

**Belton Independent School District**  
***Board of Trustee Meeting Agenda Item***  
**May 12, 2025**

**Item:** Recognitions

**Contact Person:** Christine Parks

**Presented for:** ☐ Action ☒ Report Only

**Supporting Documents:** ☒ None ☐ Attached ☐ Provided Later

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**District Goal or Objective Addressed:**

Goal 2: Ensure exceptional learning experiences for each and every student.

Goal 4: Develop a district-wide culture of value, support, and growth amongst all students and staff.

**Background Information:**

**Student Pledges – Belton Early Childhood School**

This evening, the pledges were led by Belton Early Childhood preschoolers Susannah Johnson and Carter Jones.

Susannah's favorite part of school is Writer's Workshop—she loves being an author and creating her own books! At home, she enjoys swinging in the backyard and putting together puzzles. Her friends describe her as friendly, helpful during stations, always safe and careful and someone who gives the best hugs. Plus, they say she's super cute and everyone's best friend!

Carter's favorite subject is reading and when he's at home, he loves playing video games—especially Plants vs. Zombies—with his dad and grandpa. He says games are fun and his friends say they love him and always want to play with him.

**Student Showcase – Penguin Project**

Tonight's student showcase features an inspiring program that has become a beloved tradition in Belton ISD—The Penguin Project—brought to our district thanks to the vision and support of the Board of Trustees.

Now in its third year, the Penguin Project gives students with disabilities the opportunity to shine on stage in a full-scale musical production, supported by peer mentors who volunteer to rehearse and perform alongside them. What began with *Annie Jr.* and 35 students has grown each year—with *Finding Nemo Jr.* featuring 60 participants and this year's *Shrek the Musical Jr.* involving more than 90 students.

Through four months of rehearsals and unforgettable performances, this program builds confidence, friendships and joy for everyone involved.

As one of the program's mantras says, "Our penguins may not be able to fly, but that doesn't stop their spirits from soaring."

Please enjoy a special performance of "Don't Stop Believin'" and a selection from *Shrek the Musical Jr.*

### **Fine Arts**

#### **UIL Choir Solo & Ensemble State Qualifiers**

We are pleased to recognize 59 exceptional choir students from Belton High School and Lake Belton High School who have qualified for the UIL Choir Solo and Ensemble State Contest.

These talented students earned first division ratings—the highest possible score—at the regional competition, securing their advancement to the state contest in Austin.

This achievement is a reflection of their dedication and artistry, as well as the expert guidance of their directors, Tonya Lovorn at Belton High School and Terrance Livingston at Lake Belton High School.

We congratulate these students on this outstanding accomplishment and wish them the very best at state.

#### **VASE State Qualifiers**

We're excited to celebrate nine talented student artists from Belton High School and Lake Belton High School who qualified for the 2024 Texas Art Education Association's High School Visual Arts Scholastic Event—also known as VASE—state competition.

This is a significant accomplishment, as their work advanced through rigorous regional rounds to join over 32,000 pieces at the state level. Lake Belton's Liam McCullagh earned a prestigious Gold Seal for the second year in a row, placing him among the top seven percent of high school artists in Texas—one of only three Belton ISD students ever to receive this honor.

We also recognize the dedicated art teachers who helped make this possible: Jannet Alarin, Macon Tolleson, Alicia Richardson, and Emily Simeroth.

Congratulations to these students and educators for their creativity and excellence!

### **UIL Theatrical Design State Qualifiers**

Congratulations to Lake Belton High School students Liam McCullagh and Paloma Carmona-Ortiz for advancing to the State UIL Theatrical Design Competition!

Liam returns for his third trip to state, having previously earned 1st and 2nd place in Marketing Design. This marks Paloma's first year competing—and qualifying—a remarkable debut.

Special thanks to their teacher, Ty Carter, for supporting their creative journey!

### **Dance All-State Qualifiers**

We're excited to recognize Reagan Vergara of Belton High School and Emersyn Tucker of Lake Belton High School for being named All-State Dancers and performing at the Texas Dance Educators Association convention—an honor awarded to just 250 dancers across the state.

Reagan is a four-year member and current captain of the Magic Belles, coached by Rachel Hill and McKenzie Urteaga. Emersyn is a three-year Silver Spurs member, two-year officer, and recently placed sixth in solo competition at Nationals under the guidance of coach Emma Marsland.

Congratulations to both dancers for representing Belton ISD with talent and pride!

