

# Killeen Independent School District

## Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, Regular Meeting May 19, 2026, at 5 p.m. in the Killeen ISD Boardroom

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### Board Members Present

- Oliver Mintz, Vice President
- Brenda Adams, Secretary
- Marvin Rainwater, Member
- Tina Capito, Member
- Rodney Gilchrist, Member
- **Board Member Absent:** Brett E. Williams, President; Susan M. Jones, Member

**Quorum:** Established

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### Call to Order

The meeting of the Killeen Independent School District Board of Trustees was called to order by Vice President Oliver Mintz at 5 p.m.

The meeting was recorded and streamed publicly

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## **Agenda Item 1: Public Forum**

### **Speaker: Tiana Quick**

Tiana Quick handed out gifts to the Superintendent and all Board members as a token of appreciation for the continued partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. The program focuses on supporting students through academic success, healthy lifestyles, character and leadership, and mental wellness. Ms. Quick emphasized that after-school time should have a meaningful impact by helping students attend regularly, complete academic goals, and move on to the next grade level. The program also provides mental wellness support through prevention, targeted interventions, and free clinical counseling for students and their families. Appreciation was expressed for the partnership, noting that the work with students and families could not be done without continued support.

### **Speaker: Tina Merker**

Tina Merker addressed the Board to express appreciation for the progress her son experienced through the Special Education Department and the support provided by Killeen ISD staff. She shared that after being diagnosed with autism and placed on an IEP, her son received strong support from teachers and campus staff, particularly during his transition to middle school following the COVID-19 pandemic. The parent explained that with the assistance of Smith Middle School and later Shoemaker High School, her son developed academically and socially, eventually transitioning from an IEP to a 504 plan while excelling in the STEM Academy and dual credit courses at CTC. She thanked the District and staff members for their partnership and dedication, noting that the combined efforts of the school system and her family helped her son become a straight-A student.

### **Speaker: William Gilstrap**

Host parent William Gilstrap addressed the Board on behalf of a foreign exchange student from Brazil, expressing concern that she is not being allowed to walk with her graduating class. He shared that the student had demonstrated exceptional character, perseverance, and academic success while adapting to a new country, language, and school environment. The speaker explained that although the family was not seeking a diploma for the student, they hoped she would be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies and create lasting memories with her classmates. He urged the District to reconsider the decision and find a path forward that would allow the student to walk with her class and be recognized for her accomplishments.

### **Speaker: Manuella Alvez**

Manuella Alvez, an exchange student from Brazil addressed the Board and shared that studying in the United States had been one of the greatest dreams of her life and that she had fully embraced the opportunities and experiences offered during her time at school. She explained that because she came to the United States, she missed her graduation ceremony in Brazil and

hoped to be allowed to walk with her classmates here so she could feel included as part of the school community. The student expressed that participating in graduation would represent more than a ceremony, as it would be a meaningful and lifelong memory of her year of personal growth, friendships, and academic experiences.

**Speaker: Alix Guekam**

Alix Guekam, a French exchange student from Chaparral High School addressed the Board and requested consideration for allowing exchange students to participate in graduation ceremonies, clarifying that she was not seeking a diploma but only the opportunity to walk with her classmates. She shared that attending an American high school and participating in senior traditions had been a lifelong dream, and she fully immersed herself in school activities, academics, varsity cheer, varsity tennis, and other senior events during her year in Killeen ISD. The student asked the Board to review district policy and consider recognizing exchange students with a certificate of participation or attendance so they could share in the graduation experience while still respecting academic requirements for earning a diploma.

**Speaker: Camilla Floris**

Camilla Floris, an Italian exchange student addressed the Board and shared that studying in the United States and participating in an American graduation ceremony had been one of her lifelong dreams. She explained that her experience in Texas helped her gain confidence in speaking English, become more independent, and feel connected to the school community through athletics and school activities. The student respectfully requested that the District review its policy to allow exchange students the opportunity to participate in graduation ceremonies, emphasizing that she was not asking for a diploma but for the chance to share in a meaningful milestone and lasting memory with her classmates.

