

BOARD BRIEFS

October 2022



Belton ISD Earns Top Rating on Annual Fiscal Accountability Review for 11th Straight Year

Belton ISD has earned a “Superior Achievement” rating on the annual state fiscal accountability review for the 11th year in a row.

Melissa Lafferty, the district’s chief financial officer, shared with the Board of Trustees at its regular meeting Monday results from the 2022 School FIRST (Financial Accountability Rating System of Texas) Report issued by the Texas Education Agency.

The 2022 rating is based on data from the 2020-2021 school year and evaluates school districts on 20 indicators, including the findings of external auditors, cash on-hand, debt and staffing levels. Using the 20 indicators, school districts are scored on a 100-point scale. Belton ISD received 98 possible points.

Student Showcase - Cantando Mixed Show Choir from LBHS



Cantando is Lake Belton High School's new audition-only mixed show choir. The group began this fall and sings music from a variety of genres. They are currently working on music for their Disney Cabaret on Oct. 29.

Members of the group are: Ashley Navarrete, Elizabeth Coburn, Makenna Peace, Payton Elliott, Anna James, Lauren Price, Madison Letts, Jordan Powell, Aidan Fenton, Pate Palomino, Zachary Reyes, Corbin Mock, Derek Toledo, Stone Wall, Joaquin Garza, Jack Tucker and Caden Love.

Cantando is under the direction of Terrance Livingston, head choir director, and Charlotte Wurman, assistant choir director.

Demographers: Enrollment Trends Return to Pre-Pandemic Levels

A demographer report from Zonda Education painted a picture of enrollment trends returning to pre-pandemic levels for trustees. As a fast-growth district, Belton ISD added 323 students this fall for an annual change of 2.4%. During the pandemic, Belton ISD was one of the few districts in Texas that saw enrollment increases. The district added 733 students from fall 2020 to fall 2021 for a 5.8% increase.

Chisholm Trail Elementary, located in the southern part of the district, is overcapacity with 872 students. Tarver Elementary, located in the northern part of the district, has 786 students, putting its enrollment at 95% capacity. The two elementary campuses funded through the voter-approved bond election in May will alleviate overcrowding at these schools.

Demographers will continue to keep a close eye on the area housing market, especially as interest rates are expected to continue rising this spring. The district currently has 53 actively building

subdivisions with groundwork underway on about 1,939 lots. Sixteen future subdivisions are also within the district.

Belton ISD currently has about 13,300 students, but five-year enrollment projections have the district headed toward 15,500 students. Ten-year projections could top 17,300.

Board Recognition - National Merit Semifinalists



The National Merit Program has recognized two Belton ISD students as semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program for their performance on the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) — Belton High School senior Caleb Bovell and Belton New Tech @Waskow senior Kevin Thomas.

To qualify as a National Merit semifinalist, both students' high scores on the PSAT placed them in the top 1 percent of more than 1.5 million students who took the test last fall. As the next step in the scholarship competition, Bovell and Thomas will submit essays, recommendations and additional test scores to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Finalists will be announced in the spring.

Congratulations to these hardworking students who have demonstrated many of our Journey of a Graduate competencies, including adaptability, collaboration and critical thinking, to earn this recognition.

Board Recognition — National Merit Commended Scholars



The National Merit Program has recognized six Belton ISD students as Commended Scholars for 2023.

The students recognized are: Karmanyaah Malhotra from Belton High School; David Larsen from Lake Belton High School; and Michael Savino, Duncan Lancaster, William Asuncion-Crabb and Kole Petersen from Belton New Tech @Waskow.

Ranked in the top 5 percent in the nation for scores on the PSAT, these Belton ISD students are among about 34,000 selected as Commended Scholars out of 1.5 million students who took the test last fall.

Congratulations to these students who have demonstrated perseverance, adaptability and communication – all competencies from the district's Journey of a Graduate profile.

Trustees Hear Update on May 2022 Bond Projects

Michael Morgan, assistant superintendent of operations, updated trustees on the status of 2022 bond projects. Construction on Elementary #12, located in Temple's North Gate subdivision, is underway, and the district recently purchased 20 new buses that will be incorporated into the fleet in the coming months.

Elementary #13, Belton High School renovations and additions, Lake Belton Middle School additions, Southwest Elementary addition and the secure entry vestibules are all in the design phase.

Other projects are in the programming stage where district officials are assessing needs and options and scheduling project phases. This includes the expansion of the district's agricultural facility; a facility for the Delta Program which supports students with special needs transitioning to adult independent living and work; security cameras and keyless entries; and mechanical, electrical, plumbing and roofing projects.

Board Recognitions — 2022 Texas State Solo-Ensemble Contest Outstanding Performers



Three Belton ISD students have earned top recognition at the 2022 Texas State Solo-Ensemble Contest. Rachel Kim, a sophomore from Lake Belton High School, and Angel Rios-Torres and Ethan Rasmussen, both who graduated last year from Belton High School, were named Outstanding Performers for solos performed at the contest in May. The honor comes with a gold-draped medallion identical to state champions in all UIL events.

