

May 14, 2025

The Board of Trustees of Willis ISD met in Regular Business Session on May 14, 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, and Chad Jones

Member Absent: Nikita Lagway

President Kyle Hoegemeyer turned the meeting over to Superintendent, Dr. Kim James. Dr. James welcomed Lynn Lucas MS and AR Turners Principals and students to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION – AR Turner Elementary & Lynn Lucas MS ANNOUNCEMENTS / PROCLAMATION / RESOLUTIONS / RECOGNITIONS

Elementary Student of the Month – Natalie Solis

Dr. Hall, Principal of AR Turner Elementary, recognized fifth-grader Natalie Solis as Student of the Month. Natalie was celebrated for her consistent respect toward everyone, regardless of the situation, and her responsibility for her academic progress and behavior. Teachers highlighted her desire to learn from mistakes, her gratitude toward those who help her, and her ability to set and achieve goals while resisting peer pressure. Natalie was praised for embodying all positive character traits and being a "joy to have in class."

Secondary Student of the Month- Sara Mar

Dr. Kelly Moore, Principal of Lynn Lucas Middle School, honored eighth-grader **Sarah Maher** as Student of the Month. Dr. Moore, who has known Sarah since second grade, had the school counselor and eighth-grade assistant principal speak on Sarah's behalf due to her emotional connection to the student.

Sarah was recognized for her remarkable growth, unwavering dedication to peers and the school community, and her caring nature. She even used her "Minga points" to be Principal of the Day but chose to focus on helping with Career Day due to its importance. Staff highlighted her infectious smile, commitment to helping others, academic improvement, and her ability to inspire and uplift those around her. She transformed from quiet and reserved to a confident, warm, and driven young leader, consistently demonstrating hard work and kindness.

Hailey Dobroski, Director of Nursing for Willis ISD, recognized the district's nurses for their vital role in ensuring student health and well-being. She emphasized that campus nurses go "above and beyond" their daily duties, which include medication administration, first aid, and health procedures. Nurses are crucial for assessing and treating the "whole student," addressing medical, emotional, social, and other healthcare needs, including emergencies. Dobroski expressed her honor in working with such an "invaluable team" and appreciated their daily efforts in promoting safety and wellness, especially in honor of National School Nurse Day.

May 14, 2025

Communication Specialist, Kayla Bracota presented the PAWS of Pride awards Tyler Farrow & Lara Varnal, recognizing them for embodying passion, responsiveness, innovation, dynamism, and empathy.

Tyler Farrow, an adaptive PE teacher and Special Olympics coach, was honored for significantly increasing student participation in Special Olympics and adding new sports. His exceptional organization, enthusiasm, and commitment to an inclusive environment have made a profound difference in students' lives.

Laura Varnell, a teacher, was celebrated for laying a strong foundation for student success, both academically and personally. Her passion for education has ignited a love of learning in her students, fostering growth beyond expectations. Her dedication, care, and commitment leave a lasting positive impact.

Director of Federal Programs/Compliance & Grants, Meghan Ballard, presented the Kats on Patrol award to Isabella Fletcher, a fourth-grade student at Parmley Elementary. Isabella was nominated by her campus School Resource Officer (SRO) for her dedication to researching law enforcement during recess and for mirroring her SRO for a class project, where she wrote an essay about campus safety and the role of a police officer.

Pat Leen, President of the Assistance League of Montgomery County, announced a literacy grant award to Willis ISD. The Assistance League is a philanthropic organization with 200 volunteers who operate a thrift shop to fund their community programs. Their largest program, "Operation School Bell," provides new clothes to economically disadvantaged students across all six Montgomery County school districts. A favorite initiative is supporting literacy in non-Title I schools, and Willis ISD was presented with three checks as part of this effort.