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**Agenda Item 2: Closed Session**

The Board entered closed session at **5:18 p.m.** for:

**2A. Consultation with the District's Legal Counsel Regarding Pending Litigation, a Settlement Offer, or other Issues Confidential under the Attorney-Client Privilege**

(Texas Government Code 551.071).

**2B. Deliberate the Purchase, Exchange, Lease, or Value of Real Property**

(Texas Government Code 551.072).

**2C. Deliberate the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline, or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee**

(Texas Government Code 551.074).

**2D. Deliberate a Matter Regarding a Public School Student in which Personally Identifiable Information About the Student will Necessarily be Revealed**

(Texas Government Code 551.0821).

**2E. Level III Parent Grievance**

(Texas Government Code 551.071, 551.0821).

No action was taken in closed session.

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The Board reconvened in Open Session at **6:00 p.m.**

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**Invocation and Pledges**

Invocation was led by Trustee **Rodney Gilchrist**.

Pledges of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags were led by student **Elliot Britten and Olivia Khalees** from Meadows Elementary School.

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**Agenda Item 3: Honors and Recognition**

*Presenter: Karen Rudolph*

The District recognized numerous students and staff members for outstanding achievements in academics, athletics, fine arts, theater, transportation, nutrition services, and health services during the Board meeting. Student athletes from multiple high schools were honored for earning Academic All-State recognition, while visual arts students received recognition for exceptional performances at the state VASE and Junior VASE competitions. Chaparral High School's Bobcat Drama Program was celebrated for receiving national recognition in theater education and for earning honors at the Heller Awards for Young Artists. The Board also recognized Halli Richards as Elementary Teacher of the Year and Savannah Carr as Secondary Teacher of the Year for their dedication and impact on students throughout Killeen ISD. Transportation staff members Frank Walker and Tina Sutton were commended for advancing to the state school bus driver safety competition after excelling at the regional level. In addition, the School Nutrition Department was recognized for the success and rapid growth of its supper program and received additional grant funding from Dairy Max, while school nurses across the District were honored for their continued commitment to student health and wellness.

**Teacher of the Year**

- Halli Richards – Skipcha ES
- Savannah Carr – Ellison HS

**Transportation Department – ROADeo State Qualifies**

- Frank Walker
- Tina Sutton

**National Premier School Award**

- Chaparral HS

**School Nutrition Department**

- Steve Smith
- Stephanie Russom

**High School VASE All State Artist & Gold Seal**

- Ellison HS
  - Ahniya Hinton
- Shoemaker HS
  - Jae Uno Dy
  - Lylah Rodriguez
- Harker Heights HS
  - Laylah Fernandez
  - Laila Torres-Mendoza
  - Isabella Shepherd
  - Marci Leon Valencia

**Junior VASE**

- Audie Murphy MS
  - Sofia Willis
- Dr. Jimmie Don Aycock MS
  - Nayeli Hinte
  - Javier Casanova
- Eastern Hills MS
  - Stella Menchaca
  - Everlee Taylor
- Liberty Hills MS

- Sadie Millares
- Rancier MS
  - Amari Dixon
- Roy J. Smith MS
  - Liliana Junco
- Union Grove MS
  - Kacey Sutton
  - Nicholas Ross
  - Elizabeth Lorn
  - Isabella Ortiz Hurtado
  - Kymani Owens
  - Emelia Roldan
  - Henry Coleman
  - Mayaliana Ramirez
  - Cassidy Smith
  - Zoe Jibran