### **Career Readiness**

#### **Hospitality**

### **SkillsUSA Hospitality State Qualifiers**

We're proud to recognize four talented Belton High School CTE students who advanced to state through SkillsUSA and FCCLA competitions!

From intricate cake designs to excellence in baking, early childhood education and service learning, these students showcased the skills and passion found in our Hospitality pathway—guided by dedicated teachers Kenzie Pennacchio and Kathy Firkins.

Way to go, Tigers!

### **FCCLA Regional Competition State Qualifiers**

We're excited to celebrate six Lake Belton High School students who advanced to the FCCLA State Competition after a strong showing at Regionals!

Their success highlights the strength of our Career and Technical Education programs and the support of their dedicated instructors, Nicolas Warren and Melinda Hodge.

Congratulations on advancing while showcasing the skill, professionalism, and dedication that makes Belton ISD proud!

### **Health Science**

#### **HOSA State Qualifiers**

We're proud to recognize 13 Career and Technical Education students from Belton High School and Lake Belton High School who qualified for the HOSA—Future Health Professionals—State Leadership Conference. These students demonstrated excellence across a range of healthcare-related events, reflecting both their strong academic skills and their passion for helping others through the health sciences.

Belton High School students are supported by teachers Stephanie Yaryan and Brandi Frieden, and Lake Belton High School students are led by teacher Mary Keeton. We commend these students and their instructors for their hard work, dedication, and outstanding achievement!

### **Auto Tech**

#### **SkillsUSA Auto Tech State Qualifiers**

We're proud to recognize five Lake Belton High School CTE students who advanced to the SkillsUSA State Competition in Automotive Technology, showcasing their expertise in service and tool identification.

A special congratulations to Miles Kunce, who qualified for the National Competition—an incredible achievement that speaks to his talent and dedication.

These successes reflect the strength of our Auto Tech program and the guidance of instructor Brent Sharp. Well done, Broncos!

## **Law**

### **SkillsUSA Law State Qualifiers**

We're proud to recognize seven outstanding CTE students from Belton and Lake Belton High Schools who advanced to the SkillsUSA State Competition in the Law and Public Service pathway.

These students showcased strong skills in critical thinking, emergency response, and investigative techniques through events like Crime Scene Investigation, EMT, and First Aid/CPR.

Their achievement reflects both their hard work and the expert support of instructors Corylynn Upton and Willie Ward.

### **YMCA Law State Qualifiers**

We're proud to recognize 10 Belton New Tech @Waskow CTE students who competed in the YMCA Youth and Government State Qualifiers.

Serving as appellate attorneys, justices, and mock trial participants, these students demonstrated exceptional legal reasoning and public speaking skills—a reflection of their hard work and the strength of our Law and Public Safety program.

Special thanks to their teacher, Mark Durfee, for his leadership and support.

## **Arts & AV**

### **SkillsUSA Arts & AV State Qualifiers**

We're excited to recognize seven talented CTE students in the Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications pathway who qualified for the SkillsUSA State Competition in Audio Production, Video Production, Film, Photography, and T-Shirt Design.

A special shoutout to Lake Belton's Ryan McGinnis, who advanced to the National Competition in T-Shirt Design—an incredible accomplishment!

These students, along with their instructors Alyssa Vargas-Leon (BHS) and Dustin Shepherd and Brittany Truitt (LBHS), exemplify creativity, skill, and dedication.

Congratulations to all!

## **Construction**

### **SkillsUSA Construction State & National Qualifiers**

We're proud to recognize 11 Belton High School CTE students in the Construction pathway who qualified for the SkillsUSA State Competition in Carpentry, Construction Tool Identification, and Teamworks—showcasing their skill, knowledge and teamwork.

A special congratulations to our Teamworks group—Jack Clark, Joseph Fuentez, Bryson Necessary and Eric Schiller—who advanced to the National Competition! This impressive achievement highlights their collaboration, technical expertise, and dedication.

Thank you to their instructor, Michael Carrillo, for his leadership and support.

## **FFA**

### **Area 12 Wool State Qualifiers**

We're excited to celebrate four outstanding Belton and Lake Belton High CTE students who took 1st place at the local level and are now headed to the FFA State Competition after qualifying through the Area 12 Wool Career Development Event!

These students showcased impressive expertise in wool judging, grading, and the textile industry—earning their place at state through hard work and dedication.