Mindy Maturin, a teacher at Brabham Middle School, was honored with the Crystal Apple Award, a national recognition for exceptional educators. Out of over 500 nominations nationwide, only five educators received this prestigious award. Maturin was celebrated for her profound dedication to her craft, passion for her students, and her role as an inspiration and role model for colleagues. She was specifically recognized for her unwavering commitment to helping others grow and her continuous pursuit of professional and personal development, embodying the spirit of the award through her leadership and passion for education

Randi Gay, Director of Special Education, recognized Willis ISD's elementary and secondary Kool Kats track and field teams for their exceptional performance this season. Under the guidance of Coach Tyler Farrow, these athletes trained diligently, supported each other, and excelled in running, jumping, and throwing events, embodying the motto "one team, one purpose."

The elementary Kool Kats secured an impressive 11 first-place medals, 4 second-place medals, and 2 third-place medals. The secondary Kool Kats also achieved outstanding results, earning 10 first-place medals, 8 second-place medals, and 4 third-place medals. Their determination and teamwork were highlighted as key to their success.

Willis High School Tennis recognized the academic achievements of his tennis players. Out of 18 varsity players, 14 earned Academic All-District honors, meaning they maintained a 90 or higher in all classes during the first nine weeks.

May 14, 2025

Senior Kade Ford received special recognition. He was named Academic All-State and, most notably, earned First Team Academic All-State from the Texas High School Coaches Association. This prestigious statewide honor, based on GPA, SAT scores, and class rank, recognizes him as among the top academic tennis players in Texas.

The Willis High School Track and Field Coach recognized athletes for their achievements from the district to the state level. Heath Grant was specifically highlighted as the 800-meter District Champion, Region 2 800-meter Champion, and a two-time state qualifier.

Travis Utecht, Executive Director of HR, proudly recognized the Kullinary Kats from Willis ISD for their exceptional performance at the "Cook around the World" competition in Orlando, Florida. Competing against approximately 80 schools and 800 students, the team not only shined but also brought home several accolades.

They earned Best Entrée and Best Appetizer in their session. Furthermore, they were named the Best Asian Team across the entire three-day event and received a special Judges' Award for Best Steak in the entire competition. Utecht celebrated their hard work, discipline, and passion, stating they "cooked up something special" and made the district proud.

Michelle Bischoff, Community Involvement Liaison, recognized the inaugural Superintendent's Student Advisory Council for their exceptional contributions. This student group provided insights into the student experience at Willis ISD, demonstrating maturity and advocacy. They conducted a student-led survey, offered improvement recommendations to Mr. Keane, engaged with Dr. Tobin Redwine, and learned about district operations through an administration building tour. Beyond leadership, they focused on service by creating inspirational quotes for peers, embodying the council's focus on district leadership, student leadership, and service.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Board President Kyle Hoegemeyer announced that there are no Public Comments

STANDING INFORMATIONAL AND AD HOC REPORTS & ITEMS

Student Enrollment Report

Willis ISD's enrollment hit 9,358 students on May 12, 2025, a jump of about 370 students from last year. Attendance also improved, with eight campuses seeing better numbers in April 2025 compared to April 2024, and another eight improving from March to April 2025. Brabham Middle School earned the Momentum Maker Attendance Award for its notable progress.

Accountability Update

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) released its controversial A-F accountability ratings for the 2022-2023 school year on April 24, 2025, after a two-year delay due to significant changes in methodology and subsequent lawsuits from over 120 districts. These updates included a redesigned STAAR test and a drastically increased college/career/military readiness (CCMR) threshold for an "A" rating, which critics argued were retroactively applied and unfair. The statewide results showed a notable decline in performance, with only 78% of rated schools receiving a passing grade, down from 93% in 2022. Willis ISD received a "D" rating (67 out of 100).

In response to this rating, Willis ISD initiated comprehensive changes, including new leadership at district and campus levels, a grants director, new curriculum, literacy frameworks, and enhanced community engagement. While the 2023-2024 ratings remain on hold due to ongoing legal disputes, early data for Willis ISD indicates promising gains: several elementary schools are projected to increase their

May 14, 2025

accountability ratings by one to two letter grades, and Willis High School is expected to improve by two letter grades for the 2023-2024 school year.