#### **Academic All State**

- Chaparral
    - Levi Robinson – Soccer
    - Yiamxel Marino Vega – Soccer
    - Andrew Chavez – Track
    - Trestyn Wingfield – Track
    - Antonio Bunton – Track
    - Avianna Borja – Track
    - David Flores – Baseball
    - Emily Peterson - Softball
  - Ellison HS
    - Jadesola Oladipo - Basketball
    - Hannah Stowers
  - Harker Heights HS
    - Aaliyah Garris – Powerlifting
    - Israel Valdes-Munoz – Soccer
    - Juan Orduna – Soccer
    - Matthew Bryan – Soccer
    - N’Mari Smith - Soccer
  - Shoemaker HS
    - Alyssa Dell - Powerlifting
    - Charles Mark Degano - Tennis
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**Agenda Item 4: Public Forum (Continuation of 5:00 pm Public Forum)****Speaker: Tyler Smith**

Tyler Smith, student addressed the Board to advocate for foreign exchange students to be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies as part of their American high school experience. Tyler Smith emphasized that many exchange students have excelled academically and fully participated in school life, and he encouraged the Board to consider a solution that would allow them to walk with their classmates while still honoring District and state graduation requirements.

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**Agenda Item 5: Information Items for Discussion****5A. Update on Killeen ISD District Strategic Priorities**

*Presenter: Dr. Michael Hinojosa*

Dr. Michael Hinojosa addressed the Board regarding the district's ongoing strategic planning work and emphasized the importance of maintaining a focused commitment to academic achievement. He explained that the Board identified three major priorities, including improving middle school performance, strengthening early literacy and numeracy, and enhancing Tier One instruction, noting that Killeen ISD was unique in keeping academics as its central focus. Dr. Hinojosa and his team discussed the development of leadership systems, data monitoring processes, instructional observations, and structured academic planning designed to improve student outcomes and long-term district success. He shared feedback gathered from district leadership teams, highlighting the value of meaningful dialogue, academic-centered meetings, and collaborative planning focused on moving student performance forward. The presentation also emphasized accountability, the importance of monitoring all student groups, and the need for aggressive instructional support to ensure success for every student across the district. Board members expressed appreciation for the work completed thus far and discussed using the strategic priorities and forthcoming meetings to guide future goal-setting discussions and District progress monitoring.

## **5B. Discussion of Draft of Proposed District Goals and Objectives**

*Presenter: Dr. Susan Buckley and Dr. Jo-Lynette Crayton*

Dr. Buckley and Dr. Crayton presented a draft framework for Board Goal One: Student Success, which was developed in alignment with the Board's recent governance training and strategic planning priorities. The presentation outlined four primary objectives focused on strengthening Tier One instruction, improving middle school achievement, increasing early childhood literacy and numeracy, and enhancing post-secondary readiness outcomes. Administrators explained that the District plans to monitor progress through measurable SMART goals, targeted professional development, classroom walkthroughs, student performance data, and regular progress reporting to the Board. Proposed short-term goals included ensuring high participation in targeted teacher professional development, increasing classroom walkthroughs by campus administrators, improving STAAR assessment performance, and raising graduation and college, career, and military readiness rates. District leadership also emphasized that additional goals related to human capital, financial stewardship, and safety and security would remain in place to support overall student achievement and compliance requirements. Trustees discussed the importance of establishing baseline data, improving accountability systems, and ensuring that professional development and classroom walkthroughs are targeted, measurable, and timely. Questions from Board members focused on how teacher professional development attendance would be tracked, how walkthrough expectations would differ from current evaluation systems, and how feedback would be provided more efficiently to teachers. Administrators explained that the District intends to implement more structured and automated walkthrough systems that allow administrators to quickly gather instructional data and provide actionable feedback within 48 hours. The administration further shared that incremental assessments, progress checks, and benchmark data would be closely monitored throughout the school year to measure student growth and district progress toward the adopted goals. Board members expressed appreciation for the work completed thus far.

