

# Killeen Independent School District

## Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, Workshop Meeting February 17, 2026, at 5 p.m. in the Killeen ISD Boardroom

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### **Board Members Present**

- Brett E. Williams, President
- Brenda Adams, Secretary
- Marvin Rainwater, Member
- Oliver Mintz, Member
- Tina Capito, Member
- Rodney Gilchrist, Member
- **Board Member Absent:** Susan M. Jones, Vice President

**Quorum:** Established

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### **Call to Order**

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

The meeting was recorded and streamed publicly

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### **Agenda Item 1: Public Forum**

#### **Speaker: David Laws**

David Laws addressed the Board regarding SB 11, expressing strong opposition to school-organized periods of prayer or religious reading during the school day and emphasizing that Texas students already have the right to pray voluntarily without school involvement. He stated that staff-led or school-sponsored religious activities constitute indoctrination and raise serious First Amendment concerns, particularly by requiring parents to opt their children out rather than opt in. Mr. Laws proposed alternatives such as student-led activities outside school hours or offering an elective academic course on world religions, asserting that religious instruction should remain the responsibility of families, not the state.

**Speaker: Wilmarie Nieves**

Marie Nieves, a KISD parent of three students, addressed the Board to raise districtwide concerns regarding coaches conduct, appropriate language, and student-athlete emotional safety while also expressing support for SB 11. She emphasized that district athletic handbooks and UIL standards require coaches to model sportsmanship, professionalism, and respect, noting that athletics are part of a student's overall education and not solely about winning. Ms. Nieves requested the Board consider placing clear coaches language standards on a future agenda, including written prohibitions against degrading language, required annual training with accountability, and transparent reporting processes to ensure consistent student protection across all campuses.

**Speaker: David Santiago-Ortiz**

David Santiago, a KISD parent, addressed the Board to express concerns about student-athlete emotional safety and the way coaches communicate with students, emphasizing that school athletics should foster respect, confidence, and personal growth. He urged the Board to adopt and enforce clear districtwide standards prohibiting profane, humiliating, or inappropriate language, require annual coaches training on respectful communication and sportsmanship, and establish transparent reporting processes for families and students. Mr. Santiago also voiced support for SB 11, stating that students should be provided a safe space at school to practice their religious beliefs through prayer and reading religious texts.

**Speaker: Sherina Blett**

Sherina Blett addressed the Board to raise districtwide concerns about coaches and teachers conduct toward student-athletes, emphasizing the significant influence adults have on students' confidence, motivation, and emotional safety. She urged the Board to ensure clear, consistent, and enforced standards across all campuses, including districtwide training for coaches, transparent reporting procedures, and timely communication with families when concerns are raised. Ms. Blett also expressed support for SB 11, stating that students should be able to freely practice and express their religious beliefs at school without fear of shame or discrimination.

**Speaker: Andre Stinson**

Andre Stinson, a fifth-grade student at Willow Springs Elementary, thanked the Board for allowing him to speak and shared how the Communities In Schools program supports his learning in science, math, and spelling while encouraging students through friendly competition. He stated that the program helps prepare him for future success and motivates him to maintain good grades so he can participate in sports when he reaches middle school.

**Speaker: Zoey Ender**

A fifth-grade student from Willow Springs Elementary School in Killeen thanked the KISD Board and Dr. Davis for the opportunity to speak about her education and shared appreciation for the Communities In Schools program. The student explained that the program enhances daily learning, increases interest in coming to school, and provides additional educational support beyond regular classroom instruction.

**Speaker: Kalycia Hutchings**

Kalycia Hutchings, a student at Willow Springs Elementary School, spoke about the Communities In Schools program and shared how it keeps her engaged in school, makes learning enjoyable, and helps improve her academic performance. She added that the program encourages her to do well in school and supports her goal of becoming a doctor in the future.

