

Belton Independent School District
Board of Trustee Meeting Agenda Item
May 18, 2026

Item: Recognitions

Contact Person: Christine Parks

Presented for: Action Report Only

Supporting Documents: None Attached Provided Later

District Goal or Objective Addressed:

Goal 2: Ensure exceptional learning experiences for each and every student.

Goal 4: Develop a district-wide culture of value, support, and growth amongst all students and staff.

Background Information:

Student Pledges – Belton Early Childhood School

This evening, the pledges were led by students Kobe Bailey and Hadleigh Brewer from Belton Early Childhood School.

Kobe says his favorite subject is math, and he is a big sports fan who enjoys playing football and baseball. He stays very active and loves being out on the field whenever he can. His friends describe him as a cool and kind classmate who is always ready to lend a helping hand.

Hadleigh loves reading and exploring stations at BECS, especially when she can be active, animated and outgoing. A natural cheerleader at heart, she thrives on staying busy and sharing her high energy with those around her. Her friends describe her as helpful, silly and funny, but most importantly, as someone who truly cares for others.

Student Showcase – Penguin Project

Tonight's student showcase features Belton ISD's Penguin Project, which recently brought Madagascar–A Musical Adventure Jr. to the stage for its fourth annual production.

With more than 90 student performers, this year's production marked the largest cast in program history. To expand opportunities for students to participate and shine, the production included two casts and an additional performance.

The Penguin Project provides students with special needs the opportunity to perform in a fully staged musical alongside peer mentors, building confidence and celebrating the unique talents of each and every student while highlighting the power of inclusion and belonging.

VEX Robotics World Qualifiers

Belton ISD is proud to recognize the Belton New Tech @Waskow robotics team, which qualified for the VEX Robotics World Championship, earning a second consecutive trip to compete on the global stage.

Through the VEX Robotics program, students design, build and program robots to solve complex engineering challenges while developing skills in coding, teamwork and real-world problem-solving.

The team recently competed in St. Louis against top teams from around the world, showcasing innovation, collaboration and the power of student-driven learning.

These students are supported by their teacher, Stephen Tysor.

VEX Robotics State Qualifiers

Tonight, we recognize the Belton New Tech @Waskow and Lake Belton High School robotics teams for qualifying for the VEX Robotics State competition.

Through the VEX Robotics program, students design, build and program robots to tackle complex engineering challenges while strengthening skills in coding, collaboration and real-world problem-solving.

The team competed at the state level, demonstrating innovation, perseverance and the application of STEM learning in a highly competitive environment.

These students are supported by their teacher, Jessica Persilver and Stephen Tysor.

SkillsUSA District 10 State Qualifiers

Tonight, we recognize Belton High School student Carson Cheatham for qualifying for the SkillsUSA District 10 State competition in Brakes and Maintenance and Light Repair, earning bronze in both events.

SkillsUSA supports students in trade, technical and skilled service programs by developing leadership, workplace readiness and advanced technical skills. Through hands-on competition, students demonstrate the real-world knowledge and career preparation needed for high-demand industries.

Carson's achievement reflects his dedication to mastering industry skills and preparing for future career success.

He is supported by his teacher, Jared Bouchie.

Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State - Boys Soccer

Belton ISD is celebrating student-athletes who were named to the Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State teams for soccer, swimming and tennis. To earn this honor, seniors must be in good standing with their team, demonstrate strong character and maintain an overall GPA of 92 or higher. Class rank and SAT or ACT scores are also considered in the selection process.

From Belton High School, Corin Ramesar and Valentin Villanueva were named second team, and Daniel Arroyo earned honorable mention under the leadership of Coach Carlo Mosnia.

From Lake Belton High School, Zane Fitzwater was named second team, and Jacob Boone and Jordan Tuggle earned honorable mention, coached by Andrew Kirshner.

Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State - Girls Soccer

Belton ISD is proud to recognize student-athletes who earned Academic All-State honors in girls soccer from the Texas High School Coaches Association.

From Belton High School, Abby Idoux was named first team, and Grace Landen and Mya Williams earned honorable mention under the leadership of Coach Oscar Bersoza.

From Lake Belton High School, Clara Hill and Kate Henn were named first team, and Mikaela Ebbers earned second team, coached by Jamie Tibbetts.

These recognitions reflect the dedication of our student-athletes to excel both on the field and in the classroom. Congratulations to all!

Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State - Swimming

Belton ISD is proud to recognize five student-athletes from Belton New Tech @Waskow and Lake Belton High School who earned Academic All-State honors in swimming through the Texas High School Coaches Association.

Under the direction of Coach Jaynie Ferguson at Lake Belton High School, Christine Kim and David Stewart were named to the second team, and Elizabeth Simeroth received honorable mention.

