

Belton Independent School District

Board Meeting Minutes

Regular Board Meeting, July 21, 2025 - 6:15 p.m.

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

Board Members Present:

Manuel Alcozer
Chris Flor
Erin Bass
Jeff Norwood
Brandon Bozon
Riley Beck

Board Members Absent:

Rucker Preston

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 6:15 p.m. He stated that a quorum of Board Members was present, noted that Manuel Alcozer and Erin Bass were absent, that the meeting had been duly called, and that notice of the meeting had been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Chapter 551.

2.

Recognitions

Student Pledges – Leon Heights Elementary School

This evening, the pledges were led by Leon Heights Elementary students Ava Littlefield and Hayes Dubberly.

HOSA International Qualifiers

Belton ISD recognized Belton and Lake Belton High Schools who have qualified as international competitors in HOSA—Future Health Professionals.

Tristan Hernandez and Anya Jinadatha from Belton High School advanced in the categories of phlebotomy and research poster, while Olivia Gallant from Lake Belton High School qualified in personal care. Their sponsors are Stephanie Yaryan and Mary Keeton.

Department Showcase – Custodial Department

This month's department showcase shines a spotlight on the hard-working team in BISD Custodial Services, led by Custodial Director Maria Garcia and Supervisors Francisca Guzman and Nathan Coleman.

This dedicated team of 116 custodians works year-round to maintain clean, safe and welcoming campuses across the district—covering more than two million square feet of space each day.

New Administrator Introduction

Amber Ross, Hubbard Branch Elementary Principal

Amber Ross has been named principal of Hubbard Branch Elementary in Belton ISD. With more than 20 years of experience in public education, she has served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal and principal. Ross joined Belton ISD in 2024 and previously served as assistant principal at Chisholm Trail Elementary. Ross holds a bachelor's degree from Southeastern Oklahoma State University and a master's degree in educational leadership from Walden University.

Community Partner Recognition – Belton Education Foundation

The Board recognized the Belton Education Foundation (BEF) as our Community Partner Showcase.

BEF plays a vital role in supporting students and staff across Belton ISD through generous classroom grants, scholarships, and professional development opportunities. Their impact is driven by a committed team of board members, executive committee members, and a three-person staff—each bringing diverse perspectives from across the Belton ISD community.

Last year alone, the foundation awarded \$124,797.26 in classroom grants to 36 teachers and \$375,500 in scholarships to 174 students—directly funding innovative ideas, student opportunities, and meaningful postsecondary dreams.

3. Public Comments Regarding Items on the Agenda

None.

4. Action Items

A. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding the 2025-2026 Compensation Plan

Todd Schiller, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, recommended approval of the proposed compensation plan, which includes the following:

Classroom Teachers (3-4 yrs. experience \$2500; 5+ yrs. \$5000)* - 7%

Classroom Teachers (0-2 yrs. experience \$600)** - 1%

Librarians/nurses** - 1%

Auxiliary (bus drivers, maintenance, custodial, etc.)** - 50 cents/hour increase - 3.3%

Para Professionals (campus)** - 50 cents/hour increase - 3.3%

Professionals**(from midpoint) - 1%

Administration (from midpoint) - 1%

School Nutrition Staff^ - \$1/hour increase

Funding Sources: *Teacher Retention Allotment, **Staff Retention Allotment, ^School Nutrition Fund, Local Funds

Brandon Bozon made a motion, seconded by Jeff Norwood, to approve the 2025-2026 Compensation Plan as presented. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

B. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding Resolution to Reimburse Certain Expenditures

Melissa Lafferty, Chief Financial Officer, presented a resolution to the Board that indicates \$3M from District funds would be allocated to begin renovations at Tiger Field. The turf and scoreboard have surpassed the end of their replacement cycles and require replacement due to their condition. Additionally, the field lights need to be upgraded to LED to meet UIL specifications and realize energy savings. Procurement for these replacements and upgrades needs to be initiated promptly to ensure the work will be completed with the least impact to students and staff.