**Speaker: Kimberleigh Torres**

Kimberleigh Torres, a fifth-grade student at Willow Springs Elementary School, thanked the KISD Board and Mr. Davis for the opportunity to speak and shared her desire for more time to learn and complete classwork so she can succeed academically and pursue college. She highlighted how the Communities In Schools program, led by Ms. Cinnamon, supports her learning in spelling, math, science, and reading while keeping her engaged through encouragement, quizzes, and rewards.

**Speaker: Marleigh Jai Perry**

Marleigh Jai Perry, a student at Willow Springs Elementary, thanked the KISD Board, Superintendent Dr. Davis, and campus staff for the opportunity to share her positive school experience and academic growth. She highlighted learning key academic skills across math, science, and reading, achieving honor roll recognition, and receiving strong support from teachers, counselors, administrators, and the Communities In Schools program. She also shared a suggestion for improvement by recommending clearer enforcement of the no-gum policy to reduce classroom distractions and improve the learning environment districtwide.

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**Agenda Item 2: Closed Session**

The Board entered closed session at **5:24 p.m.** for:

**2A. Consultation with Legal Counsel Regarding Senate Bill 11**

(Texas Government Code 551.071).

**2B. Discussion Regarding the Deployment of Security Devices or Security Personnel**

(Texas Government Code 551.076).

**2C. Consultation with Legal Counsel Regarding Amendments to Local Innovation Plan**

(Texas Government Code 551.071).

**2D. 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).

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

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

**2G. 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.

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

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### **Invocation and Pledges**

Invocation was led by Trustee **Marvin Rainwater**.

Pledges of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags were led by student **Michael Wright and Ariya Wright** from Willow Springs Elementary School.

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### **Agenda Item 3: Honors and Recognition**

*Presenter: Dr. Angenet Wilkerson*

District leadership recognized students and staff who represented Killeen ISD with excellence across academics, fine arts, career readiness, and student support services. Theater students from multiple high schools were honored for their outstanding performance at the Texas Thespian State Festival, national qualifications, significant scholarship offers, and individual achievements, along with recognition of Chaparral High School theater director Samantha Dunaway for receiving the Texas Thespian Golden Apple Award. The Board also celebrated Career and Technical Education Month, highlighting KISD’s designation as a CTE District of Distinction and the district’s commitment to hands-on learning, industry certifications, and real-world career pathways. National School Counseling Week was observed with recognition of counselors districtwide, including nine campuses earning the CREST Award for excellence in comprehensive school counseling programs. The agenda concluded with special recognition of Liberty Hill Middle School counselor Cynthia Bailey, named the 2025 Rhosine Fleming Texas Middle School Counselor of the Year for her exceptional leadership, student-centered support, and service to the

KISD community.

### **Counselors Week – National School Counseling**

- Sherce Hampton
- Shannon Lumar

### **CREST Award Winner**

- Iduma ES
  - Cristelita Fuertes
  - Megan Gilbert
  - Tiffany Jackson
- Oveta Culp Hobby ES
  - Jessica Baggott
  - Christine Beeg
  - Cristina Miranda
- Eastern Hills MS
  - Shelby Boles
  - Chantelle Horner
  - Ebony Kees
- Gateway MS
  - Marlene Adams
  - Antione Franklin
- Liberty Hill MS
  - Cynthia Bailey
  - Adreana Shaw
  - Bethany Smith
- Ellison HS
  - Shatilya Brooks
  - Roslyn DeKeratry
  - Casandra Hodge
  - Sarah Noteboom
  - Amber Peterson
  - Amy Picot
  - Alayshia Smith-Douglas
- Gateway HS
  - Monique Turner
  - Elsie Velez
- Harker Heights HS
  - Maria Garcia
  - Laura House
  - Maria Jackson
  - Warren Kostencki

- Laura Littlejohn
- Wendy Perry
- Deirdre Pickett
- Deleen Price
- Shoemaker HS
  - Tijuana Chancellor
  - Alexandria Hall
  - Bernadette Hicks
  - Merium Hodge-Cummings
  - Nicolya Jones
  - Kendrick Kees
  - Chernitra Kyle