Under the direction of Coach Jordan Wedemeyer at Belton New Tech @Waskow, Leland Moore and Samantha McKenzie were named to the first team.

These students have demonstrated a strong commitment to both academic achievement and athletic excellence. We're proud to celebrate their accomplishments.

Texas High School Coaches Association Academic All-State - Tennis

Tonight, we recognize Lake Belton High School student-athletes who earned Academic All-State honors in tennis through the Texas High School Coaches Association.

Ari Schanzmeyer and Shreya Bhat were named to the elite team, while Claire Linzy, Arina Kutova and Diego Olvera earned second team honors under the leadership of Coach Corey Smith.

These recognitions highlight the discipline, focus and commitment these students demonstrate both in the classroom and on the court. Congratulations to all!

UIL Orchestra Solo & Ensemble State Qualifiers

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Amelia Hadsall and Hannah Kim for qualifying for the UIL State Solo and Ensemble Contest.

They earned this distinction by performing the most challenging level of music literature from memory and receiving a superior rating at the regional contest.

Amelia and Hannah will compete at the state level at the University of Texas at Austin at the end of May.

These students are supported by their director, Jenna Burchell.

Texas Dance Educators Association All-State Qualifiers

We are proud to recognize two Belton ISD student dancers who were selected as Texas Dance Educators Association All-State performers.

This distinction places them among just 250 dancers statewide chosen to participate in master classes and perform at the Texas Dance Educators Association Convention, reflecting exceptional talent, dedication and commitment to their craft.

From Belton High School, Payten McNeely earned this honor, and from Lake Belton High School, Rivers Mahler was selected.

These students are supported by their coaches, Rachel Hill and McKenzie Urteaga, and Emma Marsland and Haley Billasano. Congratulations!

Ascension National Qualifiers

We are proud to recognize the Lake Belton High School Varsity Silver Spurs for their success at the Ascension National Competition.

The team earned second place in the Large Team division and captured first-place finishes in both Kick and Hip Hop, highlighting their talent, precision and strong teamwork on a national stage. Kennedy Ptaszek also represented the program as a soloist, earning first place in the 10th-grade division.

These students are supported by their coaches, Emma Marsland and Haley Billasano. Congratulations!

American Dance/Drill Team National Qualifiers

We are excited to recognize the Belton High School Magic Belles for an exceptional season of competition and achievement.

The team placed fourth at the American Dance/Drill Team National Competition, earning a national championship title in Jazz. Earlier in the season, the Belles swept the HTE State Contest, earning first place for both team and officers.

They also competed at the Dance Team Union National Championship in Orlando, where they placed in the top 25 for team Pom, an outstanding accomplishment for a first-year team in that category.

These students are supported by their coaches, Rachel Hill and McKenzie Urteaga. Congratulations!

Color Guard State Qualifiers

Congratulations to the Belton High School color guard for advancing to the state-level competition in the Texas Color Guard Circuit.

This achievement reflects the team's dedication, precision and commitment throughout the season as they competed at a high level.

These students are under the leadership of Director Briana Merritt.

VASE State Qualifiers

Congratulations to Belton ISD students Ethan Cohen, Samira Cruz, Mariel Kacal and Syllas Lopez, who advanced to the State Visual Art Scholastic Event through the Visual Arts Scholastic Event program.

These students earned area medals to qualify for state. Ethan, Samira and received Level IV ratings, the highest distinction awarded.

They are supported by their teachers, Jannet Alardin and Emily Simeroth. Congratulations to all!

Jr. VASE Regional Qualifiers

Congratulations to Belton ISD middle school artists who earned top honors at the Jr. Visual Art Scholastic Event.

Katelynn Mitchell, a seventh-grade student, earned a double medal with gold and platinum recognition. Eighth-grade students Thi Dao, Hailey Jeong and Madeline Poulton each earned Gold and Platinum, representing the highest rating at the regional competition. Madison Saldana, a seventh-grade student, also earned Gold and Platinum honors.

These distinctions reflect the highest level of achievement at the middle school level, aligned to state standards.

These students are supported by their teachers, Shannan Swanson-Bryan, Robyn Jackson and Stephen Steger. Congratulations to all!

UIL Theatrical Design State Qualifiers

Congratulations to Belton ISD students Emilee Whitt, Paloma Carmona-Ortiz and Ashley McDonald for qualifying for the UIL State Theatrical Design competition.

Emilee qualified in both costuming and marketing. Paloma qualified in costume design, and Ashley qualified in marketing in the 5A state contest.

These students are supported by their teachers, Marie Phillips and Shelby Cozart. Congratulations to all!

Texas Elementary Art Meet - Top of TEAM

Congratulations to Belton ISD students Camila Munoz, a third-grade student from Southwest Elementary, and Elleleanor Neal, a fifth-grade student from Chisholm Trail

Elementary, for earning Top of TEAM honors at the Texas Elementary Art Meet, the highest level of recognition at the elementary level.