Of about 100,000 students participating in the regional UIL music contests and the thousands of musicians who performed at TSSEC, only 2-3% of the solo performances earned the Outstanding Performer honor.

Kim earned her award for a violin solo. Rios-Torres performed a euphonium/baritone horn solo while Rasmussen performed a keyboard percussion solo.

Jenna Burchell is the director of orchestras at LBHS. BHS' band directors include Kevin Kwaku, Chris Kreger and Ian Smith.

Congratulations to these students for their demonstration of our Journey of a Graduate competencies.

Rotary Educator of the Month — Temple

Kacy Hancock is being recognized by the Temple Rotary Club for her outstanding service to Belton ISD. Kacy serves as an eighth-grade ELAR teacher at North Belton Middle School. She is in her third year in education, all in Belton ISD.



Michelle Tish, principal at NBMS, said this about Ms. Hancock: “Kacy is a phenomenal teacher but an even better person. Her heart for students is apparent in everything she does. Kacy embodies warmth and positivity for the students — she truly cares about them more than she does herself, and she goes above and

beyond to help them both academically and socio-economically. I can’t speak enough praise for her. She is truly a positive force at work here at NBMS.”

Congratulations to this student-centered educator!

Rotary Educator of the Quarter — Belton



Julia Potts is being recognized as the Belton Rotary Club for her outstanding service to Belton ISD. Julia serves as a first-grade teacher at Sparta Elementary. She’s in her seventh year in education, all of which are in Belton ISD.

Julie Manley, principal at Sparta, said the following about Mrs. Potts: “She works really hard to build a classroom where the students are an active part of every process and step of their learning. She builds relationships with her students and their families, and those relationships allow her to students to make tremendous progress. I am extremely proud to work with Mrs. Potts every day, and I am thankful for her dedication to Belton ISD.”

Mrs. Potts demonstrates on a daily basis the competencies that make a World-Class Employee in Belton ISD. Congratulations!

Board Recognitions — National Principals Month



Each October, National Principals Month recognizes the essential role that principals play in making a school great. The success of Belton ISD as a district is a direct result of the hard work our campus principals do on behalf of our students and staff and it is worthy of recognition.

Belton ISD's principals are Sheila Surovik, Belton Early Childhood School; Christopher Lockamy, Charter Oak Elementary; Elizabeth McMurtry, Chisholm Trail Elementary; Jeanna Sniffin, High Point Elementary; Marcie Beck, Leon Heights Elementary; Christy Chandler, Lakewood Elementary; Hope Orsag, Miller Heights Elementary; Rebecca Vaughn, Pirtle Elementary; Dawn Schiller, Southwest Elementary; Julee Manley, Sparta Elementary; Aubrey Itz, Tarver Elementary; Timothy Goodridge, Belton Middle School; Kris Hobson, Lake Belton Middle School; Michelle Tish, North Belton Middle School; Kevin Taylor, South Belton Middle School; Ben Smith, Belton High School; Jill Ross, Lake Belton High School; Kim Winters, Belton New Tech @Waskow; and Sandy Garrett, District Alternative Education Program.

Board Committee Reports

Policy: The policy committee met on Oct. 3. The group discussed the district's legislative priorities and reviewed five policies as part of the Texas Association of School Boards' (TASB) recent policy review. Any changes suggested were minor and for clarification.

Facilities: The facilities committee met on Oct. 11 and heard a preliminary fall demographer report and an update on the progress of bond projects. The committee also discussed the processes for naming a new facility and adjusting attendance zones. Both processes will include transparency and input from those impacted.

Department Showcase - Human Resources



Our Belton ISD human resources team works tirelessly to recruit and retain world-class employees who directly impact our students on a daily basis. This team is responsible for supporting the district's most important asset — its people — by keeping them informed about policies, working

conditions, compensation and benefits. They must also monitor and manage workforce trends, organizational culture and legal and legislative trends. We are grateful for the instrumental work they do for the Big Red Community.

Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Smith noted that the experiences the district is creating for students is beyond meaningful for them. He especially enjoyed attending Manufacturing Day this month and LBHS' performance of *The Hobbit*.
- He highlighted how the district is working to improve on a regular basis and described how principals meet twice monthly as a group to learn from each other. Once is to focus on instructional leadership and once to focus on operational leadership – both of which are important in their roles.
- Dr. Smith expressed his thanks for the Belton Educational Enrichment Foundation, which he said has a unique focus on student scholarships that he has not seen elsewhere.
- He also noted his delight in seeing parents back on campuses as he visited schools this month. He appreciated the opportunity to meet with PTA leaders and hopes to include board members in future meetings.

Consent Agenda Highlights

- Unaudited financial report for the month ending September 30, 2022
- Gifts, grants and bequests
- Expenditures over \$50,000 (renewals of Smartnet for support of Cisco equipment, Microsoft Office 365, Alert Logic for network monitoring services, Voice EA software license for phone system and a contract with SustainEd for math literacy framework)
- Appointment of 2022-2023 School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)
- Approval of Design Educational Specifications
- Professional Development Plan per DMA(LOCAL)

To review Belton ISD board meeting agendas and full packet materials, [click here](#).



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