

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SMITHVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Smithville Independent School District was held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 beginning at 6:00 PM at the Smithville ISD Administrative Building PO Box 479, 901 N.E. 6th Street, Smithville, Texas 78957.

Members present: Grant Gutierrez, Michael Hancock, Chelsa Vinklarek, Chris Hinnant, Josh Magden, Candice Parsons, Bryan Jones

Others present: Tracy Johnson, Holly Brockman, Amanda Hudspeth, Andrew Torrey, Tucker Copeland, Angie Westerfield, Lindsey Saunders, Kary Bitzkie, Ray Bitzkie, Ben Johnson, Nikki Johnson, Lindsay Grimm, Nikki Peacock, Landon Peacock, Cooper Peacock, Cindy Davis, Dezirae Litton, Minerva Vences, Sheila Namken, Debra Hlavaty, Kierstin Davis, Corbin Davis, Minnie Tatum, Linda Shivocky, Trip Davis, Courtland Namken, Trace Namken, Misty Lopez, Stacy Tiner, Kevin Mahoney, Denise Velez, Maddy Villager, Lucy Kirkby, CR Winn, Marcie Garcia, Kelsey Abreo, Zack Harris, Bethany Logan, Rosalba Ariza, Juan Ariza, Darby House and Liza Rios.

Call to Order - The Board President called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

Roll Call - The Board President called the roll of members. All members were present.

Student Led Pledge of Allegiance - Students who have earned the most Tiger Tokens at Smithville Elementary led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Those students were Ashley Benitez Soto, Edrick Arce Vences, Knox Bledsoe, Rainey Bitzkie, Blayne Bennett, Reese Bitzkie, Olivia Abreo, Allison Benitez Soto, and Julius Allison.

Recognition of Outstanding Students for the Second Nine-Weeks - Each nine-weeks the middle school and high school faculties select an outstanding student from their respective campus. Students are rated on criteria including grades, honesty, enthusiasm, cooperation with teachers and their peers, class participation and leadership.

The students for the second nine-weeks from SJHS are Addison Wendel and Yaiden Ariza. Addison is a sixth grader and the daughter of Ashley Wendel and Cory Abshier. Yaiden is a 6th grader and the son of Rosalba and Juan Ariza.

Outstanding students from the high school are Callie Ruyle and Michael Davis. Both Callie and Michael are seniors. Callie is the daughter of Jeremy and Daphne Ruyle. Michael is the son of Mike Davis and Debra Hlavaty.

Smithville Elementary School Tiger of the Month - Smithville Elementary School is excited to celebrate outstanding students with the "Tiger of the Month" recognition. Elementary staff nominate

students who exhibit characteristics such as kindness, strong character, and helpfulness. Each month, one exceptional student is honored by the campus, recognized at the school board meeting, and receives a special yard sign to proudly display at home. The Tiger of the Month for January 2026 was James Litton, he is a 4th grader in Mrs. Covey's class. Congratulations to James!

ACC Welding Certification Graduates - Students who have attained the Austin Community College Level 1 Certificate in welding received acknowledgement for this outstanding accomplishment at the December ACC Graduation. We were pleased to recognize these students this evening: Ace Ahlbrandt, Trace Namken, Cooper Stockdale, Landon Peacock, and Cooper Peacock.

Staff Recognitions - The TIGER award is a quarterly recognition program for staff who go above and beyond and demonstrate service to others. Tiger Award Recipients for this quarter include: Brown Primary — Lindsey Grimm, Para Educator, Smithville Elementary — Marcie Maloney, Para Educator, Smithville Junior High — Misty Lopez, Para Educator, Smithville High School — Kevin Mahoney, Special Education Teacher, Transportation — Cynthia Winn, Bus Monitor

School Board Appreciation - Each January, we honor the dedicated individuals who tirelessly serve their communities as volunteers — school board members. School boards oversee the operation of local public schools and work to ensure that students are getting a high-quality education. School Board Recognition Month is an opportunity to show trustees how much we appreciate their work, leadership, and commitment to improving our schools. Smithville ISD is grateful for the outstanding leadership of our seven Trustees and applauds their ongoing commitment to excellence.

