

**Belton Independent School District**  
***Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda Item***

***February 23, 2026***

**Item:** Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action on a Resolution Regarding a Period of Prayer and Reading Religious Text During the School Day

**Contact Person:** Cassandra Spearman

**Presented for:**  Action     Report Only

**Supporting Documents:**  None     Attached     Provided Later

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**District Goal or Objective Addressed:**

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

**Background Information:**

The 89th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 11, which requires that each school board in Texas take a record vote within six months of the effective date of the act, on whether to adopt a policy regarding a period of prayer and reading of religious text during the school day in accordance with Texas Education Code § 25.0823.

If a school board decides to adopt such a policy, the period of prayer and religious reading must follow the provisions set out in Section 25.083, which includes the following conditions:

- To participate in the period of prayer and religious reading, a student's parents must submit a signed consent, expressly waiving their right to bring a legal claim on a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.
- The prayer and religious reading must not be done in the physical presence or hearing of a person for whom a signed consent was not made.
- The prayer and religious reading may only be observed in segregated areas where consenting parties are separated from non-consenting parties; before the school day; or by methods recommended by the Texas Attorney General or the district's legal counsel.

State law, federal law, and Belton ISD Board Policy already allow students to engage in prayer, reading of religious text, and religious expression on school property during non-instructional time. Board Policy FNA(Legal) states:

"A public school student has an absolute right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt the instructional or other activities of the school. A student shall not be required,

encouraged, or coerced to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity... Nothing in the Constitution as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court prohibits any public school student from voluntarily praying at any time before, during, or after the school day..."

Board Policy FNA(Local) states: "The District shall treat a student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint, if any, on an otherwise permissible subject in the same manner the District treats a student's voluntary expression of a secular or other viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject and shall not discriminate against the student based on a religious viewpoint expressed by the student on an otherwise permissible subject". The local policy further provides that students may organize prayer groups, religious clubs, and religious gatherings, before, during, and after school to the same extent that students are permitted to organize other noncurricular student groups.

Students already have well-established rights to engage in religious expression on school grounds during non-instructional times. Belton ISD has policies and practices in place to allow students to exercise those rights. Students are free to continue exercising these rights, whether or not the Board adopts the proposed resolution.

**Fiscal Implications:**

None.

**Administrative Recommendation(s):**

Approve the resolution declining to adopt a policy under Texas Education Code Section 25.0823 relating to a period of prayer and reading of the Bible or other religious text.