

Belton Independent School District

Board Meeting Minutes

Regular Board Meeting, February 2, 2026 - 6:15 p.m.

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

Board Members Present:

Manuel Alcozer
Chris Flor
Rucker Preston
Jeff Norwood

Brandon Bozon
Riley Beck
Erin Bass

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 6:27pm. 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 – Chisholm Trail Elementary School

This evening's pledges were led by fourth graders Josiah Christopher Wilkerson and Theia Hernandez from Chisholm Trail Elementary School.

Student Showcase – Belton New Tech @Waskow Appeals Court

The student showcase featured Belton New Tech @Waskow students Kaycee Piskorz and Isabelle Allen, who presented appellate arguments from opposing sides of a case at the state level. These students are supported by their legal studies teacher, Dr. Mark Durfee.

FFA Leadership Development State Qualifiers

The Board recognized 11 Lake Belton High School students who qualified for FFA Leadership Development Events at the state level.

Students competed in two events, demonstrating strong leadership, research, and communication skills. One group analyzed current agricultural issues through in-depth research and presentations, while another delivered programs designed to educate targeted audiences about the mission and impact of Texas FFA. Their instructor is Allison Hall.

Texas Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra

The Board congratulated Lake Belton High School senior Emily Jeong on being selected for the Texas Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra. This honor marks her fourth consecutive year earning All-State recognition, an outstanding achievement in one of the most competitive music programs in the state. Jeanna Burchell is her instructor.

Texas Thespian National Qualifiers

Six Belton High School students earned national qualification through the Texas Thespian Excellence Awards, advancing to represent their program at the International Thespian Festival this summer after receiving superior ratings from all three state-level judges. State officers support more than 600 theatre troupes across Texas through festival planning and leadership workshops. This achievement reflects strong program support, guided by their theatre instructor, Melissa Stuhff.

Pathfinders

The Board proudly celebrated four Belton ISD elementary students from James L. Burrell Elementary School and Lakewood Elementary School who were selected for the prestigious Pathfinder program. This national initiative nurtures young mathematicians by supporting and inspiring exceptional mathematical talent from elementary school through high school, while providing expert guidance and access to advanced STEM enrichment opportunities.

The Journey of a Graduate Milestones Award

The Board recognized Dylan Bourland, a student at South Belton Middle School, nominated for his outstanding character, exceptional maturity, and consistent demonstration of the Journey of a Graduate competencies.

Dylan is known as a proactive leader who takes initiative without being asked and brings a thoughtful awareness to everything he does. He is dependable, adaptable, and trusted by multiple staff members for his willingness to step in and help wherever needed.

Presentation of Child Safety Fees from the City of Belton

Belton ISD expressed gratitude for Belton Mayor David K. Leigh and City Manager Sam Listi for the City of Belton's continued support of student safety through its annual contribution to the district's crossing guard program. This year, the district received \$28,012.39, helping ensure safe school crossings for students across the district

Community Partner Recognition – Carlson Law Firm

Belton ISD recognized Carlson Law Firm as a valued community partner supporting the Legal Studies pathway at Belton New Tech High @Waskow. Belton ISD is grateful for Carlson Law Firm's continued commitment to preparing students for future careers in the legal field.

School Board Appreciation Month

Throughout January 2026, the Big Red Community is recognizing Belton ISD's Board of Trustees during School Board Recognition Month. These dedicated volunteers provide leadership and stewardship in support of students, staff, families and public education.

Belton ISD trustees help bridge the community and the classroom while guiding decisions that support meaningful learning experiences across the district. Over the past year, each trustee dedicated more than 100 volunteer hours to board meetings, committee work, and professional training, in addition to 65 hours attending campus events, graduations and meetings with state and local leaders.

