

Belton Independent School District

Board Meeting Minutes

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

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

Board Members Present:

Manuel Alcozer

Rucker Preston

Jeff Norwood

Chris Flor

Riley Beck

Erin Bass

Board Members Absent:

Brandon Bozon

1. Call to Order, Moment of Silence, and Pledge of Allegiance

Chris Flor, Board President, called the regular meeting of the Belton Independent School District Board of Trustees to order at 6:15 p.m. He stated that a quorum of Board Members was present, Brandon Bozon was absent, 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 incoming third graders Ryker Cottrell and Brynlee Hargrave from James L. Burrell Elementary School.

Unified Track State Qualifiers

The Board recognized the LBHS Unified Track team for qualifying for the Special Olympics Texas Unified State Track and Field Meet and earning a third-place state finish. Under the guidance of coaches Tiffney Barnes and Stephanie Townsel, the team demonstrated perseverance, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the season.

Golf State Qualifiers

The Board celebrated Belton New Tech @Waskow's Samantha McKenzie for qualifying for the UIL 3A State Golf Tournament. Under the leadership of Coach Ben Bralley, Samantha earned the opportunity to compete among the state's top golfers.

Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State Golf

The Board recognized Belton New Tech @Waskow student-athlete Samantha McKenzie for earning First Team All-State honors from the Texas High School Coaches Association. She is coached by Ben Bralley.

Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State Softball

The Board celebrated BHS student-athletes Iris Molina, Lauren Vazquez and Kenadie Vanderveer for earning Academic All-State honors from the Texas High School Coaches Association. Under the leadership of Coach Morgan Birkel, Iris Molina and Lauren Vazquez were named to the Academic All-State Second Team, while Kenadie Vanderveer earned Honorable Mention recognition.

Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State Track

The Board celebrated Palu Muringathuparambil and Christian Porter for earning Academic All-State honors in track from the Texas High School Coaches Association.

Under the leadership of Coach Emily Pinkerton, these students demonstrated a commitment to excellence both on the track and in the classroom.

Heller Award Recipient

Belton ISD spotlighted BHS senior Malachi Santana for earning Best Lead Performer Male at the 13th Annual Heller Awards for Young Artists for his performance in *Seussical**. This prestigious honor recognizes Malachi as one of Central Texas' top high school musical theatre performers. Malachi is under the direction of Tonya Lovorn and Melissa Stuhff.

Community Partner Recognition – Texas Nativescapes

The Board recognized Texas Nativescapes for its generosity and support of Belton ISD. This month, their team donated and applied sand topdressing to the Wilson-Kerzee Field, providing an in-kind contribution that will help improve and maintain a space used by students, staff and the community. This investment reflects the kind of partnership that helps our programs thrive and our facilities remain a source of pride.

3. Public Comments Regarding Items on the Agenda

None.

President Chris Flor noted a change to the order of the agenda, moving Item 5. Reports ahead of Item 4. Action Items. Hearing no objections, the agenda was amended by unanimous consent

4. Reports

A. Academic Progress Report - Special Education

Ms. Gabi Nino, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, provided an annual special education report to the Board. Key takeaways are as follows:

Significant Enrollment Growth: Special education enrollment jumped from 1,695 students in the 2019-2020 school year to 2,899 students in 2025-2026, meaning the district now serves 21.4% of its student body in special education.

Surge in Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD): The massive increase in SLD identifications is driven by a lowered state eligibility bar, pandemic learning gaps, and a legislative mandate to formally include dyslexia, which now makes up 8% of the district's students.

Staffing Strain from Outside Evaluations: While proactive classroom interventions have decreased internal evaluations, mandatory evaluations for out-of-district students (like private or homeschool students) doubled. Each evaluation takes roughly 20 hours, heavily burdening the district's multidisciplinary teams.

Academic Highs and Lows: Students showed solid growth in 4th and 8th-grade reading and 5th and 6th-grade math, but struggled in transition years. A notable dip in 7th-grade math is attributed to students splitting into advanced pathways and state rules banning the use of calculators on the 7th-grade test.

Major Budget Impact: Meeting these rising demands and state mandates has heavily strained the district's budget, resulting in nearly \$1.9 million in additional staffing costs mostly dedicated to special education

B. LASO Grant Bluebonnet Math Implementation Report

Ms. Nino continued on to provide this report to the Board. Key takeaways are as follows:

Significant Grant Funding: The district was awarded a **\$743,000 competitive LIFT grant** (part of the TEA's LASO grant umbrella) to support the rollout of the new Bluebonnet Math curriculum. The district was eligible for this grant specifically because Bluebonnet is an approved high-quality instructional material.

Strategic Fund Distribution: **70% of the funds must go to Great Minds**, an approved vendor that will provide expert pedagogical coaching and professional learning. The remaining **30% is**

at the district's discretion and will fund an implementation specialist, embedded intervention materials, and digital teaching infrastructure.

Three-Phase Rollout: To avoid leaving teachers unsupported after adopting a new resource, the plan includes a pre-implementation leadership readiness phase, a **summer learning series and differentiated August launch**, and rigorous, ongoing **coaching cycles** throughout the year for teachers, coaches, and principals.

Elevating Tier-One Instruction: The primary objective of the implementation is to ensure **consistent, high-quality first-time (tier-one) instruction** in every K-5 classroom, aimed at driving measurable gains in student achievement, advanced problem-solving, and deep conceptual understanding.

Extra Support for Southwest Elementary: Southwest Elementary proactively secured an additional **\$120,000 Strong Foundations Implementation grant** to provide their staff with even more intensive, monthly in-person instructional support and extended planning time.