The reimbursement resolution allows the District to reimburse itself for capital expenditures paid for these renovations prior to the issuance of a financing obligation for such capital expenditures. The reimbursement would be funded up to the amount requested from either a revenue bond or voter approved general obligation bond.

Jeff Norwood made a motion, seconded by Chris Flor, to approve the resolution to reimburse certain expenditures as presented. The motion passed 5-0-1, Erin Bass abstaining.

C. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding Resolution on Participation of Non-Enrolled Students in University Interscholastic League Activities

Dr. Michael Morgan, Deputy Superintendent, informed the Board that Texas Senate Bill 401, effective at the start of the 2025-2026 school year, mandates public schools to offer University Interscholastic League

(UIL) participation to eligible homeschooled students residing in their attendance boundaries, unless the local school board opts out by September 1, 2025. This decision is based on the commitment to maintaining consistent standards, equitable competition, and the integrity of UIL extracurricular programs for all participants enrolled in Belton ISD.

The participation for non-enrolled students has been allowed by UIL schools since 2021, but only 46 public and charter schools participated for the 2024-2025 school year. Given the complexities and potential risks, the recommendation is to decline participation for the upcoming school year. This allows for a thorough assessment of implications and developing comprehensive plans for addressing the associated challenges.

Chris Flor made a motion, seconded by Erin Bass, to adopt the resolution to opt-out of participation of Non-Enrolled Students in University Interscholastic League Activities as presented. The motion passed 5-1-0, Brandon Bozon opposing.

D. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding Resolution to Claim a Good Cause Exception Regarding Texas House Bill 3

Dr. Cassandra Spearman, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, reminded the Board of Texas House Bill 3 and noted that if a District is unable to find adequate staff as defined by Section 37.0814 of the Texas Education Code, a good cause exception must be claimed and an alternate standard must be adopted by the Board of Trustees. The Board adopted the Good Cause Exception at the Regular Board Meeting on August 31, 2023. On June 20, 2025, Texas House Bill 121 was signed into law, requiring school boards to review and renew the Good Cause Exception.

Chris Flor made a motion, seconded by Erin Bass, to approve the resolution to Claim a Good Cause Exception Regarding Texas House Bill 3 as presented. The motion passed 6-0,

5. Reports

A. Belton Education Foundation Annual Report

Ellen Burnett, BEF President introduced the new Executive Director, Kim Pimento, who provided a report on Belton Education Foundation, the year in review. She informed the Board about the BEF annual fundraising events, provided scholarship and grant totals, and shared the foundation's plans for the future.

B. Academic Progress Report

Gabi Nino, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, presented this report regarding academic progress in grades 3-8, measured by STAAR results. Ms. Nino shared that challenges include the impact of COVID and STAAR redesign on student performance. Areas of targeted support focus on curriculum, resources, and professional learning. See report.

C. Personal Electronic Communication Device Guidelines Report

Dr. Morgan discussed feedback from teachers, students, and parents on revised personal electronic communication guidelines from the spring semester and discussed changes required by Texas House Bill 1481 from the 89th Texas Legislature. Next steps for the personal electronic communication device guidelines include reviewing the guidance and model language from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), reviewing the Parent and Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct to incorporate legislative updates, specifically those related to Texas House Bill 1481. Finally, revise guidelines and communicate the changes to parents, students, and staff.

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Malinda Golden shared the summer events happening across the District that are connected to the Belton ISD Vision, Values and Beliefs, and Journey of a Graduate. This includes Leadership Retreats, Professional Learning, Safety Summit, and the Student Services Summit. She expressed her thanks to our custodial and auxiliary staff for their continued work over the summer to ensure our schools are ready for students in the fall. Dr. Golden expressly highlighted the SkillsUSA team for going to Nationals and placing 2nd.

E. Board Highlights

Riley Beck shared that he was impressed by the number of students and coaches involved in our summer workout programs. Manuel Alcozer attended a Bond Advisory Committee meeting and thanked the administration and community for taking part in such important work.