3. Public Comments Regarding Items on the Agenda

Amy Longfield, Parent - Non-Agenda Item: Staffing
Katherine Longfield, Student - Non-Agenda Item: Staffing
Ewan Longfield, Student - Non-Agenda Item: Staffing

4. Action Item:

A. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding the 2024-2025 School Year Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

Kent Willis, Audit Manager, at Pattillo, Brown, & Hill, shared financial highlights of the annual comprehensive financial report (ACFR). The most significant outcome of the report is that the district received an "unmodified opinion," which is the technical term for a clean opinion. This is the highest level of assurance an auditor can provide. It signifies that the financial statements are correct and that no significant errors were identified that would affect decision-making.

The auditors performed a separate review of federal expenditures, specifically testing the "IDEA B" cluster (Special Education funding) . Despite the complexity of federal rules, the audit found zero findings or non-compliance issues, which the auditor noted is a distinct positive achievement as this is where districts often face challenges. The audit team spent

approximately 450 hours reviewing records and was granted "unfettered access" to all district documents to verify the numbers.

Board members emphasized that the clean audit demonstrates the District's commitment to financial transparency and noted that despite narratives sometimes heard in the public regarding school finance transparency, this independent report confirms that Belton ISDs books are open and accurate. See report.

Rucker Preston made a motion, seconded by Brandon Bozon to approve the 2024-2025 School Year Annual Comprehensive Financial Report as presented. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

B. Consider, Discuss and Take Appropriate Action Regarding Approval of a Strategic Plan Charter

Dr. Malinda Golden, Superintendent, presented a charter to form a strategic planning committee to set goals for the next five years. The committee will consist of 35 members, including staff, students, parents, and community leaders. Work is to be completed by June 2026.

Erin Bass made a motion, seconded by Jeff Norwood, to approve the strategic plan charter as presented. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

C. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action to Set At-Large Trustee Election for Saturday, May 2, 2026, and Approve the Order of Election

The Board of Trustees order the Trustee election annually, on or before the deadline set forth by the Secretary of State, for the May general election date. Election Day is May 2, 2026, and early voting will take place at the Pittenger Fine Arts Center.

Jeff Norwood made a motion, seconded by Chris Flor, to set the Belton ISD Trustee Election for Saturday, May 2, 2026, and approve the Order of Election as presented. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

5. Reports:

A. Mid-year Update: Goals & Key Progress Measures Report

Led by Dr. Michael Morgan, Deputy Superintendent, members of Belton ISD Cabinet provided a mid-year update on the progress of each of the five district goals. See report.

B. Academic Progress Report

Ms. Gabi Nino, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, presented mid-year data using Star Renaissance and district benchmarks.

Math: Projected to exceed House Bill 3 goals (49% projected vs. 40% target). A focus on moving students from concrete to abstract thinking is required.

Reading: Projected to exceed House Bill 3 goals (60% projected vs. 52% target). Fourth grade was identified as a specific area needing targeted support due to the shift in cognitive complexity

C. Unlimited Tax School Building and Refunding Bonds, Series 2026 Report

Jennifer Ritter, Specialized Public Finance, discussed a plan to sell \$6 million in voter-approved technology bonds combined with a refunding of 2015 and 2016 bonds to save on interest. The Board will vote on this in late February. See report.

D. 2022 Bond Report

Dr. Morgan reported that the District is nearing the end of the bond program with 100% of the originally promised projects fulfilled, despite a challenging economic environment. Southwest Elementary and Lake Belton Middle School are undergoing final closeouts, which include deductive change orders meaning money is being returned to the bond program from the

Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP). Belton High School renovations and the access control safety project are expected to close out in March.

A significant portion of the report focused on the economic conditions during the bond's lifecycle. Dr. Morgan highlighted a disparity between general consumer inflation and construction inflation. The district faced rising labor costs, long lead times for equipment, and high material costs. Despite these factors, the District did not cut any projects from the bond program.

Board member Chris Flor commented that many other school districts who passed bonds at the same time were unable to complete their projects due to these costs.

Belton ISD anticipates realizing approximately \$4 million in bond savings.

Sources of Savings: These funds resulted from unspent owner contingencies, liquidated damages from contracts, value engineering, and interest earnings.

