

# Belton Independent School District

## Board Meeting Minutes

Regular Board Meeting, September 16, 2024 - 6:15 p.m.

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

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### Board Members Present:

Manuel Alcozer  
Chris Flor  
Erin Bass  
Suzanne McDonald  
Rucker Preston  
Jeff Norwood  
Janet Leigh

### Board Members Absent:

### 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 6:25 pm. He stated that a quorum of Board Members was present, 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 – James L. Burrell Elementary School**

The evening's pledges were led by James L. Burrell Elementary fifth graders Jace Anderson and Eve MacVey.

#### **Student Showcase – Belton High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC Demonstration**

The evening's student showcase features the Belton High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC (MCJROTC). Established on February 11, 2009, the program serves 137 students from Belton High, Lake Belton High, and the district's four middle schools. The curriculum focuses on citizenship, leadership, and general military subjects, promoting character and leadership development.

Cadets engage in extracurricular activities such as Color Guard, drill, physical fitness, marksmanship, and Cyber Patriot, while also participating in community events like parades and football games, where they present the colors and run touchdown flags. The program is led by Sergeant Major Matthew Conrad, USMC (Ret.), and Gunnery Sergeant Jose Torres, USMC (Ret.).

#### **Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars**

The College Board has recognized 184 Belton ISD high school students as Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars for their exceptional performance on AP exams taken last spring. AP courses are designed to prepare students for the college experience, and these honors, divided into four categories, highlight the extensive dedication and hard work of both our students and teachers. Congratulations to all for demonstrating perseverance and critical thinking—two key competencies in Belton ISD's Journey of a Graduate.

Of the recognized students, 15 are from Belton New Tech @Waskow, 62 from Belton High School, and 107 from Lake Belton High School.

College	Board	National	Recognition	Program	Scholars
Sixty-nine students from Belton ISD have earned national academic honors from the College Board for their					

outstanding performance on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). These students ranked in the top 2.5% of test-takers who identified as African American, Hispanic or Latinx, Indigenous, or who attend school in a rural area or small town.

Of the recognized students, 10 are from Belton New Tech @Waskow, 18 from Belton High School, and 41 from Lake Belton High School. To qualify for this distinction, students needed to meet a minimum PSAT score and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher.

### **Department Showcase - Technology Services**

This 34-member team manages servers, networks, and over 20,000 devices and provides essential tech support and training. The team's tireless efforts keep our district connected and our classrooms future-ready. We are grateful to the Technology Department for their unwavering dedication and behind-the-scenes work that enables exceptional learning experiences every day. The department is led by Chief Technology Officer Shad McGaha.

### **New Administrator Introductions**

Kathleen (Kitty) Corsi, Director of Special Programs

Kathleen "Kitty" Corsi has been appointed as the Director of Special Programs for Belton ISD. With nearly 30 years of experience as a school psychologist, Corsi has served as the District's Special Programs Coordinator since 2020. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Virginia Tech and a Master of Arts in Clinical and Counseling Psychology from Southern Methodist University.

### **Community Partner Recognition - Mt. Zion United Methodist Church**

Belton ISD is proud to celebrate our partnership with Mount Zion United Methodist Church in Belton. Established in 1893, this historical landmark has hosted the "Back to School with God" event since 2010. Through the dedication of its 15-member congregation, more than 500 students have received backpacks, free haircuts, and essential ear and eye exams. Following the event, Mount Zion continued its support by providing additional supplies to Belton ISD to assist Project HEARTBEAT, the District's initiative focused on homeless education, awareness, and barrier elimination. The church is led by Pastor Patrick Russell.

### **Community Partner Recognition - First Temple Church**

Belton ISD is proud to celebrate our partnership with First Temple Church. The church generously purchased and shipped \$3,000 worth of school supplies from a list the District provided to support Belton ISD students in need. This donation is intended to assist students not covered by programs like Project HEARTBEAT or Project Apple Tree, as well as those displaced by the recent tornado. We are deeply thankful to First Temple Church for ensuring our students had the supplies they needed to start the school year. Dr. Joe Loughlin serves as the lead pastor of First Temple Church.

### **3. Public Comments Regarding Items on the Agenda**

None.

### **4. Reports**

#### **A. Academic Progress Report - Professional Learning**

Gabi Nino, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, provided a report on the professional learning opportunities for Belton ISD employees. Ms. Nino shared that high quality professional learning is continuous and sustained, collaborative, job embedded, data informed, focused on student impact and growth oriented. Ignite and Recharge are district-wide learning opportunities. Individualized learning includes instructional coaching, mentoring, choice learning session and book study. In addition, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) include content cohorts, role-alike sessions and early career cohorts.

Ms. Nino informed the Board about the data collected from a staff survey regarding professional learning. She reviewed highlights and opportunities for growth, of which Teaching & Learning will use to continue to improve learning across the District. Other steps include the development of a professional learning action team to establish short and long term professional learning goals.

Chris Flor stressed the importance of this work for the District as a whole. He shared with Ms. Nino similar feedback he had received about professional learning and teachers hoping to have more time in the classroom. Mr. Flor asked for an example of an outcome of professional learning from the Ignite conference. Ms. Nino provided an example on critical thinking and the approach by which to assess and measure the Journey of a Graduate competency. Erin Bass asked if Belton ISD had collaborated with other districts on their professional learning process. Ms. Nino informed her yes and provided an example.

### **B. 2022 Bond Projects Report**

Michael Morgan, Deputy Superintendent, provided an update on the 2022 bond projects. He reported approximate financial savings from bond projects to include \$700,000 from James L. Burrell Elementary, \$1,750,000 from Hubbard Branch Elementary, and Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) reductions reported in May to include \$350,000 from BHS, \$415,000 from LBMS and \$250,000 from Southwest Elementary bond projects, resulting in approximately \$3,465,000 in savings.

