

March 19, 2025

The Board of Trustees of Willis ISD met in Regular Business Session on March 19, 2025 at the Sharon Hill Jennette Administration Building in the Willis ISD Boardroom, 612 N. Campbell Street, Willis, Texas 77378, and the business to be conducted is listed below.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

President Kyle Hoegemeyer called the Regular Business Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and announce that a quorum was present and that notice of the meeting had been posted for the time and manner required by law.

Board Secretary, Chad Jones called the roll.

Members Present: Cliff Williams, Scott Carson, Charles Perry, Kyle Hoegemeyer, Paulett Traylor, Nikita Lagway, and Chad Jones

Member Absent: None

Board President Kyle Hoegemeyer passed the meeting to Superintendent Dr. Kimberley James, who announced Cannan Elementary as the school of the month and introduced Principal Brooke Paulson. Principal Paulson then had Cannan Elementary students lead the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION - Cannan Elementary School

ANNOUNCEMENTS / PROCLAMATION / RESOLUTIONS / RECOGNITIONS

Principal Paulson recognized the Cannan Art Club, guided by Ms. Foster. Fifth grader Adriana Dominguez shared the inspiration behind their handmade flower pots – the book "The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver" by Jean Beretta, which highlights the importance of hard work, curiosity, and caring for the earth. The students presented the board members with handmade clay flower pots and a copy of the book as a thank you for their dedication to Willis ISD students.

Elementary Student of the Month

Principal Paulson introduced Mae Paela as the Cannan Elementary Student of the Month. Mae, also an art club member, exemplifies empathy, consistently showing kindness, compassion, and a positive attitude, making her a true leader on campus.

Secondary Student of the Month

Principal King of Willis HS introduced Darlene Parsons, who then presented Kristen Eilers as the secondary Student of the Month. Kristen is recognized for her dedication, leadership in KAT Culture, Pickle ball Club, Student Advisory Council, and Student Council. Academically, she excels in Math and Spanish Honor Societies and is involved in TAFE, even competing at the national level for her project.

Ken Labonski presented fine art awards to Joshua Grush, who earned a spot in the All-Region Band and is a pre-area candidate, and Drew Walker, who earned a spot in the TMEA All-State Band and Orchestra and is the #1 ranked piccolo player in Texas. Labonski also highlighted the success of middle school choirs at UIL and the high school's one-act play advancing in competition.

Director of Communication Jaime Fails presented the PAWS of Pride awards for March to Charla High from Brabham MS and Melissa Flores from Lynn Lucas MS. PAWS stands for Passionate, Responsive, Innovative, Dynamic, and Empathetic.

Director of Federal Programs/Compliance & Grants, Meghan Ballard presented the Kats on Patrol award to Sarah Tea, the school nurse at Brabham MS, for her heroic actions in saving a student's life through her quick thinking and expert care.

Director of Athletics Trent Miller recognized his staff and athletes for their phenomenal achievements across Willis ISD athletics. He honored the boys' basketball team's historic playoff run as district and area champions, reaching the third round. Following this, the coaches specifically recognized the members of the regional-qualifying swim team and the all-district nominees from the girls' and boys' basketball teams.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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Board President Kyle Hoegemeyer announced that audience comments would only be heard during the public comment section, which is limited to 30 minutes total, with each speaker allowed a maximum of three minutes. Groups with the same viewpoint must appoint a representative. Speakers must respect privacy and will be referred to administrative channels if they haven't sought resolution there. Disruptions will not be tolerated, and the board will not respond during public comments. There are two speakers scheduled for tonight.

Diane Hivnor addressed two agenda items, K-5 Math and K-5 RLA and the Montgomery County Appraisal District Director vote. As a former educator, she wholeheartedly endorsed STEM scopes for math and SAVVAS for RLA, highlighting their comprehensive teacher guides, engaging student materials, and potential for enhanced learning and critical thinking. She also suggested Jerry A. Nash and/or Casey Olsen for the appraisal district board, advocating for new perspectives over incumbents or politically affiliated candidates.

It is noted that Ms. Hivnor exceeded the allotted 3-minute speaking time.