Congratulations to them and their instructor, Jeffry Heffernan, for this well-deserved achievement!

### **Region II Wildlife State Qualifiers**

We are proud to recognize four outstanding CTE students from Belton and Lake Belton High Schools who qualified for the FFA State Competition through the Region II Wildlife Career Development Event.

Their fourth place regional finish showcases their strong knowledge of wildlife management, habitat evaluation, and conservation practices.

We applaud these students and their instructor, Brad Hobbs, for their hard work and for representing Belton ISD with distinction.

### **Tarleton State Area State Qualifiers**

We're proud to recognize eight talented CTE students from Belton and Lake Belton High Schools who advanced to the FFA State Competition through the Tarleton State Area Career Development Events.

Our Dairy Cattle Evaluation team earned an impressive 2nd place finish, and our Environmental and Natural Resources team also secured a spot at state—both reflecting

strong knowledge, critical thinking and dedication to agricultural and environmental sciences.

Congratulations to these students and their instructors, Brad Hobbs (BHS) and Taylor Wells (LBHS), for their hard work and achievement!

### **Texas A&M Area State Qualifiers**

We're proud to recognize 16 CTE students from Belton and Lake Belton High Schools who excelled at the Texas A&M Area Career Development Events and advanced to state competition.

Our Nursery/Landscape and Milk Quality teams earned 1st place, while the Floral and Horse Evaluation teams placed 3rd and 4th, respectively. These achievements highlight their dedication and skill in agricultural science.

Congratulations to these students and their instructors—Lindsey Chapman, Brad and Lori Hobbs, and Corey Killen—for their outstanding work!

### **Texas Tech State Qualifiers**

We are proud to recognize four Belton High School CTE students who qualified for the FFA State Competition in the Cotton Career Development Event.

These students showcased exceptional analytical skills and a strong understanding of cotton production, plant identification and agronomic practices. Their success is a testament to their hard work and passion for agriculture.

We congratulate them and their teacher, Corey Killen, for an outstanding job!

### **Education & Training**

#### **SkillsUSA Education & Training State Qualifiers**

We are proud to recognize two Belton High School CTE students in the Education and Training pathway who advanced to the SkillsUSA State Competition in the Career Demonstration event.

These students demonstrated strong communication skills and professionalism, reflecting a solid foundation in teaching practices and career readiness.

We commend them and their instructor, Marylisa Fanning, for their hard work.

### **Human Services**

#### **SkillsUSA Human Services State Qualifiers**

We are proud to recognize three Belton High School CTE students in the Human Services pathway who advanced to the SkillsUSA State Competition in the Human Services Practicum event.

These students stood out for their professionalism, interpersonal skills and ability to apply their knowledge in real-world service settings—reflecting a strong commitment to helping others and a passion for the human services field.

We commend them and their instructor, Marylisa Fanning, for their dedication.

## **IT**

### **Business Professionals of America National Qualifiers**

We are proud to recognize Lake Belton High School CTE student Lane Cahaya, who has qualified for the Business Professionals of America National Leadership Conference in the Medical Coding 435 event.

Lane's success reflects exceptional technical skill, accuracy and professionalism in a high-demand field within healthcare IT.

Congratulations to Lane and instructor Megan Shick for this outstanding achievement and for representing Belton ISD at the national level!

## **UIL Performance - Debate**

### **Congressional Debate State Qualifiers**

We are proud to recognize four students from Belton and Lake Belton High Schools who qualified for the UIL State Competition in CX Debate and Congressional Debate.

These students have shown outstanding abilities in research, critical thinking and persuasive communication—skills that are vital for success in both academics and future careers. Their achievement at the state level speaks to their dedication, intellect and composure under pressure.

Congratulations to these students and their teachers, Hannah Berg and Pam Rodriguez, for this impressive accomplishment.

## **Robotics**

### **VEX Robotics World Qualifiers**

We are proud to recognize six Belton New Tech @Waskow CTE students who have qualified for the VEX Robotics World Championship through their outstanding performance in the VEX Robotics and UAV Competitions.



Their achievement reflects a high level of technical skill, innovation, and teamwork, as well as a strong foundation in engineering and robotics design. These students are excellent examples of STEM success in action.

Congratulations to them and their instructor, Steve Tysor, for this impressive accomplishment!

## **Athletics**

### **Soccer**

#### **Texas Association of Soccer Coaches Academic All-State**

We are proud to recognize nine Lake Belton High School student-athletes who earned Academic All-State honors from the Texas Association of Soccer Coaches.