School Start Times 2025-2026

Willis ISD is adjusting school start times 30 minutes earlier for greater efficiency and to improve the learning environment. The new schedule will have high school starting at 7:15 AM, elementary at 7:45 AM, and junior high at 8:15 AM, allowing sufficient bus travel time between campuses. Key benefits include more efficient bus routes, an 8-period high school schedule with 46-minute classes for flexibility, better alignment of after-school programs with parent schedules, and reduced traffic congestion. These changes are based on research, logistics, and feedback from a survey of 2,280 community members, with a majority in favor.

In response to board member questions, the district confirmed plans for early drop-off "early bird" and late pick-up "late bird" programs at elementary schools. Additionally, arrangements are being made for athletes with early practices to receive breakfast and attend morning tutorials. Campus administrators were involved and aware of the decision-making process.

Financial Reports/Bill Payments/Bond Summary

Willis ISD's General Fund revenues are on track to meet budget projections for the current fiscal year, with local revenues at 96% collected through April and anticipated to reach 100% by August. Expenditures are also proceeding as planned, with the remaining buses ordered last fall expected to be delivered in May or June, incurring those expenses.

Additionally, the \$4 million bond defeasance approved by the board in April has been finalized, successfully paying off debt and saving a significant amount in interest.

Board Questions & Responses:

- **Bus Auction:** A board member inquired about an upcoming bus auction. The response confirmed that older, non-running buses have been identified for auction this summer.

Huckabee Presentation – Long Range Plan for 9th Grade Center

Lauren Yoner presented the formal long-range plan for the Willis High School 9th Grade Center, a required compliance document for new TEA facility standards effective November 2021. The plan, which is not new information but a consolidated formal presentation, details the project's qualification, acknowledgements of those involved, and a campus overview.

The center is designed to house 1,200 students, with a functional capacity of 958. The plan also addresses the general purpose of the center, special education requirements, existing site buildings, and capital improvements. The site plan specifically emphasizes thoughtful placement, proximity to other buildings, and traffic flow. Yoner proactively noted that this plan will need to be updated every five years and does not require board action tonight, only presentation.

Lone Star Governance

Dr. Larry Lewis, LSG Coach, commended Willis ISD for their "Level Up" magazine and "winning culture" before outlining the board's role in the strategic planning process. He emphasized the need for

May 14, 2025

board input to define student outcome goals, specifically for House Bill 4, which mandates three goals: third-grade math, third-grade reading, and College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR).

Dr. Lewis presented board members with a packet containing five years of district data, including NWEA MAP, STAAR, and various comparative datasets, noting that by law, only 2022-2023 data could be officially discussed. He highlighted areas of projected growth and areas where schools did not meet growth targets. For Willis High School, he pointed out opportunities for significant CCMR improvement through industry certifications and dual credit courses. Board members were asked to provide their input on the data by next Wednesday. Preliminary 2025 STAAR data will be incorporated, and preliminary student outcome goals, progress measures, and superintendent constraints will be presented at the June board meeting for a July vote. Additionally, board members will receive a survey to contribute to the 2025-2026 community engagement process.

Board Questions & Responses:

- **Consideration of 2023-2024 Data:** A board member asked if they should consider 2023-2024 data, given that it showed improvement. Dr. Lewis affirmed that while he could not officially discuss it due to legal restrictions on public release, the board absolutely should consider any available data, acknowledging the district's recent improvements under Dr. James's leadership.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - B. 2024-2025 Financial Auditor Engagement
 - C. Approval for Expenditures over \$50K for Calfee MS
 - D. Delivery Method for WHS Locker Replacement – Co-Op
 - E. Delivery Method JOC for Willis ISD Marquee Replacements
 - F. Delivery Method JOC Willis ISD ADA Lifts
 - G. Delivery Method JOC for Carpet Replacement, Paint, & Repair for Lynn Lucas MS Choir Room
 - H. Delivery Method JOC for installation of Shot Put and Discus Rings for Lynn Lucas MS Yates Stadium
- During the consent agenda review, a board member raised concerns about Item D, the high school locker replacement.

