the matter necessary to make that decision. All remedies sought by the Grievant and not already provided in this decision are denied.

Documents relied upon - See Level III Grievance Record.

1A - 1H	Policy GF(LEGAL) – Public Complaints Policy GF(LOCAL) – Public Complaints Policy GKC(LEGAL) – Community Relations Visitors Policy GKC(LOCAL) – Community Relations Visitors Policy BBD(LEGAL) – Board Members: Training and Orientation Policy BBD(LOCAL) – Board Members: Training and Orientation Policy BBE(LOCAL) – Board Members: Authority Policy BBF(LOCAL) – Board Members: Ethics	Record 002 - 005 Record 006 - 011 Record 012 - 014 Record 015 Record 016 - 024 Record 025 Record 026 - 027 Record 028 - 029
BOARD GRIEVANCE DOCUMENTS		
2	Board Grievance Filing	Record 030 - 032
BOARD LEVEL GRIEVANCE DOCUMENTS		
3	2025 Board Operating Procedures	Record 033 - 054
4	Minutes May 23, 2024 at 6:15 PM- Regular Meeting	Record 055 - 058
5	Minutes October 23, 2025 at 6:15 PM - Regular Meeting	Record 059 - 065
6	Leander ISD Sign-In Logs	Record 066 - 124
7	Employee Handbook Notice	Record 125 - 126

Additionally, the Board incorporates the following as part of this decision and the record of this grievance: the July 22, 2026 Grievance Filing; the agendas for the July 14, 2026 and August 11, 2026 meetings; the recordings of the meetings, and the minutes of the meetings.