

# Belton Independent School District

## Board Meeting Minutes

Regular Board Meeting, March 24, 2025 - 6:15 p.m.

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

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### Board Members Present:

Manuel Alcozer  
Erin Bass  
Suzanne McDonald  
Rucker Preston

Chris Flor  
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 6:24 p.m. He stated that a quorum of Board Members was present, 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 – High Point Elementary School**

This evening, the pledges were led by High Point Elementary students Kingston Filatonga and Ziyon Turner.

#### **Student Showcase – Belton High School Theatre**

The evening's showcase was presented by the Belton High School Theatre Department to include the Texas Thespians National Qualifying Duet scene from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead featuring Matthew Farwell and Gabe Rodriguez as well as "The I Love You Song" from The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee featuring Anaise Lopez-Rodriguez, Jojo Fogle, Ava Novak & Audrena Ativalu. All are senior members of the BHS theatre department and have received top honors at the Texas Thespian Festival. They are led by theatre instructor Melissa Stuhff.

#### **Theatre in Our Schools Month**

Belton ISD is recognizing March as Theatre in Our Schools Month with a proclamation, emphasizing the importance of theatre education in fostering creativity, collaboration, and confidence among each and every student. Theatre programs offer valuable opportunities for self-expression, problem-solving, and teamwork, enhancing both academic and personal growth.

#### **Texas Theatre Scholar Award**

Five Belton High School students, Anaise Lopez-Rodriguez, Evelyne Morrow, Eilee Whitt, Finn Mauk, and Maddison Frazier, were recognized for earning the Texas Theatre Scholar Award. Guided by their dedicated theatre instructor, Melissa Stuhff, these students have shown outstanding passion and dedication in their craft.

#### **National Merit Finalists**

Congratulations to Steven Melo Arantes and David Shelburne from Belton High School for being named finalists in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program. They are among 15,000 high school students across the country to achieve this prestigious recognition. To earn this distinction, they submitted applications highlighting their academic achievements, extracurricular involvement, leadership skills, and awards. This is one of the highest honors a high school student can receive.

**Career & Technical Education Recognitions will take place at the May 12, 2025 Regular Board Meeting**

**Temple Rotary Educator of the Month**

Lorin Rhodes is being recognized by the Temple Rotary Club as the Rotary Educator of the Month for March for her outstanding service to Belton ISD. Lorin serves as a reading interventionist at Hubbard Branch Elementary School. She is in her 20th year in education with 3 of those years being in Belton ISD.

#### **Department Showcase - Business Services**

This month, we are recognizing the Business Services team for their essential role in supporting students and staff. Their responsibilities include processing vendor payments, managing 54 payrolls annually, handling purchase orders, soliciting bids, fulfilling work orders, and delivering food and custodial supplies to campuses.

Their commitment to financial transparency has earned them top honors from the Government Finance Officers Association and the Association of School Business Officials International.

Led by CFO Melissa Lafferty, this 22-member team ensures smooth operations across accounts payable, payroll, purchasing, federal programs, the print shop, and the warehouse. We appreciate their dedication!

#### **Community Partner Recognition - Don Ringler Automotive**

Tonight, we recognize Don Ringler as our Community Partner Recognition. Don Ringler Toyota generously donated over \$41,000 in new automotive parts to Belton High School and Lake Belton High School, providing students with hands-on experience using industry-standard materials. As an employer of Belton ISD students in its automotive department, Don Ringler actively supports career development by selecting schools for donations and fostering future automotive professionals. This partnership strengthens career readiness, aligns programs with industry needs, and equips students with the skills to succeed. We are incredibly grateful for their support.

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

None.

#### **4. Action Items**

##### **A. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding Certification of Unopposed Candidates and Order of Cancellation for Area 1 & 5 for the May 3, 2025 Trustee Election**

Dr. Malinda Golden informed the Board state law allows entities without contested elections to avoid election costs by certifying the candidates as elected. She indicated two documents require Board consideration – the Certification of Unopposed Candidates which states that Jeff Norwood representing Area 1, and Manuel Alcozer representing Area 5, are unopposed; and the Order of Cancellation which states that unopposed candidates are elected to office according to the Texas Election Code.