- **Question:** What is the timeline for the locker installation? **Response:** Purchasing Coordinator Kelly Hughes-Shropshire stated there's approximately a 12-week lead time after the Purchase Order is issued. She confirmed they conducted a walk-through with vendors to get measurements last week and received four responses through the TIPS co-op.
- **Question:** Why has there been a delay since January, given that information about a ready vendor was available then? **Response:** Chief Financial Officer Garrett Matej clarified that the previous vendor's quote lacked sufficient detail for competitive bidding. The delay was due to the need to conduct accurate measurements and solicit competitive bids from multiple vendors to ensure a fair price, rather than just using one vendor who had already exceeded their contract limit.
- **Question:** Given the 12-14 week lead time, how will the district accommodate the lack of lockers and potential theft at the start of the school year? Can vendors bid with an August 6th installation date? **Response:** Matej acknowledged the frustration regarding the timeline. While vendors have stated a 12-week minimum, they will ask if expedited delivery is possible. The installation will likely occur during school breaks (October, Thanksgiving, Christmas), with sub-varsity locker rooms taking about a week to install. The current consent

May 14, 2025

agenda item is only to approve using a co-op for procurement; the final award, if over a certain dollar amount, will require a separate board vote, potentially a special meeting, to expedite the process.

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 6:42 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. Discuss Teacher Resignations and Consider Approval of Teacher Appointments. Tex. Gov't Code 551.074.

B. Consultation with Attorney by Phone: Pursuant to Texas Gov't Code §551.071

OPEN SESSION

The Board reconvened into Open Session at 8:13 p.m. President Hoegemeyer asked if there are any motions from closed session.

Motion by Cliff Williams and seconded by Paulett Traylor to accept the Superintendent's recommendation on professional personnel as listed. Motion carried unanimously.

Travis Utecht, Executive Director of HR, officially introduced Michael Hagerty as Willis ISD's new Director of Transportation. Hagerty joins the district from Aldine ISD, where he was an assistant director of transportation. He also brings 20 years of experience as a teacher and coach, and holds a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Houston.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Discuss and Consider Approval to Adopt the Method of Compliance for WHS 9th Grade Center
Lauren Yoner from Huckabee presented the proposed method of compliance for the new Willis High School 9th Grade Center, aligning it with TEA facility standards. This project is mandated to comply with these standards, as it's a new facility constructed after November 2021. The district has already adopted educational specifications (April 12, 2023) and presented the long-range plan.

The recommended method is the quantitative method, suitable for traditional school operations with a single student group attending for a standard school day. This contrasts with the qualitative method, which applies to non-traditional facilities like standalone CTE centers with multiple shifts. The district is also requesting a Level 3 flexibility designation, which allows for multiple student/teacher presentation and organization spaces, outdoor access, flexible furniture, multi-purpose walls, and learner-centric digital instruction. This level of flexibility requires 36 square feet per student, resulting in a need for 43,200 square feet of instructional space for the 1,200 students. The project currently qualifies for both quantitative and qualitative methods and all levels of flexibility.

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

The discussion and consideration of approving joining the Multidistrict Litigation against Social Media has been tabled for further review.

Discuss and Consider Approval of the Strong Foundation Implementation Plan for Bluebonnet Math
Willis ISD presented its transition plans for the upcoming school year, outlining a comprehensive approach to implementing two new curriculums: Bluebonnet Learning and SAVIS ROA. The plans, described as crucial tools for successful implementation, are a required part of participating in certain grants but are also considered good practice.

May 14, 2025

The plans detail five key actions:

- Setting Implementation Goals: Goals include 100% teacher implementation by a certain date and 85% of teachers implementing with high confidence, alongside leadership and student engagement goals.
- Creating Conditions for Success: This involves planning for the large-scale ordering and distribution of materials, as well as extensive professional development (product previews, activation training, and ongoing embedded support). A grant will provide incentives for teachers to participate in summer pacing guide work and professional development.
- Leading Internalization and Professional Learning Communities: The focus shifts from lesson creation to teachers becoming experts in delivering already-vetted, research-based lessons provided by the new materials.
- Establishing Observation and Feedback Practices: District and campus leadership, trained in the Effective Schools Framework and Texas Instructional Leadership, will conduct observations specifically on the implementation of the new materials, providing feedback to support teachers.
- Aligning Assessment Strategies: The plan prioritizes assessments tied to the new materials, ensuring they are calendared alongside major assessments like STAAR and MAP.