Congratulations to Benjamin Asuncion Crabb, Jackson Domek, Erwin Castaneda Frausto, Aiden Kurdi, Brayden Mellon, Kevin Muchunu, Austin Robello, Noah Santos, and Tyrrence Taylor for their achievements on the field and in the classroom.

Their coach is Andrew Kirshner.

#### **Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State - Boys Soccer**

Belton ISD is celebrating several student-athletes who were named to the Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State teams for soccer, tennis, swimming and powerlifting. To be nominated, seniors must be in good standing with their team, have good moral character, and have an overall GPA of 92 or above. Class rank and SAT/ACT test scores are also taken into consideration.

##### **Belton High School:**

The three honorees from BHS are Joshua Roberts (Second Team) and Josue Reyes Trejo and Matthew Watkins (Honorable Mention). Their coach is Carlo Mosnia.

#### **Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State - Girls Soccer**

##### **Belton High School:**

The five honorees from BHS are Victoria Lucksinger and Elizabeth Marschall (Elite); Marissa Christenson and Ava Itz (Second Team); and Isabella Stermer (Honorable Mention). Their coach is Oscar Bersosa.

##### **Lake Belton High School:**

The four honorees from LBHS are Barrett Burdine, Chelsie Miller (Second Team); Kaylee Hudgens, Olivia Sibley (Honorable Mention). Their coach is Jamie Tibbetts.

## **Tennis**

### **Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State - Tennis**

#### Belton High School:

The honoree from BHS is Julie He (Elite). Her coach is James Stinson.

#### Lake Belton High School:

The honorees from LBHS are Rachel Kim (Elite); Nathan Dawson, Luke Droege, Emilio Gonzalez, John Garrett Hale and Jillian Webb (Second Team); and Victoria Melendez-Espino (Honorable Mention). Their coach is Niki Morgan.

#### Belton New Tech @Waskow:

The honorees from BNT@W are Tran Le, Chinonso Oqwudu (First Team); Lucas Abell, Samuel Emeodi-Wilson, Colton Fry (Second Team); and Ethan Borchers (Honorable Mention). Their coach is Jordan Wedemeyer.

## **Swimming**

### **Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State - Swimming**

#### Belton High School:

The honorees from BHS are Raef Airhart and Liliana Nelson (Second Team) and Mackenzie Gingerich (Honorable Mention). Their coach is Christopher Knipp.

#### Lake Belton High School:

The honorees from LBHS are Aidan Fenton and Samuel Stevens (Second Team) and Jacob Gerakos, Lillian Paulk and Brooke Phillips (Honorable Mention). Their coach is Natalie Hazelwood.

### **Swimming State Qualifiers**

We are proud to recognize five Belton New Tech @Waskow student-athletes who represented Belton ISD at the UIL Swim and Dive State Championships.

Claire Thomas placed 12th in the 200 Free and 8th in the 500 Free; Zayne Williford earned 6th in the 200 Free and 9th in the 500 Free; and Caleb Tort-Negron finished 12th in the 100 Fly.

Congratulations to these outstanding athletes and their coach, Ben Bralley, for their dedication and success at the state level!

## **Powerlifting**

### **Texas High School Powerlifting Association Academic All-State**

Lake Belton High School:

The honorees from LBHS are Patrick Hart (Elite); Brett Harmon and Travellis Harrison (First Team); and Caleb Ighomon (Second Team). Their coach is Ryan Graves.

**Texas High School Women's Powerlifting Association Academic All-State**

Belton High School:

The honorees from BHS are Briley Campbell, Julie He and Bella Reyes (Elite). Their coach is Barry Campbell.

Lake Belton High School:

The honorees from LBHS are Abby Rydberg and Tatum Vaughn (Elite); Kaylee Hudgens (First Team); and Aleyna Castor and Taylor Love (Second Team). Their coach is Greg Rudolph.

**LBHS Unified Track Meet State Qualifiers**

Belton ISD is proud to celebrate the incredible success of our Unified Track and Field team, which placed 13th in the state of Texas in just its second year! This accomplishment is a reflection of the dedication, perseverance and teamwork of the 34 outstanding student-athletes and partners who represented our district with pride.

Their passion continues to inspire us all, and we're grateful for the unwavering support from our community. Thank you for championing inclusion, encouragement and excellence every step of the way!