## **5C. Discussion of System Scorecard Priority 2: Human Capital**

*Presenter: Will Baker*

Mr. Baker presented an update on Priority Two: Human Capital, focusing on compensation, staffing, professional development, talent pipelines, and employee evaluations. Staff reviewed District compensation data and explained that Killeen ISD remains highly competitive among neighboring and peer districts in teacher salaries, particularly at the beginning and mid-career levels. Administrators also discussed the district's efforts to evaluate professional staff pay, nonexempt employee pay, and benefit costs while remaining competitive in recruiting and retaining employees. Trustees discussed the

impact of salary increases in surrounding districts and requested additional information comparing future compensation scenarios and pay structures. Mr. Baker highlighted ongoing staffing challenges, particularly in special education and hourly positions, while also noting positive retention trends among teachers and administrators. The administration reported improvements in substitute fill rates after implementing ESS, with monthly fill rates increasing from the 50–60% range in prior years to consistently above 90% this school year. District leaders also reviewed efforts to reduce the percentage of uncertified permit teachers and explained that many current permit teachers are actively pursuing certification through district-supported programs. A significant portion of the presentation focused on the district’s partnership with Edwell, a nonprofit organization helping Killeen ISD expand apprenticeship and “Grow Your Own” teacher pipeline programs designed to support aides and hourly employees in becoming certified teachers. Administrators explained that the apprenticeship program would provide structured on-the-job training, mentorship, professional development, and potential financial incentives while creating stronger long-term staffing pipelines, especially in special education. Trustees discussed the importance of supporting military spouses, developing campus leadership capacity, and ensuring that mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities directly support campus staff and classroom instruction. District leaders also emphasized the expectation that all employees receive meaningful evaluations tied to student outcomes and shared updates regarding districtwide and campus-specific climate and culture surveys used to gather employee feedback. Board members and administrators concluded the discussion by emphasizing the importance of long-term workforce development, improving retention, strengthening instructional support systems, and addressing critical staffing shortages through strategic partnerships and targeted employee support programs.

## **5D. Discussion of Fiscal Year 2027 District Budget Planning**

*Presenter: Kallen Vaden*

Ms. Vaden presented an overview of preliminary property tax values received from the Bell County Tax Appraisal District and explained how those values impact future budgeting and tax rate planning. The presentation noted that property value increases have steadily declined in recent years compared to the sharp increases experienced beginning in 2023, while homestead exemption changes approved by the Legislature and voters have also affected taxable values. Staff explained that certified property values received in July will ultimately be used for the district’s budget and tax rate adoption process, while current preliminary values are expected to decrease somewhat as protests and additional exemptions are processed. Historical data presented to the Board showed that property values have generally leveled off over the last several years after periods of significant

growth, and tax rates have continued to decline due largely to state-mandated tax compression. Ms. Vaden also informed the Board that additional tax compression is expected from the state, although final details and updated rates have not yet been provided.

### **Agenda Item 6: Action Items for Consideration**

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#### **6A. Appointments to the School Counseling Advisory Committee, School Health Advisory Council, KISD Education Foundation, School Safety and Security Committee, Board Audit Committee, and Board Advisory Committee**

*Item# 6A will not be taken up during this meeting. It will be moved to another meeting at a later date.*

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#### **6B. Consideration of the Palo Alto Middle School Renovation Project Architect Contract**

*Presenter: Adam Rich*

Mr. Rich presented a proposal related to the renovation of the former Palo Alto Middle School campus for future use by the Gateway Middle School and High School programs. Administrators explained that the existing Gateway facility is more than 60 years old and relies heavily on portable classrooms, while the renovated Palo Alto campus would provide improved classroom and office space within the existing building structure. Staff reviewed the proposed architectural and engineering contract with Huckabee, noting that the \$193,000 fee falls within the overall project budget of approximately \$2 million, which also includes construction, furnishings, contingencies, and permitting costs. The Board was informed that Gateway programs are expected to relocate to the Palo Alto campus beginning in Fall 2026, with construction planned in phases to minimize disruptions to students and staff during the school year.