Public Hearing — Texas Academic Performance Report and At-Risk Reports

Texas Education Code 39 requires every school district's Board of Trustees to: (a) publish an annual report describing the district's educational performance on the TAPR or Texas Academic Performance Report indicators (and include the campus performance objectives); (b) hold a hearing for public discussion of the report; and (c) widely disseminate the report within the district. Additionally, the At-Risk Reports will be reviewed. The district staff has prepared and published the 2024-2025 Texas Academic Performance Report, and Dr. Bethany Logan, Assistant Superintendent, presented it to the group at the public hearing. The report will also be placed on the district website in accordance with state guidelines and paper copies will be available upon request.

Public Communications – There were no communications from the public at this meeting.

Consent Agenda – Josh Magden moved to approve consent agenda items 1 through 8 as presented. With a second from Candice Parsons, the vote passed 7-0.

1. Minutes
2. Financial Statements
3. Investment Report
4. State Aid Comparison - Budgeted vs. Earned
5. Earned vs. TEA Payments

6. Tax Collection Report
7. Financial Report
8. Bond Payments Resolution

Superintendent's Report - The Superintendent updated the Board on important issues pertaining to the District.

- Enrollment Update
- CTE Showcase was held for 8th grade students on January 12 and 13, 2026
- 37th Annual Walk for Peace, Justice and Equality was held in Elgin on January 19, 2026
- Brown Primary Historical Marker Designation was held on January 20, 2026
- National Honor Society Induction on January 22, 2026 at 6 p.m.
- Career Tracks Ribbon Cutting January 22, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.
- Holocaust Remembrance Week January 26–30, 2026
- Upcoming Community Events
 - Friday, February 6, 2026 - Annual Chamber Banquet
 - Saturday, February 7, 2026 - Annual Lions' Club and Volunteer Fire Department Fish Fry
 - Thursday, February 26, 2026 - Smithville Education Foundation's Scramble FORE! Education Golf Tournament

INFORMATION ITEMS

Smithville ISD Strategic Plan 2023-2027 Update – Dr. Bethany Logan, Assistant Superintendent, gave a progress/update on the progress of Strategic Plan Priority 1: Student Success.

Receive a Report Regarding HB 2 and Revised Texas Teacher Certification Requirements

As a result of the 89th Legislative Session and beginning in the 2026-27 school year, revised requirements regarding teacher certification in certain subject areas and grade levels will be implemented. An overview of the new requirements and the District plan for implementation were reviewed and discussed.

SB 11 Regarding a Resolution for a Period of Prayer and Reading of Religious Texts on Each School Day

Lindsey Saunders, District Communications Officer, provided information related to SB 11. As a result of the 89th Legislative Session, school boards must consider a resolution related to a period of prayer and reading of religious texts each school day. An overview of SB 11, the state's resolution, and related state and federal laws were provided and action will be recommended at the regular meeting in February.

Tentative February 2026 Agenda Items – Tentative Items to be included on the February Agenda are:

- Recognitions of Students and Staff
- Strategic Plan Update - Priority 2: Staff Satisfaction and Engagement
- Review of a report from the district's demographer
- Approval of contract for annual financial audit services

- Consideration and Action Regarding Administrator Employment Contract Renewals/Extensions
- Consider Approval of an Application to the Texas Education Agency for a Delay of Teacher Certification Requirements Application
- Hiring of New Certified Personnel
- Consider approval of an MOU with the City of Smithville regarding reciprocal facility usage
- Consider renewal of an MOU with the University of Texas System for continued student access to T-CHATT (Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine) services

ACTION ITEMS

Employment of Contractual Personnel – Josh Magden moved to approve the hiring of Darby House and Stewart Burns. With a second from Bryan Jones, the vote passed 7-0.

According to Board Policy DC [Local], the Superintendent has the authority to make recommendations to the Board regarding the selection of all contractual personnel.