Suzanne McDonald made a motion, seconded by Janet Leigh, to approve the Certification of Unopposed Candidates and Order of Cancellation for Area 1 and Area 5 for the May 3, 2025 Trustee Election as presented. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

##### **B. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding Budget Assumptions for Fiscal Year 2025-2026**

Melissa Lafferty, Chief Financial Officer, shared a brief report on the 2025-2026 Budget Assumptions. At the Board Workshop held at 5:00 p.m. this evening, Mrs. Lafferty provided a detailed presentation regarding the Budget Assumptions and explained that the annual budget is based on several assumptions that serve as the basis for estimating revenue and expenditures used to develop the budget. The initial budget assumptions to be used for the preliminary development of the 2025-2026 budget were presented for discussion. Ms. Lafferty noted the 10% reduction in campus budgets and the conservative budgeting approach for the upcoming fiscal year. She also stated that the tax rate will likely drop due to the projected growth in property values.

Erin Bass made a motion, seconded by Jeff Norwood, to approve the budget assumptions for fiscal year 2025-2026 as presented. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

##### **C. Consider, Discuss and Take Appropriate Action Regarding RFP #2503-100-386 for Driveway & Storm Drainage Easements**

Dr. Michael Morgan informed the Board in June 2024, BISD was approached by a developer regarding interest in a shared-use driveway and allowing a storm drain pipe to cross District property for a planned commercial development at the corner of Loop 121 and 2nd Street adjacent to BISD property (Agricultural

Facility). These easements offer potential future advantages for the District, including improved access to the 25.94-acre tract, which includes agricultural facilities, and opportunities for storm drain integration.

In accordance with Texas Local Government Code 272.001, RFP #2503-100-386 for Driveway & Storm Drainage Easements was advertised on March 4, 2025 and opened on March 19, 2025. The District received one qualified proposal from Mammoth Holdings LLC.

Jeff Norwood made a motion, seconded by Rucker Preston to award RFP #2503-100-386, including attendant rights and privileges, for (1) stormwater drainage across/under BISD property generally located at 1012 W 2nd Avenue, Belton, TX 76513, and (2) a shared driveway somewhere on that same property to Mammoth Holdings LLC. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

#### **D. Consider, Discuss and Take Appropriate Action Regarding a Resolution Authorizing the Granting of Easements**

Dr. Morgan informed the Board that RFP #2503-100-386 for Driveway & Storm Drainage Easements was advertised on March 4, 2025 and opened on March 19, 2025. The District received one qualified proposal from Mammoth Holdings LLC, which includes attendant rights and privileges for (1) storm water drainage across/under BISD property generally located at 1012 W 2nd Avenue, Belton, TX, 76513, and (2) a shared driveway on that same property.

The resolution will allow the District to negotiate the final terms of the easement agreement for approval by the Board president. The district will not incur any financial cost for this agreement, its use, or the stormwater drainage or shared-use driveway construction.

Janet Leigh made a motion, seconded by Erin Bass, to authorize the Superintendent to negotiate the final terms of the easements and authorize the President of the Board of Trustees of Belton ISD to execute any and all instruments appropriate or necessary to effectuate the granting of the easements. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

### **5. Reports**

#### **A. Academic Progress Report**

Gabi Nino, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, provided an academic progress report on District benchmarks on student writing. The focus of the presentation was interim and benchmark data regarding extended constructed response (ECR) for 3rd grade through high school, as well as continued professional and classroom learning efforts to prepare students and improve ECR results.

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

Dr. Morgan provided a report on the status of the 2022 Bond Projects. A majority of the construction projects are complete with the exception of finalization of the BHS black box theatre, audio-visual classroom equipment, warrantee items in culinary arts, and dust collection items in CTE. Lake Belton Middle School is nearly complete pending final touches in fine arts, and the Delta Facility, having been delayed by interior architectural designs, is now well underway and should be substantially complete by the end of May.