Scott Baker thanked the board and administration for involving parents in the curriculum review. While impressed with the SAVVAS reading curriculum, his preference was for the Bluebonnet curriculum due to its simplicity and print-based format, which he believes is more conducive to fundamental learning and reduces screen time for young students. He also highlighted the benefit of parents being able to easily review printed materials with their children without the need for technology.

STANDING INFORMATIONAL AND AD HOC REPORTS & ITEMS

Safety Report, Meghan Ballard, Director of Grants/Safety

March safety updates included a cybersecurity exercise, Fire Marshal campus visits (with some remediation needed within 30 days), 911 test calls, submission of the TEA safety audit, biannual SRO campus checks, and planned summer safety PD. A board member asked about Fire Marshal visits/audits; it was clarified that some audit findings require district correction within 30 days for clearance.

Student Enrollment/Attendance Report, Travis Utecht, Exe. Director of Student Services and CTE

As of March 17, 2025, Willis ISD enrollment was 9,322 students, a 314 increase from the previous year (170 more secondary, 144 more elementary). February attendance percentages showed little overall gain year-over-year, but five campuses improved from January to February. Parmley Elementary won the "Momentum Maker" attendance award for February with a 2.2% increase.

Financial / Bill Payment Report/Bond Summary, Chief Financial Officer, Garrett Matej

For February, Willis ISD had \$64.6 million in revenues (\$44.7M local, \$19.5M state) and \$44.9 million in expenses, a typical disparity for this time of year due to tax revenue collection earlier in the year. A budget amendment will be presented later to align with current projections.

Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA), Susan Clardy, Exe. Director of Accountability, Research, & Eval.

Willis ISD is implementing the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) for 2025-2026 to recruit, retain, and reward effective teachers. Eligible teachers can earn designations (Recognized, Exemplary, Master) based on observation (40%) and student growth (60%), receiving \$3,000-\$32,000 annually for 5 years, with 90% going directly to the teacher. Year 1 (24-25) is for system development and application (due April 15, 2025). Data capture is in year 2 (25-26), with payouts starting in August 2027. Eligibility for the first cohort includes grades 3-8 RLA/math and high school English I/II and Algebra I teachers meeting specific criteria. Funding amounts are recalculated annually based on designation and campus economically disadvantaged student tiers (rural status doesn't apply to Willis ISD). A board member asked if this had been done before (no, first application year) and if the dollar amount is the same each year (no, it's recalculated annually based on campus needs).

Texas Association of Schools Boards (TASB) Staffing Review, Shannon Burns

TASBY's Shannon Burns presented staffing review recommendations across departments based on benchmarking. A board member questioned if the data reflected current enrollment, which Burns confirmed, noting 4% projections for next year but potential for variation.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
- B. Delivery Method for Generator Replacement, Brabham MS
- C. Delivery Method for FF&E District Wide

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- D. Delivery Method for Elementary #7 Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)
- E. Delivery Method of CMAR for Transportation Facility
- F. Ninth Grade General Contractor Ranking
- G. MOU with Montgomery County Regarding Emergency Sheltering

Motion by Cliff Williams and seconded by Paulett Traylor to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board entered into closed session at 6:47 p.m. for the purpose of considering matters for which closed sessions are authorized by Title 5, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code Sections (.071 - .084): 551.074

- A. Real Estate: Pursuant to Texas Government Code 551.072
- B. Discuss Teacher Resignations and Consider Approval of Teacher Appointments Texas Gov't Code 551.074
- C. Consultation with Attorney by Phone: Pursuant to Texas Gov't Code §551.071

OPEN SESSION

The Board reconvened into Open Session at 8:33p.m.

Board President Kyle Hoegemeyer stated there were no motions from the preceding closed session. He also noted for the record that Board Member #5 (Mr. Williams) had to leave the meeting due to a family situation.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Discuss and Consider Approval of 2024 – 2025 Budget Amendment

The district is requesting a budget amendment to align with updated projections for local taxes, state revenue, and TRS calculations. Increased revenue allows for adjusting the budget to fill some vacant positions, providing more operational capacity for the remainder of the budget cycle.