Recommendations this month include:

- Athletic Director & Head Football Coach
- Stewart Burns, Science Teacher at SJHS

Order Board of Trustees Election for May 2, 2026 – State statute requires that annually each governing body call for an election to be held in accordance with existing election law. The Smithville Independent School District Board of Trustees, being a governing body and electing representatives by place, must call for the election. The Smithville Independent School District Board of Trustees has established the first Saturday in May as its regular election date. This year, the election falls on Saturday, May 2, 2026. Two places are up for election, including:

- Place 1 - Chris Hinnant
- Place 2 - Grant Gutierrez

The Order of Election is attached. Candice Parsons moved to approve the Order of Election as presented, with a second from Chelsa Vinklerek the vote passed 7-0.

Consider Approval of Election Services Contract with Bastrop County – Smithville ISD has been contracting election services with the County of Bastrop since January 2006. Since that time, the Bastrop County Elections Administrator has overseen all elections ordered by the school district for an administrative fee.

According to Chapter 271 of the Election Code, school districts are required to hold their elections jointly with the municipality located within the district. Bastrop County conducts countywide voting services, which allows all municipalities in the county to conduct a joint election, and will satisfy the Chapter 271 requirement. Candice Parsons moved to approve the contract with a second by Michael Hancock, the vote passed 7-0.

Consider Approval of Election Services Contract with Fayette County - Although the Bastrop County Elections Administrator oversees all elections ordered by the school district, Smithville ISD also has less than 200 voters who reside in Fayette County. Fayette County Elections have agreed to contract services for SISD constituents who reside in Fayette County and the proposed contract is included in the board packet for approval. Chris Hinnant moved to approve the contract with a second by Chelsa Vinklarek, the vote passed 7-0.

Approval of the 2026-27 Instructional Calendar – Following an extensive process of gathering input and feedback from staff, students, parents and community members, the proposed 2026-27 instructional calendar is designed to focus on instructional time, with opportunities for professional learning and embedded breaks for staff and students. Josh Magden moved to approve the calendar with a second by Candice Parsons, the vote passed 7-0.

Designation of School Holidays for the 2026-27 School Year as Related to the Texas Public Information Act and HB 3033 –

Various provisions throughout the PIA require a governmental entity to act within a prescribed number of "business days." Under HB 3033, the only days that do not count as business days are the following:

- Weekends - Saturday or Sunday;
- National Holidays - New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr., Day; President's Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; and Christmas Day;
- State Holidays - Confederate Heroes Day; Texas Independence Day; San Jacinto Day; Emancipation Day; Lyndon B. Johnson Day;
- Optional Holidays - Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur; and Good Friday (only if the governmental body observes the holiday);
- The Friday before or the Monday after a holiday described above if the holiday occurs on a Saturday or Sunday and the governmental body observes the holiday on that Friday or Monday; and
- Up to 10 additional days each calendar year when the district's administrative offices are closed or operating with minimal staff.

To take advantage of the 10 additional "non-business days" each calendar year, the board of trustees must officially designate these days. For 2026-27, it is recommended that these days include November 26-27, December 24, 28-31, January 4, and March 18-19. Chelsa Vinklarek moved to approve with a second from Chris Hinnant, the vote passed 7-0.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board of Trustees entered closed session at 7:29 pm and returned at 9:36.

Disclaimer - During the course of the meeting, the Board of Trustees may conduct a closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Subchapter D and E. Decisions may be made as a result of executive session.

Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071, Consultation with an Attorney Regarding Legal Matters Related to Construction Issues at Smithville Junior High School –

This item was discussed in closed session.

Discussion Regarding the Superintendent's Annual Evaluation and Contract Pursuant to the Personnel Matters; Closed Meeting Exception to the Texas Open Meetings Act as Set Forth by Texas Government Code Section 551.074 – This item was discussed in closed session.

OPEN SESSION

Consideration and Action Related to the Superintendent Contract - Chris Hinnant moved to approve the motion with a second from Candice Parsons, the vote passed 7-0.

Adjournment – Josh Magden moved the meeting to be adjourned at 9:38 with a second from Chris Hinnant, the motion passed 7-0 and the meeting was adjourned.

The notice for this meeting was posted in compliance with the Texas Open Meeting Act on Tuesday, January 13, 2026.