### **Texas Thespian Golden Apple Award**

- Samantha Dunaway – Chaparral HS

### **2025 Texas Middle School Counselor of the Year**

- Cynthia Bailey – Liberty Hill MS

### **Career & Technical Education Month**

- Patrice Robinson

### **Texas Thespians National Qualifiers**

- Chaparral High School
  - Lemeika Boulding
  - Anaiah Chamberlain
  - Kaitlyn Dooley
  - Sha'Ve Dotson
  - Kayoni Harrell
  - Marlee Luther
  - Alexandra Madera
  - Armie Melton
  - Hadassah Moon
  - Ava Morgan
  - Zachary Repine
  - Riley Yurush
- Ellison High School
  - Tavin Bunes
  - Sasha Lauderdale
  - Justin Mages
  - Camilla Olivas

- Tatiana White
- Harker Heights School
  - Charlotte Iuchs
- Killeen High School
  - Eliel Santiago
- Shoemaker High School
  - Adalena Gabriel

#### **Agenda Item 4: Public Forum**

##### **Speakers: Joseph Baez**

Joseph Baez of the Harker Heights KISD community addressed the Board regarding agenda item 6, expressing concern that the item was labeled as “consideration” when it was, in fact, a vote to approve a Texas Partnership operating partner for Manor Middle School. He stated that the proposed partnership with Third Future Schools under an 1882 agreement would commit the district to a three-year contract from 2026 to 2029, rather than a single year as suggested by the 2025–2026 agenda language. Mr. Baez questioned why the Board was being asked to vote on February 17 rather than February 24, as outlined in the Manor Middle School Turnaround Plan and supporting documents. He cited inconsistencies between the agenda, PowerPoint timeline, and published district materials, emphasizing the importance of transparency and adherence to the stated process.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Consent Agenda**

- Consideration of Delay of Teacher Certification Requirements
- Consideration of Number and Dollar Amounts of Board Scholarships to be Awarded for Fall 2026
- **Motion:** Brenda Adams
- **Second:** Tina Capito
- **Vote:** 6-0-0-1
  - **For:** Brett E. Williams, Brenda Adams, Marvin Rainwater, Oliver Mintz, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
  - **Against:** None
  - **Abstained:** None
  - **Absent:** Susan M. Jones

## **Agenda Item 6: Action Items for Consideration**

### **6A. Consideration of Resolution to Recognize March 2026 as Arts in Our Schools Month in Killeen ISD**

*Presenter: Morganne Davies, Director of Fine Arts*

Ms. Davies and students from various grade levels presented information to the Board recognizing Arts in Our Schools Month as a nationwide initiative that promotes access to arts education, student achievement, professional growth for educators, and arts-rich schools for all students in Killeen ISD. A resolution was introduced requesting Board approval to officially recognize March 2026 as Arts in Our Schools Month and to encourage students, staff, and parents to acknowledge the importance of arts education and the contributions of fine arts students and educators districtwide.

- **Motion:** Tina Capito
  - **Second:** Brenda Adams
  - **Vote:** 6-0-0-1
    - **For:** Brett E. Williams, Brenda Adams, Marvin Rainwater, Oliver Mintz, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
    - **Against:** None
    - **Abstained:** None
    - **Absent:** Susan M. Jones
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### **6B. Consideration of Renewal of Resolution to Declare a Good Cause Exception for House Bill 3 - Armed Security Officer Requirement**

*Presenter: Scott Hequembourg, Deputy Superintendent*

Mr. Hequembourg presented an action item requesting Board approval of a resolution to declare a good cause exemption under House Bill 3 due to funding and staffing limitations related to the armed security officer requirement. Trustee Mintz clarified for the public that the exemption does not waive safety requirements and that the district continues to take steps to improve campus safety, which administration confirmed.