Motion by Paulett Traylor and seconded by Chad Jones to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of Bearkat Advantage Program MOU with Sam Houston State University

The Bearkat Advantage program will allow eligible Willis ISD students to apply to Sam Houston State University without an application fee. Additionally, SHSU will award three \$1,000 scholarships annually to Willis ISD seniors. Motion by Scott Carson and seconded by Charles Perry to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of Out of State Trip for TAFE – Orlando, FL.

Kristen Eilers qualified for the national TAFE competition in Orlando, Florida in June. Approval is requested for this out-of-state trip for Kristen, accompanied by Darlene Parsons (her mom will also attend, paying her own way). Motion by Paulett Traylor and seconded by Nikita Lagway to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of TASB Local Policy Update 124

- a. CAA LOCAL – Fiscal Management Goals and Objectives Financial Ethics
- b. CDA LOCAL – Other Revenues Investments
- c. CY LOCAL – Intellectual Property
- d. DH LOCAL – Employee Standards of Conduct
- e. EHB LOCAL – Curriculum Design Special Programs
- f. EHBB LOCAL – Special Programs Gifted and Talented Students
- g. FFG LOCAL – Student Welfare Child Abuse and Neglect
- h. GKA LOCAL – Community Relations: Conduct on School Premises

TASB local board policy update 124, containing several legal policy changes, requires board approval for local policies. A board member asked about the change to DH local (page 109) regarding e-cigarettes, specifically about

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employee awareness. The response confirmed that an email would be sent to all employees about the change (possession, not just use, against policy) upon adoption.

Motion by Scott Carson and seconded by Nikita Lagway to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of IMRA 2024 High Quality Instructional Materials Selection for K-12 Math & K-5 RLA

New instructional material selection process overviewed, thanking involved parties. Feedback rubrics (1-3 scale) guided recommendations: Bluebonnet Learning for K-algebra 1 math (higher ratings across criteria) and SAVVAS Reading for K-5 RLA (more feedback, higher ratings for text/engagement). Parent/community feedback aligned. Next steps: ordering, PD with Region 6/SAVVAS, inventory. A board member asked Superintendent Dr. James her opinion, and Dr. James expressed feeling comfortable with the process, noting the significant work of the team and community involvement, and emphasizing the importance of teacher input. The same board member then asked the presenter about the cost and specifics of professional learning services. The presenter stated that foundational training comes with the purchase, and they would work with the providers to customize ongoing PD plans, anticipating competitive pricing. Specific numbers were not yet available pending approval.

Another board member commended the thorough process and community involvement, expressing excitement about having consistent curriculum.

Motion by Paulett Traylor and seconded by Charles Perry to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of LASO Grant Award

The district received grants: \$15K for AP Computer Science PD and \$121.5K for HQIM implementation at Parmley and Lucas (CC Hardy also received). A Strong Foundations grant for Bluebonnet is pending. All are 100% funded. A board member exclaimed, "That's awesome!" upon hearing the news.

Motion by Chad Jones and seconded by Nikita Lagway to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of eRate Category I Fiber Vendor Contract

The district applied for E-rate funding (80% discount) for fiber services. For Elementary #7, Sky Rider Communications was chosen (\$25K). For the new Transportation Center, Optimum was chosen (\$41,050). The total bid is \$67,050, with the district's 20% share being \$14,034.75, budgeted across the general and technology funds. An extension of the fiber maintenance contract with Sky Rider for \$12K (district share \$2.4K) is also requested. Approval is sought to award contracts to Optimum and Sky Rider. A board member asked if current contracts exist with these providers. The response confirmed a current fiber contract with Sky Rider and an internet contract with Optimum (different service).

Motion by Scott Carson and seconded by Charles Perry to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of eRate Category II Hardware Vendor Contract

Through E-rate Category 2, the district applied for an 80% discount on infrastructure and hardware. Bids were received from five vendors. Advanced Networks of Texas was chosen for switches/licensing (\$233,129.81), Turtleneck Technologies for access points/licensing (\$116,758.33), and Intex Southwest Services for UPS units (\$12,090), totaling \$361,978.14. The district's 20% share, if approved, is \$72,395.63, to be budgeted in the 24-25 general fund. Approval is requested to award contracts to these three vendors for E-rate infrastructure improvements.