- **Motion:** Tina Capito
- **Second:** Brenda Adams
- **Vote:** 5-0-0-2
  - **For:** Oliver Mintz, Brenda Adams, Marvin Rainwater, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
  - **Against:** None

- **Abstained:** None
- **Absent:** Brett E. Williams, Susan M. Jones

## **6C. Consideration of Revisions to Board Policy CH(LOCAL) Purchasing and Acquisition**

*Presenter: Kallen Vaden*

Ms. Vaden presented proposed revisions to Board Policy CH Local regarding purchasing and acquisition procedures, specifically requesting an increase to the competitive procurement threshold from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Ms. Vaden explained that the change would align local policy with the updated legal policy approved through TASB Update 126 and would provide greater flexibility and efficiency in the district's procurement process while accounting for inflation. Clarification was provided that the change did not alter the Board's existing approval authority for purchases over \$100,000.

- **Motion:** Brenda Adams
- **Second:** Rodney Gilchrist
- **Vote:** 5-0-0-2
  - **For:** Oliver Mintz, Brenda Adams, Marvin Rainwater, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
  - **Against:** None
  - **Abstained:** None
  - **Absent:** Brett E. Williams, Susan M. Jones

## **Agenda Item 7: Discussion of Future Board Meeting Agendas and Trustee Remarks**

During Trustee Remarks, Board members expressed appreciation to teachers, administrators, support staff, and District employees for their hard work and dedication throughout the academic year. Trustees recognized the progress made across the District, noting improvements in student performance, campus operations, and overall district initiatives despite ongoing challenges. Board members also encouraged students and families to fully enjoy graduation celebrations and recognize the many individuals who contributed to students' success and achievements. Remarks highlighted the importance of celebrating accomplishments while also acknowledging the efforts of staff members who work behind the scenes to support students each day. Trustees wished employees

and families a restful and enjoyable summer break while encouraging everyone to return prepared to continue the district's work and progress in the upcoming school year. District leadership also thanked staff for their continued commitment and reminded employees to take time to rest and recharge.

### **Board Returned to Agenda Item 2: Closed Session**

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The Board entered closed session at **8:10 p.m.** for:

#### **2E. Level III Parent Grievance**

(Texas Government Code 551.071, 551.0821)

No action was taken in closed session.

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The Board reconvened in open session at **9:36 p.m.**

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### **Vice President Oliver Mintz called for a motion on Agenda item 8:**

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### **Agenda Item 18: Consideration and Possible Action Regarding Level III Parent Complaint**

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Vice President Mintz moved that the Board of Trustees direct the Superintendent to further investigate the bullying report and that he considers the provision of additional supportive services as required, and that the Board of Trustees uphold the administrative decision on the Level II grievance.

- **Motion:** Oliver Mintz
  - **Second:** Rodney Gilchrist
  - **Vote:** 5-0-0-2
    - **For:** Oliver Mintz, Brenda Adams, Marvin Rainwater, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
    - **Against:** None
    - **Abstained:** None
    - **Absent:** Brett E. Williams, Susan M. Jones
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## **Board Returned to Agenda Item 2: Closed Session**

The Board entered closed session again at **9:38 p.m.** with a 5 minute recess:

Previously mentioned posted agenda items as permitted under Texas Government Code 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, and 551.0821.

No action was taken in closed session.

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The Board reconvened in open session at **10:22 p.m.**

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## **Agenda Item 9: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

- **Motion:** Brenda Adams
- **Second:** Tina Capito
- **Vote:** 5-0-0-2
  - **For:** Oliver Mintz, Brenda Adams, Marvin Rainwater, Tina Capito, Rodney Gilchrist
  - **Against:** None
  - **Abstained:** None
  - **Absent:** Brett E. Williams, Susan M. Jones

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at **10:22 p.m.**

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*Signatures*

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**Oliver Mintz**

Board Vice President

**Brenda Adams**

Board Secretary

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