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

## **6C. Consideration of Senate Bill 11 – Daily Prayer Time and Reading of the Bible or Other Religious Text**

*Presenter: Mike Harper, School Attorney*

Mr. Harper presented an action item explaining the requirements of Senate Bill 11, which mandates that Texas school boards take a record vote on whether to adopt a resolution establishing a formal period of prayer and reading of religious texts. The administration outlined statutory safeguards, including parental consent waivers, voluntary participation, separation from non-consenting individuals, and prohibitions against replacing instructional time. It was emphasized that existing state law, federal law, and Killeen ISD policy already allow students to pray, read religious texts, and engage in religious expression voluntarily and without disruption during the school day. Trustees asked clarifying questions regarding implementation logistics, supervision requirements, consent procedures, and whether participation would apply to multiple faith traditions. Board discussion reflected concern that formalizing prayer could unintentionally restrict or infringe upon students' and staff members' existing First Amendment rights. Multiple trustees expressed that students already freely exercise their right to pray in various settings, including classrooms, cafeterias, athletic events, and before or after school. Trustees shared personal perspectives rooted in faith while cautioning against government-imposed structures that could limit religious freedom. Several members emphasized the importance of protecting students from harassment related to religious expression and ensuring existing policies are enforced.

Trustee Oliver Mintz offered a non-traditional motion "Acknowledging that the Killeen ISD school Board of Trustees places the highest value on the students and staff's free exercise of religion, and that the Board does not wish to infringe upon or limit any freedom to pray as their faith and tradition dictates the very right that students and staff enjoy today, I move, that the Board of Trustees declines to adopt the formal opportunity for student prayer as contemplated by Senate Bill 11 as written, which limits opportunity for staff and student prayer." The Board approved the motion to decline adoption of the formal prayer resolution.

- **Motion:** Oliver Mintz
  - **Second:** Brenda Adams
  - **Vote:** 5-1-0-1
    - **For:** Brenda Adams, Marvin Rainwater, Oliver Mintz, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
    - **Against:** Brett E. Williams
    - **Abstained:** None
    - **Absent:** Susan M. Jones
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## **6D. Consideration of Recommendation of a 2025-2026 Texas Partnership Operating Partner**

*Presenter: Dr. Terri Osborne, Deputy Superintendent*

Dr. Osborne presented the recommendation to approve Third Future Schools as the Texas Partnership operating partner for Manor Middle School and to authorize the administration to proceed with performance contract negotiations. Trustees questioned how accountability would be ensured, and administration explained that the partnership would include a detailed performance contract with academic, financial, and operational goals, ongoing monitoring, site visits, data reviews, and a multi-step intervention process up to non-renewal. The Board was informed that this action represents only one step in a multi-phase process and that final approval would occur after contract negotiations are completed and presented to the Board. Administration outlined the extensive vetting process conducted since fall 2025, including application review, capacity interviews, and evaluation against established success criteria. Trustees emphasized that the decision is driven by a state mandate to address academic performance at Manor Middle School and to avoid potential state intervention. Discussion clarified that the partnership would include 1882 benefits, such as additional per-student funding and a two-year accountability pause, though the district would pass funding through to the operating partner. Trustees expressed concerns about financial impacts, long-term outcomes, and the need for strong contractual protection. Several members acknowledged the challenges of the situation while emphasizing the urgency to improve student outcomes. Trustees noted that this approach offers an opportunity to explore alternative instructional models that may benefit students across the district.

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

## **6E. Consideration of the Annual Comprehensive Financial and Compliance Reports for the Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2025**

*Presenter: Kallen Vaden*

Ms. Vaden introduced Mr. Dana Legg of Lott, Vernon & Company, who presented the results of the district's annual financial and compliance audit and explained the distinction between internal and external financial audits. Mr. Legg reported that the district's core financial statements were complete, noting overall decreases in assets, revenues, and expenditures largely due to the expiration of ESSER III federal funds and reduced construction activity. He highlighted that the district maintained a strong unassigned fund balance of approximately \$158 million, representing about 3.9 months of operating expenditures and remaining in compliance with board policy. The audit showed a clean, unmodified opinion on both financial statements and federal single audit testing, with no material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, or findings. Trustees discussed revenue reductions, expenditure controls, and the impact of capital projects, child nutrition expenditures, and future 1882 partnership accounting considerations. Mr. Legg also advised the Board that KISD qualified as a low-risk auditee for federal programs and noted that special education would be a major program area for audit focus in the next fiscal year.