Dr. Morgan shared with the Board the findings from the recent energy audit and provided a list of campuses that require the most immediate attention. He also shared that a focus for the community during the 2022 Bond was removing portables from campuses across the District. To date, 12 portables have been removed, with a goal of reducing portables by 83% by August 2025. Dr. Morgan provided a brief update on 2022 bond financials.

#### **C. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Malinda Golden shared her experiences visiting campuses and events across the District tied to the Belton ISD Vision, Values and Beliefs, and Journey of a Graduate.

#### **D. Board Highlights**

Suzanne McDonald led the conversation by sharing her experience at Southwest Elementary during Read Across America Week, her campus tour at Chisholm Trail and Sparta, as well as a groundbreaking at Family Promise. Rucker Preston spoke to the State of the City event for the City of Temple, advocating

at the Capitol, and campus visits. Erin Bass shared about reading in classrooms and the amazing achievement of students at middle school track meets. Chris Flor shared accolades on the achievements of our CTE teachers and students at the State level this year. Manuel Alcozer reflected on January's School Board Recognition, thanking students and staff for reaching out. He read meaningful sentiments from letters and cards, as a reminder of the purpose and impact of serving on the School Board.

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

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

1. February 13, 2025 - Special Meeting
2. February 24, 2025 - Workshop Meeting
3. February 24, 2025 - Regular Meeting

### **B. Unaudited Financial Report for the Month Ending February 28, 2025**

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

### **D. Budget Amendment #6 for 2024-2025**

### **E. Supply, Equipment, and Service Bids**

1. RFP #2410-450-372 for Instructional Materials, Supplies, Equipment and Services
2. RFP #2411-470-377 for Grounds Supplies, Equipment & Services
3. RFP #2411-475-376 for Maintenance, Repair and Operations (MRO) Services, Equipment and Supplies (Supplemental I)
4. RFP #2412-150-373 for Athletic Supplies and Equipment (Supplemental II)
5. RFQ #2502-600-382 for Engineering Services for MEP Improvements

### **F. Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding with Tarleton State University**

Jeff Norwood made a motion, seconded by Rucker Preston, to approve the Consent agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

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

None.

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

Riley Beck - Student Transfers

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

The Board went into closed session at 7:44 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 and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination of Estevan Banda, Probationary Contract Employee
2. Consider Superintendent Recommendation Regarding Termination and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination of Logan Demeny, Term Contract Employee

### **C. Consultation with Attorney - Texas Government Code, Section 551.071**

### **D. Discussion of Districtwide Intruder Detection Audit Report Finding - Texas Government Code, Section 551.076**

## **10. Reconvene in Open Session and Take Action, if any, on Items Discussed in Closed Session**

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 8:33 p.m.

## **11. Action Items**

### **A. Propose Termination and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination of Estevan Banda, Probationary Contract Employee**

Jeff Norwood made a motion, seconded by Chris Flor, to accept the superintendent's recommendation to propose termination and suspension without pay pending termination of Estevan Banda, probationary contract employee. The motion passed unanimously (7-0). See the full motion attached.

**B. Propose Termination and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination of Logan Demeny, Term Contract Employee**

Rucker Preston made a motion, seconded by Suzanne McDonald, to accept the superintendent's recommendation to propose termination and suspension without pay pending termination of Logan Demeny, term contract employee. The motion passed unanimously (7-0). See the full motion attached.

**12. Adjourn**

Adjourn: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

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Manuel Alcozer, President

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Erin Bass, Secretary

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**Attached in reference to item 11.A.**

**ESTEVAN BANDA  
MARCH 24, 2025**

**Motion to Propose Termination and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination**

Mr. President, I move to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to propose termination and suspension without pay pending termination of Estevan Banda's probationary contract 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. Banda 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 and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination for Estevan Banda 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 of Employment and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination sent to Estevan Banda.

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**Attached in reference to item 11.B.**

**LOGAN DEMENY  
MARCH 24, 2025**

**Motion to Propose Termination and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination**

Mr. President, I move to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to propose termination and suspension without pay pending termination of Logan Demeny's term contract 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. Demeny 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 and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination for Logan Demeny 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 of Employment and Suspension Without Pay Pending Termination sent to Logan Demeny.