Motion by Scott Carson and seconded by Chad Jones to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of Contigo Ed, Inc. as a Vendor

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Contigo Ed offers Willis ISD a data analysis and strategy for CCMR (College, Career, and Military Readiness). Phase one provides information, and phase two targets high-priority topics for improvement. The Dell Foundation will largely defray the \$75,800 cost, leaving the district to pay under \$20,000. Approval for the Contigo Ed contract is requested to improve CCMR outcomes. A board member asked if they will audit to see how to better serve CCMR students. The presenter confirmed, explaining Contigo Ed helps districts meet CCMR readiness goals and potentially increase outcome-based funding through a thorough audit of current practices. Another board member asked if they will present their findings, and the presenter confirmed they can. Motion by Scott Carson and seconded by Chad Jones to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of the Professional Services Contract with RL Townsend for the Construction Audit of Calfee MS

RL Townsend offers specialized construction audit services to ensure the Cali Middle School project is built according to contract terms.

They will review documentation, computations, and processes (general conditions, subcontractor pay, etc.). The contract is not to exceed \$39,120, billed hourly. Approval is requested. A board member asked if they will monitor ongoing construction. The response clarified that the audit is to review past payout calculations, math, and adherence to contract terms.

Motion by Chad Jones and seconded by Paulett Traylor to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of Expenditures in Excess of \$50,000 for Calfee MS

This is the second request to approve vendors exceeding \$50,000. The initial focus was on furniture with longer lead times; this list includes vendors with shorter lead times but whose approval is still essential for timely ordering. All listed amounts are "not to exceed." This round includes a significant amount of technology, waiting room items, and science equipment.

Motion by Paulett Traylor and seconded by Nikita Lagway to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of Expenditures in Excess of \$50,000 for Lynn Lucas & Brabham MS

The district is implementing standardized furniture, starting with Calfee Middle School, using the Central Texas Purchasing Alliance to piggyback on an existing contract. This purchase, not in the board packet but included as a handout, covers new furniture primarily for classrooms, libraries, and instructional areas (Lynn Lucas focus), and arts, robotics, and life skills rooms (Brabham focus). The goal is standardization across all middle schools, ensuring every student has the same furniture. While the furniture type was pre-selected based on the Calfee choice, principals provided input on quantities and specific desk types (e.g., art tables, lab tables) for Board Member Question: Is this furniture for classrooms only, or does it include office furniture for administrators? Response: This initial list focuses on student areas (classrooms, library, robotics, life skills). Office and teacher lounge furniture were not included in this phase but could be addressed later. Board Member Question: Were principals involved in the selection process? Yes, the design team and principals walked through the campuses. While the *type* of furniture was already chosen (based on the Calfee selection), principals provided input on the *number* and *specific types* of desks (e.g., art tables, lab tables) needed in different spaces. Board Member Comment/Concern: Concern raised about the white-top student desks and their susceptibility to scratching and ink stains, based on past observations of similar furniture. The board member emphasized the need for furniture to last 15 years and questioned the warranty and the possibility of a different color top. Response: The presenter clarified that the top is not a whiteboard but a material designed for use, though it is a light color. They offered to look up the warranty information and invited the design team to present a sample of the tabletop for the board member to see. Pictures from another district showing similar furniture aged 3-5 years will also be provided for review. The presenter acknowledged the concern and the importance of durable furniture.

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Board Member Comment: Expressed a personal preference for traditional whiteboards for quick student feedback but acknowledged the aesthetic appeal of the selected furniture, noting teacher requests for similar items for small group instruction. Board Member Comment: Reiterated the desire to avoid classrooms with "nasty" looking furniture due to scratches. Response: Acknowledged the concern and committed to providing more information and visuals of the furniture top.

Motion by Chad Jones and seconded by Scott Carson to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of selecting ECS Southwest, LLP for Willis ISD Elem. #7 Material Testing
The district secured a pool of material testing vendors via RFQ and ranked four based on qualifications. Negotiations with the top-ranked vendor failed, so they moved to the second-ranked vendor, ECS Southwest, and successfully negotiated a contract.