Mr. Morgan informed the Board of the current bond project timeline and provided the completion data below:

**James L. Burrell - 97.35%** HVAC system issues mostly resolved

**Hubbard Branch - 93.61%** Remaining digital imaging and outstanding HVAC commissioning

**Belton High School - 82.5%** Instrument storage replacement, sound doors to be replaced

**Lake Belton Middle School - 91.95%** Additional acoustic spray, lighting replacement, instrument storage replacement needed

**Southwest Elementary - 83.24%** Removing temporary gym, punch list items, outstanding HVAC commissioning

**Agricultural Facility - 93.25%** Obtained certificate of occupancy

**Delta Facility - 15%** Awaiting foundation pour, metal building to immediately follow

**Safety & Security Items** - Keyless access and security camera upgrades are nearly complete

Chris Flor inquired about the possible uses of the approximately \$3.5 million in savings. Mr. Morgan informed the Board of the existing Capital Improvements Projects list, HVAC needs, and that the savings could potentially be used for a land purchase. Dr. Golden thanked Mr. Morgan and team and our community for their support to improve learning spaces for students and teachers.

### **C. Cell Phone Discussion Report**

Mr. Morgan, Deputy Superintendent, shared that over the last 6 weeks after conducting surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions, there have been nearly 2400 opportunities for people to provide input on cell phones. He reviewed the timeline and next steps in this process and will present potential cell phone guidelines changes at the October 21, 2024 Regular Board Meeting. Board Policies and the Student Handbook would then be reviewed, and potential implementation of a plan on January 8, 2025. Mr. Morgan reviewed teacher, principal and student focus group feedback regarding cell phone strategy, support and potential barriers and identified common themes.

Suzanne McDonald shared that ensuring the solution is consistent throughout the District is an apparent priority to students, parents and staff, and ensures checks and balances. Janet Leigh added that allowing the students to have a thought experiment about the impact of cellphones and considering student input is very valuable. Rucker Preston shared his experience attending one of the listening sessions and was

surprised by what he learned and thanked Mr. Morgan for the opportunity. There was Board consensus on the importance of communication, consistency and accessibility as we approach January 8, 2025.

#### **D. PEIMS Audit Report**

Dr. Golden introduced Shad McGaha, Chief Technology Officer, and Gabi Nino, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, to share a report on the PEIMS Audit. Mr. McGaha informed the Board that the audit was commissioned in April 2024 to evaluate Belton ISD's policies, procedures, and data reporting practices, particularly in light of declining accountability performance. The audit included conducting interviews with department administrators, principals and staff, as well as holding focus groups to shed light on differentiated processes across the District.

Ms. Nino reviewed the PEIMS audit analysis and findings identifying immediate needs, including a designated leader for processing records, collaborative course review, cross-departmental coding guidelines and improving the process for free and reduced lunch applications. Future needs include reviewing the impact of student off-periods and program growth, increasing CTE courses in middle school, improving advising for CTE courses and clarity in the roles of those who input student data. Ms. Nino clarified that work is already underway to address the findings.

Suzanne McDonald asked about an example of what improved CTE advising might look like. Ms. Nino informed the Board that one example includes counselors and staff meeting with students, beginning in 8th grade, to review CTE offerings and build a plan. Chris Flor inquired about the data coming in from each campus and the quality checks in place. Mr. McGaha clarified the process.

#### **E. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Golden shared highlights from across the District tied to the Belton ISD Vision, community engagement and Journey of a Graduate competencies. These highlights included a PTA/PTO leaders meeting, Belton Education Foundation, and Grandparents Day. Dr. Golden shared the experiences she had on campuses and in classrooms that include examples of exceptional learning experiences not only for students, but staff as well.

#### **F. Board Highlights**

Suzanne McDonald led the conversation and shared about the listening session she attended with the PTA/PTO Leaders. Erin Bass shared her experience attending various campus open houses and how important that is for the community. Rucker Preston spoke to the 9/11 Remembrance Walk at High Point Elementary. Chris Flor expressed his excitement about getting to chaperone and attend football games and band performances now that school has kicked off. Manuel Alcozer shared about the work being done through the City of Temple Legislative Task Force. He informed the Board that this team understands the impact to both Temple, Belton and the surrounding communities and looks forward to the continued work.

### **5. Consent Agenda: Consider and Take Appropriate Action**

#### **A. Minutes of Previous Meetings:**

1. August 5, 2024 Special Meeting - Team of 8
2. August 19, 2024 Workshop Meeting
3. August 19, 2024 Regular Meeting

#### **B. Unaudited Financial Report for the Month Ending August 31, 2024**

#### **C. Gifts, Grants, and Bequests**

#### **D. Expenditures over \$50,000**

1. ParentSquare Mass Notification Platform
2. Renewal of Insight Investments, LLC for Lightspeed
3. Renewal of Red River Technology, LLC for Smartnet

- 4. Renewal of National Recruiting Consultants for Special Programs
- E. Resolution Adopting Authorized Broker/Dealer List
- F. Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (MCJROTC) Program
- G. Class Size Waiver
- H. Certified T-TESS Appraisers for 2024-2025
- I. Change Order #1 with American Constructors for Hubbard Branch Elementary
- J. Projected Expenditures Exceeding \$50,000 for Delta Facility Bond Project

Rucker Preston made a motion, seconded by Jeff Norwood, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried by a vote of (7-0).

**7. Board Requests for New Information and/or Reports**

PEIMS Report follow up.

**8. Public Comments Regarding Non-Agenda Items**

None.

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

The Board went into closed session at 8:03 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 8:54 p.m.

**11. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

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Manuel Alcozer, President

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Erin Bass, Secretary