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

Discuss and Consider Approval of the Strong Foundations Implementation 2B Grant Award
Willis ISD announced new grant funding but also the need to deny a portion of a federal grant award tied to the adoption of Bluebonnet RLA curriculum. The grant was applied for before the district made its final curriculum adoption decision, and since Bluebonnet RLA was not adopted, the district must return that portion of the funds to the state.

Despite this, the district will accept \$192,000 from the grant. Furthermore, Willis ISD's service center received an additional \$42,000 on the district's behalf for Bluebonnet professional development, effectively reducing the district's planned expenses.

Board Questions & Responses:

- A board member ask for clarity as to why the district was "paying back the bluebonnet ELA" if they already had it. The presenter confirmed that the grant was indeed for the Bluebonnet ELA curriculum, which the district ultimately did not adopt.

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

Discuss and Consider Approval to accept Gamma Construction as the General Contractor for the Transportation Center

A Request for Competitive Sealed Proposals (CSP) for the new Willis Transportation Center was advertised on March 27, 2025, receiving 14 submissions by April 23, 2025. The evaluation committee selected Gamma Construction as the top vendor, determining they offered the best value with the following fees: \$1,000 for pre-construction, 2.9% for general conditions, and 1.4% for construction management, totaling 4.3%.

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

May 14, 2025

Board members inquired about the start date for the new Willis Transportation Center.

- **Question:** What is the start date for the Willis Transportation Center project?
 - **Response:** The start date is anticipated to be **mid-September of next year**, as the project is currently in the design phase.

Board members also expressed optimism that the new facility's location would help address existing issues at the high school related to a pond and potential material challenges. One board member humorously noted that the new Director of Transportation, recently hired, was fortunate to begin his tenure with a new facility project.

Discuss and Consider Approval of Revision of UES Professional Service for Willis Ninth Grade Material Testing

At the April board meeting, a contract for geotechnical services for the 9th-grade campus was approved with UES for \$24,800. However, during the transition, Carla Castillo, the architect from Huckabee, reviewed UEES's proposal and identified the need for additional testing, specifically Geotech fault investigations and maximum axle load adjustments. This resulted in a revised quote from UES, increasing the cost to \$37,500. The district expressed gratitude for the team that identified these necessary adjustments, preventing potential delays later in the project.

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

Discuss and Consider Approval of the Final Payment of Lynn Lucas Fire Sprinkler Project

Willis ISD is seeking approval for the final close-out of the Lynn Lucas Middle School fire sprinkler project, contracted with Kim Associates in February 2024. The total project cost is \$2,997,562, with a final payment of \$148,241.80 due to the vendor. The board voted to approve the superintendent's recommendation for this final payment.

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

Discuss and Consider Approval to Amend the 2024-2025 Regular School Board Meeting Schedule

Due to a conflict, an amendment to the 2024-2025 school board meeting schedule has been proposed. The meeting originally set for Wednesday, June 11th, will be changed to Monday, June 9th.

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

Discuss and Consider Approval of HOSA – Out of State Travel

Willis ISD is seeking approval for Adelaide Bagwell to travel out-of-state to compete in the HOSA International Competition in Tennessee from June 18-21. Bagwell, a student who won first place in Clinical Laboratory at the HOSA state competition, will be accompanied by two staff chaperones. This travel approval will allow her to compete at the international level.

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

May 14, 2025

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

A board member expressed gratitude for a successful year, commending the district's collective efforts as the final week approaches. He conveyed his pride in the district and its staff, wishing everyone a great summer. He also reminded attendees to expect to see them at the June 9th meeting, advising casual dress.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

The Superintendent expressed gratitude for a successful year, emphasizing the district's strong finish and excitement for the upcoming strategic plan rollout.

FUTURE BUSINESS / MEETINGS:

May 30, 2025 Special Board Meeting @ 8:00 am

June 9, 2025 Budget Workshop @ 4:30pm and Regular Board Meeting @ 5:30 pm

ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING

Motion by Cliff Williams and seconded by Scott Carson to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.