6. Consent Agenda: Consider and Take Appropriate Action

- A. Minutes of Previous Meetings:
 - 1. June 4, 2025 - Special Meeting
 - 2. June 16, 2025 - Workshop Meeting
 - 3. June 16, 2025 - Regular Meeting
- B. Unaudited Financial Report for the Month Ending June 30, 2025
- C. Budget Amendment #10 for 2024-2025
- D. Expenditures over \$50,000
 - 1. Renewal of Goalbook for Toolkit
 - 2. Renewal of ParentSquare for Mass Communication Platform
 - 3. CDW-G for Staff Device Refresh
 - 4. Delcom Group for Staff Device Refresh
 - 5. Apple for Staff Device Refresh
 - 6. SAVVAS Learning Company for Supplementary Materials
 - 7. Mohawk Lifts for CTE Auto Shop Equipment at Belton High School
- E. Supply, Equipment, and Service Bids
 - 1. RFP# 2504-275-386 School Photography Services
 - 2. RCSP# 2506-475-900 Addendum 3 (Swim Center HVAC Replacement Bond Project)
- F. Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding with Central Counties Services for School-Based Children's Mental Health Services
- G. Designate Officer to Calculate District Tax Rates
- H. District Insurance Renewal
- I. Education Service Center Region 20 Purchasing Cooperative Agreement 2025-2026
- J. Contract with Bell County Office of Elections Administration for Election Services
- K. Memorandums of Understanding
 - 1. Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding for University of Texas Permian Basin
 - 2. Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding for Temple College - Dual Credit
- L. District Local Policy Update - 2nd Reading
 - 1. DNA(LOCAL) Performance Appraisal: Evaluation of Teachers

Brandon Bozon made a motion, seconded by Jeff Norwood, to approve Consent items A-K1, and L-M as presented. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Jeff Norwood made a motion, seconded by Erin Bass, to approve Consent item K2. Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding for Temple College - Dual Credit as presented. The motion passed 5-0-1, Brandon Bozon abstaining.

7. Public Comments Regarding Non-Agenda Items

None.

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

The Board convened in Closed Session at 8:16 p.m.

- A. Student Disciplinary Matter - Texas Government Code, Section 551.082
- B. Personnel - Texas Government Code, Section 551.074
 - 1. Consider Superintendent Recommendation Regarding Termination of Pietro Giustino, Term Contract Employee
- C. Consultation with Attorney - Texas Government Code, Section 551.071

9. Reconvene in Open Session and Take Action, if any, on Items Discussed in Closed Session

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 8:43 p.m.

10. Action Item:

- A. Propose Termination of Pietro Giustino, Term Contract Employee**

Chris Flor made a motion, seconded by Jeff Norwood to accept the superintendent's recommendation to propose termination of Pietro Giustino, term contract employee. The motion passed unanimously (6-0). See the full motion attached.

11. Adjourn

Adjourn: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Manuel Alcozer, Board President

Erin Bass, Secretary

PIETRO GIUSTINO
JULY 21, 2025

Motion to Propose Termination

Mr. President, I move to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to propose termination of Pietro Giustino's term contract for the 2025-26 school year and further move that the record of this action reflect the following:

- before voting on this Motion, the Board considered a draft letter to Mr. Giustino proposing the termination of employment;
- the Superintendent reviewed with the Board the reasons for making her recommendation regarding the employee; and
- the Board considered the reasons and other information provided by the Superintendent; and

that by passage of this motion, the Board:

- directs the Superintendent to prepare for the Board President's signature a final Notice of Proposed Contract Termination for Pietro Giustino and ensure that the Notice is delivered;
- directs that the notice include the time limitations and procedure for requesting a hearing before an Independent Hearing Examiner as required by the Texas Education Code;
- directs the Board President to notify Eichelbaum Wardell, Hansen, Powell & Munoz, P.C. of this action and request the firm to take whatever actions are necessary and proper in support of these proposed actions; and
- directs that a copy of this Motion be attached to the minutes of this meeting along with the final Notice of Proposed Termination sent to Pietro Giustino.