Usage Restrictions: Dr. Morgan explained that under Texas law, these savings must be spent on projects that fit the original proposition's purpose, such as renovations, safety items, or HVAC.

Prohibitions: The savings cannot be used for salaries, benefits, supplies, or items that would require a separate proposition (e.g., performing arts centers, stadiums, or technology equipment).

The Board expressed strong appreciation for the team's ability to complete all projects and generate savings despite the high inflation rates. See report.

E. Board Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee

Erin Bass provided a summary of the 8 policies reviewed in the Policy Committee as reflected in the consent agenda for a 2nd reading

2. Budget Committee

Chris Flor provided a recap of the Budget Committee as explained by the Board Workshop earlier this evening and the ACFR and Unlimited Tax School Building and Refunding Bonds reports provided earlier in this meeting.

3. Facilities Committee

Jeff Norwood covered four main areas: the technology refresh cycle, the stadium turf replacement, financial constraints regarding bond savings, and long-range facility planning.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Malinda Golden highlighted the STEM night partnership with Temple College, the "Night of Champions" inclusivity event, and the district's response to the recent ice storm. Dr. Golden also confirmed that due to banked minutes, the District will not need to make up the three days missed due to the inclement weather.

D. Board Highlights

Trustees shared experiences attending the Bell County Youth Fair, "Night of Champions," campus musicals (Wizard of Oz, Seussical), and the Unified Robotics team advancing to state. Trustees expressed mutual appreciation for one another in light of Board appreciation month.

6. Consent Agenda: Consider and Take Appropriate Action

A. Mid-year Update: Goals & Key Progress Measures Report

B. Academic Progress Report

C. Unlimited Tax School Building and Refunding Bonds, Series 2026 Report

D. 2022 Bond Report

E. Board Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee
2. Budget Committee
3. Facilities Committee
- F. Superintendent's Report
- G. Board Highlights
 6. Consent Agenda: Consider and Take Appropriate Action
- A. Minutes of Previous Meetings:
 1. December 15, 2025 - Workshop Meeting
 2. December 15, 2025 - Regular Meeting
- B. Unaudited Financial Report for the Month Ending December 31, 2025
- C. Gifts, Grants, and Bequests
- D. Budget Amendment #4 for 2025-2026
- E. Expenditures over \$50,000
 1. Renewal of CDW-G for Google Workspace
 2. Renewal of Soliant Health for Special Programs
 3. Renewal of Growing Places Therapy for Special Programs
 4. Paragon Sports Constructors, Inc. for Tiger Field Synthetic Turf Replacement #2511-150-390
- F. School Library Advisory Council Recommendation for Library Materials Purchase
- G. Region 10 ESC Multi-Region Purchasing Cooperative
- H. Contract with Bell County Office of Elections Administration for Election Services for the May 2, 2026 Trustee Election
- I. Change Order #2 with CORE Construction for the Lake Belton Middle School 2022 Bond Project
- J. Acceptance and Close-out of the Lake Belton Middle School 2022 Bond Project and Approval of Final Payment
- K. Change Order #3 with CORE Construction for the Southwest Elementary 2022 Bond Project.
- L. Acceptance and Close-out of the Southwest Elementary 2022 Bond Project and Approval of Final Payment
- M. Policy Update 126 - 2nd Reading
 1. CJ(LOCAL): Contracted Services
 2. CJA(LOCAL): Contracted Services Background Checks
 3. DBD(LOCAL): Employment Requirements
 4. DEC(LOCAL): Compensation & Benefits
 5. DFBB(LOCAL): Term Contracts
 6. DH(LOCAL): Employee Standards of Conduct
 7. FFB(LOCAL): Student Welfare, Crisis Intervention
 8. GF(LOCAL): Public Complaints

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

7. Public Comments Regarding Non-Agenda Items

Robin Peebles - Staffing
 Jose Martinez - Libraries, Staffing

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

The Board did not convene in closed session.

- 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

9. Reconvene in Open Session

The Board did not convene in closed session.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Manuel Alcozer, President

Erin Bass, Secretary