Motion by Chad Jones and seconded by Paulett Traylor to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of the Brabham MS Generator Contract Selecting Millennium
The district completed a "jock walk" on February 20th with five vendors for the like-for-like replacement of Brabham Middle School's generator. Bids were due February 28th. The lowest bid was from Millennium Project Solutions at **\$97,327.14**.

Motion by Chad Jones and seconded by Scott Carson to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of the Schematic Design Concept of the 9th Grade Center
The schematic design (SD phase) for the Ninth Grade Center at the high school, developed with Huckabee as the design team, is complete. Approval is requested to move forward to the design documents (DD phase). The design team will now present the schematic design for board approval of this phase. Board Member Question 1: Regarding connecting the existing high school to the new Ninth Grade Center, what is the plan for the walkway? Response 1: The current likely plan is a covered walkway with vented sides, similar to the existing structure, to provide weather protection while remaining cost-efficient. Board Member Question 2: Regarding parking, when will the board be able to review the parking plan, how many new spots are planned, and what does it look like? Response 2: The design team is finalizing the parking plan, and it's currently with the city for permitting. The initial goal was 96 *additional* spots, but the current plan aims to replace 240 *lost* spots with approximately 800 new spots. The board will have an opportunity to review the plan.

Motion by Scott Carson and seconded by Chad Jones to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of the Final Design of Elementary #7

This is a final design for Elementary #7, largely based on the Lagway Elementary design but with some changes, as presented by Stantec. The size has been increased for 100 more students, the building footprint is larger, and it incorporates the EDS (Educational Design Specifications) adopted by the board, adding approximately 6,000 square feet and a few elements not present at Lagway.

Board Member Question: Inquired about the previously discussed large glass walls.

Response: Due to prior safety concerns, glass walls in classroom corridors will be removed and replaced with wainscoting (bottom four feet) and drywall. Top windows were also eliminated for cost, lack of benefit, and safety.

Motion by Chad Jones and seconded by Paulett Traylor to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of Close Out of five EMA Engineering Projects

Request for board approval of the final payment and project close-out for EMA Engineering's work on 2020 bond projects. EMA, a long-term MEP engineering partner, had an outstanding balance based on their contract (7% of

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construction costs). EMA demonstrated good stewardship by reducing this balance by \$150,000, leading to the current final payment amount. EMA operated under a master agreement with the district.

Board Member Comment 1: Noted the current price point is considerably less than previously seen. Response 1: Confirmed, explaining EMA reduced their outstanding balance by \$150,000. Board Member Question 2: Confirmed EMA was under a master agreement. Response 2: Confirmed this is correct.

Motion by Chad Jones and seconded by Scott Carson to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval of Package #2 Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for Elementary #7

The board previously approved GMP Package #1 for Elementary #7 with Stewart Builders for **\$1,930,046**. Tonight's request is for final GMP approval (GMP #2) of **\$35,269,354**, bringing the total overall GMP construction cost to **\$37,199,760**, which aligns with the budget. Board Member Question: What was the amount of the first GMP? Response: The first GMP approved was **\$1,930,046**. Clarification: The current GMP request (GMP #2) is for **\$35,269,354**, and the total overall contract amount will be **\$37,199,760**, representing the total construction cost.

Motion by Chad Jones and seconded by Scott Carson to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

Discuss and Consider Approval to Cast Votes for the Montgomery Central Appraisal District Board of Directors and Approve the Resolution

The board discussed and cast 170 votes for Bruce Tough for the Montgomery County Central Appraisal District Board of Directors.

Motion by Scott Carson and seconded by Chad Jones to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: Board President Hoegemeyer had three brief comments:

- Humorously noted Trent Miller's reaction to a comment about needing fewer coaches at the TASB staffing presentation.
- Expressed appreciation to Ms. Hivnor for her input on curriculum matters and consistent meeting attendance.
- Thanked all board members for dedicating approximately 16 hours over two days between meetings for board development and teamwork.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Dr. James thanked the board for their time and governance training. She highlighted the positive impact of the taxpayers' investment in the district's beautiful buildings and the exciting upcoming improvements, particularly to athletic facilities and student play spaces. She also noted the positive outcome of the recent curriculum selection process

FUTURE BUSINESS / MEETINGS: April 16, 2025

ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING

Motion by Paulett Traylor and seconded by Scot Carson to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47pm.

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