**New-to-the-Profession Teacher Recognition**

Belton ISD is proud to celebrate 105 incredible, student-focused educators who have completed their first year of teaching! Throughout the year, these passionate professionals have shown a deep commitment to learning and growing in service of their students' success.

As participants in the INSPIRE Academy, they engaged in monthly professional development and received valuable support from mentor teachers across the district. Congratulations on reaching this exciting milestone—and thank you for choosing to begin your teaching journey with Belton ISD!

**Belton Rotary Educator of the Quarter**

We are pleased to recognize Carla Beamesderfer, a sixth-grade math teacher at Belton Middle School, as the Belton Rotary Club's Educator of the Quarter.

Now in her 16th year in education and seventh year with Belton ISD, Ms. Beamesderfer is known for bringing math to life through engaging, hands-on lessons that connect classroom learning to real-world applications.

As shared by Principal Megan Crook, her enthusiasm, creativity and unwavering commitment to student success make her a true asset to the Belton Middle School campus and the district as a whole.

Congratulations to Ms. Beamesderfer on this well-earned recognition!

### **Temple Rotary Educator of the Month - April & May**

We are proud to recognize Cody Ward, a sixth-grade history teacher at North Belton Middle School, as the Temple Rotary Club's Educator of the Month for April.

Now in his fourth year—all with Belton ISD—Mr. Ward has become known for his student-centered approach, creative instruction and unwavering commitment to growth. Whether dressing up as historical figures or providing students with multiple ways to express their learning, he creates an engaging classroom environment where students thrive.

As shared by his instructional coach, Loren Hernandez, Mr. Ward's journey from alternative certification to becoming one of the most effective and engaging teachers on campus is a true reflection of his dedication, humility, and passion for education.

Congratulations to Mr. Ward on this well-deserved honor!

We are proud to recognize Jordan Dawkins, a second-grade teacher at Hubbard Branch Elementary, as the Temple Rotary Club's Educator of the Month for May.

Now in her 11th year in education and third year with Belton ISD, Mrs. Dawkins is known for setting high expectations, building strong relationships and creating a classroom environment where all students feel supported and empowered to succeed.

As shared by Principal Hope Orsag, she is a standout educator who truly believes in the potential of every child and goes above and beyond to meet their individual learning needs. Congratulations to Mrs. Dawkins on this well-deserved honor!

### **2024-2025 Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase Schools Award Recipient**

We are proud to recognize Lakewood Elementary for being named a Capturing Kids' Hearts® National Showcase School for the second year in a row.

This national honor highlights Lakewood's commitment to creating a safe, supportive and engaging campus culture where relationships are at the heart of student success. Their back-to-back recognition is a powerful reflection of the dedication of their staff and the strength of their campus community.

### **AP School Honor Roll by College Board**

We are proud to recognize Belton New Tech High @Waskow for being named to the AP® School Honor Roll for the second consecutive year—an achievement that highlights the campus's continued commitment to academic excellence and student success.

This year, BNT@W also earned the prestigious Bronze Distinction for Access, recognizing the school's efforts to expand AP opportunities and ensure more students are prepared for college-level learning.

Congratulations to the dedicated AP teachers whose work made this possible: Andrew Berg, Michelle Ciccariello, Mark Durfee, Trisha Kaer, Sabrina Leija, Timothy Potts, Charles Ridgley, Charles Rodarte, Nicolle Santiago and Ewan Thomson.

### **Community Partner Recognition - Temple College**

This evening, we are proud to honor Temple College as our Community Partner Recognition.

Belton ISD is grateful for our growing partnership with Temple College, built on a shared commitment of expanding access to higher education. This spring alone, 66 seniors earned college credit—many of whom had not previously considered college as a path forward.

Through joint professional development, staff interest in becoming dual credit instructors, and strategic planning now underway, we're working together toward a bold goal: ensuring every high school graduate earns college credit.

Thank you, Temple College, for helping us create brighter futures for Belton ISD students.

### **Superintendent's Student Advisory Council**

We are proud to recognize the 12 students representing all Belton ISD high schools who serve on the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council.

This council was created to strengthen communication between students and district leadership, offering a valuable opportunity for high school students to share their perspectives directly with Dr. Golden and other district leaders on important school-related topics.

We applaud these students for their leadership, insight and commitment to making a positive impact in Belton ISD.

**Fiscal Implications:**

None.

**Administrative Recommendation(s):**

None.