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

## **Agenda Item 7: Planning Strategic Prioritization**

*Presenter: Dr. Michael Hinojosa*

Dr. Hinojosa addressed the Board to lead a strategic prioritization session focused on transformational governance and aligning district leadership, staff, and community around student outcomes. He emphasized that when everything is treated as important, nothing truly becomes a priority and encouraged trustees to narrow their focus to the most critical challenges facing Killeen ISD. Dr. Hinojosa reviewed prior governance work, including Team of Eight and Lone Star Governance training, and explained that the purpose of the session was to produce actionable deliverables in a short timeframe. He guided trustees through an exercise identifying qualities of inspirational leaders, highlighting that effective leadership requires a balance of knowledge, skills, and, most importantly, attitude. He introduced the “success triangle” of the Board, staff, and community, stressing that all three must move in the same direction to achieve sustainable improvement. The discussion emphasized building both interpersonal and technical trust to strengthen leadership effectiveness. Trustees then identified major challenges the district must address over the next 18 months, including Tier 1 instruction, middle school performance, literacy and numeracy, teacher performance, community trust, and funding pressures. Dr. Hinojosa explained that strategic thinking over an 18-month horizon is more effective than long-range planning due to changing conditions and data. Through a structured voting process, trustees prioritized improving Tier 1 instruction as the district’s top focus, followed closely by improving student performance in middle schools. Literacy and numeracy in the early grades emerged as another high-priority area tied to long-term academic success. Dr. Hinojosa noted that nearly all priorities identified were instruction-focused, reinforcing the Board’s shared understanding of the district’s core challenge. He emphasized that fixing instructional systems requires sustained effort rather than short-term score improvements. The discussion highlighted the importance of strategic abandonment, encouraging the district to discontinue ineffective practices and redirect resources to high-impact strategies. Dr. Hinojosa stressed that KISD is not in immediate financial crisis, allowing leaders to focus on instructional improvement rather than emergency budget cuts. He encouraged the Board to maintain control of the district’s destiny and avoid reliance on external interventions. Trustees reflected on the strong alignment demonstrated during the session and the value of consensus-building. Board members raised questions about how the identified priorities would align with the district scorecard and accountability systems. Dr. Hinojosa advised trustees to focus on the “big rocks,” noting that progress in these areas would naturally improve other measures. He emphasized the importance of maintaining high expectations while providing adequate support for staff and students. The session concluded with appreciation for the collaborative process and a commitment to refining measures of success and next steps with district leadership.

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## **Agenda Item 8: Discussion of Future Board Meeting Agendas and Trustee Remarks**

Trustee Marvin Rainwater reflected on Dr. Hinojosa’s discussion regarding strategic abandonment, expressing regret that the concept had not been emphasized earlier and noting its potential impact on student and teacher performance given the number of competing initiatives.

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## **Board Returned to Agenda Item 2: Closed Session**

The Board entered closed session at **8:38 p.m.** for:

### **2A. Consultation with Legal Counsel Regarding Senate Bill 11**

(Texas Government Code 551.071).

### **2B. Discussion Regarding the Deployment of Security Devices or Security Personnel**

(Texas Government Code 551.076).

### **2C. Consultation with Legal Counsel Regarding Amendments to Local Innovation Plan**

(Texas Government Code 551.071).

### **2D. 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).

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

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

### **2G. 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.

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The Board reconvened in Open Session at **9:26 p.m.**

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**Agenda Item 9: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned following trustee remarks.

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

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at **9:26 p.m.**

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**Signatures**

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**Brett E. Williams**  
Board President

**Brenda Adams**  
Board Secretary

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