C. Board Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee

The committee reviewed the Board Operating Procedures, CH(LOCAL), FFAC(LOCAL), and update 126 policies CV(LOCAL), EEP(LOCAL), EIA(LOCAL), and EHBAF(LOCAL), all of which are on the meetings Consent Agenda.

2. Budget Committee

The committee reviewed three potential compensation scenarios for the upcoming fiscal year, evaluating overall personnel cost increases of either 1.2% or 1.5%, alongside a third option to potentially call a Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election (VATRE). In evaluating these paths, the board weighed the critical budget trade-offs of each scenario, specifically focusing on how to balance rising personnel costs against the needs of the maintenance and facilities budget. Compounding these decisions is the matter of pending funds, as the district is currently waiting on the results of an appeal that could bring in an additional \$2 million by August.

3. Facilities Committee

The committee discussed the submission of the state-mandated TEA Facility Use Report, noting that the TEA's intended use for the collected data remains unclear. Turning to local developments, plans are officially underway for the Community Garden Project, which will transform a previously purchased, cleared property into a community garden and park; this initiative is set to involve master gardeners and provide valuable, hands-on learning opportunities for CTE, agriculture, and construction students, with the district actively planning to apply for grants to fund it. Finally, the committee reviewed a minor, pre-existing property easement adjustment for the Charter Oak property with the City of Temple, confirming that the modification does not impact any district property.

D. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Malinda Golden, Superintendent, highlighted successful graduation ceremonies, the campus and leadership end-of-year retreat, summer school and community enrichment camps, and the SkillsUSA National competition.

E. Board Highlights

The Board highlighted graduation, the City of Temple incorporating the Bronco theme on the water tower outside the campus, marching band history, athletic summer camps, and a project heartbeat fundraising event.

5. Action Items:

A. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action on a Resolution Regarding the Engagement of an Independent Auditor to Conduct the District's Efficiency Audit

Chief Financial Officer Melissa Laferty presented an action item to engage the firm Patillo, Brown & Hill LLP to conduct a district efficiency audit. This audit will serve as an independent, strategic management tool to evaluate the district's resource allocation, financial practices, academic accountability, and staffing ratios, comparing Belton ISD's performance against peer districts and state averages. While an efficiency audit is a strict legislative prerequisite if the district chooses to pursue a Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election (VATRE), board members emphasized that their primary motivation is to use the findings to benchmark performance, uncover budget efficiencies, and build community trust, rather than solely to prepare for a VATRE.

Jeff Norwood made a motion, seconded by Riley Beck, to approve the engagement of Patillo, Brown & Hill LLP to conduct the efficiency audit as presented. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

B. Consider, Discuss, and Take Appropriate Action Regarding an Order Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of One or More Series of Belton Independent School District Unlimited Tax Refunding Bonds; Levying a Tax and Providing for the Security and Payment Thereof; Providing for the Award of the Sale Thereof in Accordance With Specified Parameters; Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of Documents and Agreements in Connection Therewith; Approving the Preparation of One or More Official Statements; and Enacting Other Provisions Relating Thereto

Rucker Preston made a motion, seconded by Erin Bass, to approve the Order Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of One or More Series of Belton Independent School District Unlimited Tax Refunding Bonds, Series 2026A, as presented. The motion passed (6-0).

6. Consent Agenda: Consider and Take Appropriate Action

A. Minutes of Previous Meetings:

1. May 12, 2026 - Special Meeting
2. May 18, 2026 - Workshop Meeting
3. May 18, 2026 - Regular Meeting

B. Unaudited Financial Report for the Month Ending May 31, 2026

C. Gifts, Grants, and Bequests

D. Budget Amendment #9 for 2025-2026

E. Expenditures over \$50,000

1. Navigate 360 for Security Software
2. Great Minds: LASO (LIFT) Bluebonnet Math Implementation
3. SAVVAS Learning Licenses
4. Renewal of Enome Inc (Goalbook) for Toolkit
5. Tessera Technology for Security Camera Refresh at Lake Belton High School
6. M.A.N.S. Distributors Inc for Custodial Equipment

F. Supply, Equipment, and Service Bids

1. RFP #2603-125-411 Apparel, Uniforms, Accessories & Supplies
2. RFP #2602-275-411 for Armed Security Guard Services
3. RFP #2605-475-424 2026 Fencing Improvements at Tarver, Lakewood, Leon Heights, and Delta 2022 Bond Project

G. Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding with Central Counties Services

H. Board Operating Procedures

I. Local District Update

1. CH(LOCAL) Purchasing and Acquisition
2. FFAC(LOCAL) Wellness and Health Services - Medical Treatment

J. Policy Update 126

1. CV(LOCAL) Facility Construction

2. EEP(LOCAL) Lesson Plans
3. EIA(LOCAL) Academic Achievement
4. EHBAF(LOCAL) Special Education Video/Audio Monitoring

Manuel Alcozer made a motion, seconded by Riley Beck, to approve the consent agenda, excluding item 6.G. Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding with Central Counties Services. The motion passed (6-0).

Erin Bass made a motion, seconded by Jeff Norwood, to approve Consent Item 6.G Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding with Central Counties Services, as presented. The motion passed (5-0-1), Rucker Preston abstaining from the vote.

7. Public Comments Regarding Non-Agenda Items

None.

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

The Board convened in closed session at 8:10 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

9. Reconvene in Open Session

The Board reconvened in open session at 8:50 p.m.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Chris Flor, Board President

Rucker Preston, Board Secretary