They are supported by their teachers, Kristi Bernstein and Amber Gabriel. Congratulations to both students!

Texas Choral Directors Association Honor Choir

Congratulations to Leon Heights Elementary students Carolina Cook and Abbey Erskine for earning a place in the Texas Choral Directors Association Elementary Honor Choir.

Selected from hundreds of auditions submitted by students across the state, Carolina and Abbey were chosen among the top sopranos and altos to represent Texas at this prestigious level. Abbey earned this distinction for the second consecutive year.

They are supported by their director, Debra Jackson. Congratulations to both students!

Superintendent Student Advisory Council

Tonight, we are excited to recognize the students who serve on the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, representing all Belton ISD high schools.

Through this council, students have a direct voice in district leadership, sharing insight, feedback and perspective on topics that matter most to their peers and school communities.

We appreciate their leadership, their willingness to speak up and their commitment to making a meaningful impact across Belton ISD.

Texas Association of Basketball 2026 Girls Middle School Coach of the Year

We are proud to recognize Katyanna "Kat" Colburn of Belton Middle School for being named the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches 2026 Girls Middle School Coach of the Year.

In just two years with Belton ISD, Coach Colburn has made a meaningful impact on her student-athletes, building a strong program rooted in discipline, teamwork and growth.

This recognition reflects her leadership and commitment to developing both the skills and character of her players. Congratulations!

New Administrator Introduction

Neill Plemons, Belton New Tech @Waskow Principal

Neill Plemons has been named principal of Belton New Tech @Waskow in Belton ISD. With nearly a decade of experience in education, he has served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal and interim principal.

Plemons joined Belton New Tech @Waskow in 2021 as an English I teacher and Career and Technical Education government program lead and was named assistant principal in March 2024. He is known for his focus on student ownership, collaboration and real-world learning, as well as his commitment to project-based instruction. Plemons holds a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in educational leadership.

Temple Rotary Educator of the Month

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Shelby Cozart and Ty Carter as the March Temple Rotary Club's Educators of the Month for their outstanding impact at Lake Belton High School.

As theater directors, they create an environment where each and every student feels valued and supported, fostering a culture of belonging while helping students build confidence and discover their strengths.

Their collaborative leadership and dedication extend beyond the classroom, ensuring meaningful opportunities and high-quality experiences for students.

Their passion and commitment make them highly deserving of this honor. Belton ISD is proud to celebrate them as Temple Rotary Educators of the Month.

Temple Rotary Educator of the Month

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Marjorie Trehern as the April Temple Rotary Club's Educator of the Month for her impact at Lake Belton High School.

Mrs. Trehern serves as a resource social studies teacher and supports programs including Hope Squad, Spirit Team and Unified Robotics, helping foster a strong sense of belonging across campus.

Her dedication and care for students make her highly deserving of this honor. Belton ISD is proud to celebrate her as the Temple Rotary Educator of the Month.

Temple Rotary Educator of the Month

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Jennifer Hoelscher as the May Temple Rotary Club's Educator of the Month for her impact at Sparta Elementary.

With more than 20 years of service, Jenn serves in a special education resource and inclusion role, where she ensures every student feels supported and empowered to succeed.

Her dedication and commitment to students make her highly deserving of this honor. Belton ISD is proud to celebrate her as the Temple Rotary Educator of the Month.

Belton Rotary Educator of the Quarter

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Rebecca Tome as the Belton Rotary Educator of the Quarter for her impact on students at James L. Burrell Elementary.

Mrs. Tome is a dedicated music teacher who creates engaging learning experiences that inspire a love of music and provide meaningful opportunities for students and families.

Her passion and genuine care for each and every student make her highly deserving of this honor. Belton ISD is proud to celebrate her as the Belton Rotary Educator of the Quarter.

Department Showcase - Human Resources

Tonight's department showcase highlights the Belton ISD Human Resources team, which supports more than 2,000 employees and hundreds of substitutes across the district.

From recruiting and retaining high-quality staff to supporting employees and ensuring compliance, their work is essential to the success of our schools. Since May 1, 2025, the team has welcomed 412 new hires to Belton ISD.

We thank the Human Resources team for their dedication and impact across the district.

Community Partner – Johnnie's Cleaning & Tailoring

With graduation this week, we would be remiss not to recognize Johnnie's Cleaning & Tailoring as a valued community partner.

Since 1949, this family-owned business has provided high-quality dry cleaning and tailoring services while consistently giving back to the community. Their generosity is evident in their support of Belton ISD, including providing complimentary gown pressing for students and staff during graduation season.

We are grateful for their continued partnership and the meaningful ways they support our schools.

Fiscal Implications:

None.

Administrative Recommendation(s):

None.