



Brownsville Independent School District

Agenda Category: Conference Presentation Board of Education Meeting: 09/01/26

Item Title:	<u>Texas Trees Foundation Tree Planting</u>	<u></u>	Action
	<u>Grant for Del Castillo-Morningside</u>	<u>X</u>	Information
	<u>Elementary and Oliveira Middle School</u>	<u></u>	Discussion

BACKGROUND:

The Texas Trees Foundation (TTF) is a Texas-based nonprofit organization dedicated to creating healthier, more livable communities through urban forestry, tree planting, education, and environmental stewardship. TTF partners with schools, municipalities, businesses, and community organizations to expand the urban tree canopy, improve air quality, reduce urban heat, and enhance outdoor learning environments throughout Texas.

TTF was awarded a tree planting grant through the Butt Family Foundation, the philanthropic organization established by the Butt family, with Brownsville ISD (BISD) selected as the grant beneficiary. The award will fund the purchase and planting of approximately 200 trees at Del Castillo-Morningside Elementary School and Oliveira Middle School (100 trees at each campus).

To support implementation of this project, TTF and BISD will collaborate with community partners, including the City of Brownsville and Brownsville Public Utilities Board (BPUB), to coordinate the tree planting and promote community engagement in environmental stewardship.

This project will provide numerous environmental and educational benefits for students, staff, and the surrounding community by:

- Increasing campus tree canopy and shade to reduce heat exposure and improve air quality.
- Enhancing the appearance and environmental quality of school grounds while creating healthier outdoor spaces for learning and recreation.
- Supporting the District's long-term sustainability efforts and promoting environmental stewardship through hands-on learning opportunities.

The grant will cover the full cost of purchasing the trees; therefore, there will be no cost to Brownsville ISD. Brownsville ISD will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and care of the trees.

Micaela Escobar
Submitted by: Principal/Program Director

Approved for Submission to Board of Education:

Recommended by: Executive Director

Dr. Timothy E. Cuff
Dr. Timothy E. Cuff, Superintendent

Dr. Nellie Cantu
Approved by: Assistant Superintendent

When Necessary, Additional Background May Follow This.



Dr. Timothy E. Cuff
Superintendent
Brownsville Independent School District
1900 E. Price Road
Brownsville, TX 78521

August 13, 2026

Dear Superintendent and Members of the Board of Trustees,

Texas Trees Foundation (Texas Trees) is pleased to partner with Brownsville Independent School District (Brownsville ISD) on a school greening initiative that will expand tree canopy, enhance outdoor spaces, and support well-being at Del Castillo-Morningside Elementary School and Oliveira Middle School. Texas Trees is a nationally recognized nonprofit that aims to transform communities by maximizing the benefits of trees to support human health. Through education, scientific research, and evidence-based design, Texas Trees is advancing urban forestry to reimagine our cities into greener, cleaner, cooler and healthier places to grow and thrive. Our Cool Schools Program™ gives students and teachers access to nature by planting trees and transforming schoolyards into greener, safer spaces for students to play and learn outdoors, supporting the health and development of every child.

Since 2023, Brownsville ISD and Texas Trees have been working together to seek support for campus greening and environmental education through the Cool Schools™ Program. Increasing the campus tree canopy is essential to creating healthy, more resilient and enriching environments for students. Since that time, the Brownsville ISD has remained engaged in advancing opportunities to bring those benefits to Brownsville schools.

We are delighted to have secured funding and volunteers support from a philanthropic partner to plant approximately 200 trees, 100 at each campus, in the fall of 2026. This initial investment will create lasting environmental, educational and community benefits for Brownsville ISD and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Upon maturity, these trees are expected to:

- Increase campus tree canopy
- Benefit over 1,200 students annually by creating healthier, more comfortable outdoor experiences and learning environments

- Expand shaded areas that help reduce surface and ambient temperatures around playgrounds, outdoor learning areas, walkways and portion of the nearby school buildings
- Support student comfort and physical wellbeing and encourage learning and physical activity in alignment with the District's commitment to outdoor recess
- Improve campus resilience by helping reduce soil erosion, increase stormwater retention, and enhance overall environmental quality.

Our collaboration with Micaela Escobar, Director of Records Management & Sustainability, has been instrumental in advancing this initiative. Through her leadership and in collaboration with the City of Brownsville, Brownsville Public Utilities Board and campus leadership, teachers, staff, students, and families will be well positioned to provide the ongoing stewardship these trees need to thrive and deliver decades of shade, environmental benefits, educational value, and health and well-being benefits for generations of Brownsville ISD students and the surrounding community.

We are excited to build on that shared vision through this new investment, and together with the district and other community partners to turn it into a lasting benefit for Brownsville ISD students.

With gratitude,



Elissa Izmailyan
Chief Strategy & Operations Officer