

# Willis Independent School District

## Board of Trustees Community Town Hall

### Meeting Minutes

<b>Meeting Type</b>	Community Town Hall (Lone Star Governance Framework)
<b>Organization</b>	Willis Independent School District
<b>Presiding Officer</b>	Kyle Hoegemeyer, Board President
<b>Board Members Present</b>	Kyle Hoegemeyer (President), Paulett Traylor (Vice President), Chad Jones (Secretary), Scott Carson, Cliff Williams, Charles Perry <i>Absent: Ms. Lagway</i>

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## 1. Call to Order and Welcome

Board President Kyle Hoegemeyer called the meeting to order and welcomed community members, staff, and students. He introduced all board members present and acknowledged Superintendent Dr. James.

Board President Hoegemeyer explained the purpose of the meeting: to listen to community voices and gather input on district direction, student outcomes, and long-range priorities -- not to resolve individual campus concerns or personal matters. Attendees with individual needs were directed to Superintendent Dr. James and the district leadership team present at the event.

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## 2. Lone Star Governance Framework Overview

A board member provided an overview of the Lone Star Governance framework, developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Key points presented:

- The framework aligns trustee behavior -- individually and collectively -- with research-based practices proven to improve student outcomes.
- The role of trustees is not to manage day-to-day operations, but to establish a clear vision for student success, set aligned goals, monitor progress, and ensure accountability.
- Board Vision: Every child learns and thrives through strong partnerships, critical thinking, accountable staff, responsible stewardship, and safe, nurturing environments.
- District Mission: To function as one team, one purpose -- developing in each student the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for lifelong learning and effective, responsible citizenship.

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## 3. Board Student Outcome Goals

The following measurable board goals were presented, with progress targets from May 2025 to May 2030:

### **Goal 1 -- 3rd Grade Reading**

The percentage of 3rd grade students scoring at the 'Meets' performance level or above in reading (STAR) will increase from 54% (May 2025) to 77% (May 2030).

### **Goal 2 -- 3rd Grade Math**

The percentage of 3rd grade students scoring at the 'Meets' performance level or above in math (STAR) will increase from 49% (May 2025) to 77% (May 2030).

### **Goal 3 -- College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)**

The percentage of high school seniors earning a CCMR point demonstrating college readiness in math and English (excluding College Prep courses) will increase from May 2025 to May 2030. The district reported being on track to meet all three goals by May 2030.

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## **4. Superintendent and Board Guardrails**

Board member Scott Carson presented the superintendent guardrails. In attaining the board's student outcome goals, the superintendent shall not allow:

- Fewer than two distinct stakeholder communications confirmed across multiple platforms, documented within the district's communication logs, by June 2026.
- Campuses to receive a 'D' rating or lower on preliminary accountability ratings as measured by STAR/local benchmark data by May 2026.
- Any campus to fail to meet 100% of TEA safety audit standards or to not conduct at least one unannounced safety drill per semester by August 2026.
- District-wide stakeholder surveys to fall below a minimum cumulative response rate of 65% across students, staff, parents, and community participants by June 2026.

Board guardrails were also presented: the Willis ISD board, either collectively or through the actions of individual board members, shall maintain 100% compliance with adopted board operating procedures as verified through its annual self-evaluation and external governance review by June 2026.

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## **5. Community Input Session**

The board presented five structured community input questions. Attendees were invited to share their perspectives. The following is a summary of feedback received for each question.

### **Question 1: What skills, experiences, and opportunities should every Willis graduate leave with?**

- Community members emphasized that college is not the only pathway -- trade schools, certifications, and CTE programs should be equally valued and communicated without stigma.
- A parent shared that their senior student is earning an industry-based certification in welding while also in the National Honor Society and on the varsity golf team, citing the value of multiple pathways.
- Attendees called for a clear 'student roadmap' or 'Wildcat profile' -- a documented framework showing what criteria students need to meet from middle school through graduation depending on their chosen pathway.

- Multiple community members praised the growth of the CTE Center and expressed desire to see those programs continue to expand.
- Attendees stressed the importance of whole-child development: fine arts, music, athletics, and social experiences were identified as equally critical alongside academic achievement.
- A community member asked whether resume building and job interview practice are part of the curriculum. Staff confirmed this occurs in some CTE programs but is not universal; a note was made to address this.

### **Question 2: What can the district do better to communicate with families?**

- A parent with three children at three different campuses noted being 'inundated with emails' and preferred consolidated weekly newsletters (WAGs) summarizing upcoming events.
- The district website was identified as difficult to navigate. Community members requested a more user-friendly interface with key information more easily accessible.
- Attendees urged the district to proactively communicate positive outcomes and accomplishments on social media and YouTube rather than waiting for negative narratives to take hold.
- A community member asked how the results of the April 8 prior-year survey were communicated back to the public and how they were used. District staff confirmed the survey informed the current strategic plan, and that results were posted, though outreach could be improved.
- The board was encouraged to continue hosting town halls and to expand participation.

### **Question 3: How do we ensure multiple pathways are supported as the district grows?**

- CTE Director Noah Hollander noted that approximately 150 students are currently placed in internships, with a goal of eventually placing all seniors.
- An attendee raised the question of whether high school students interested in education could serve as intern assistant teachers. Staff confirmed this is already occurring.
- A parent asked about community service hour requirements for graduation. The district confirmed there is no such requirement currently (except for NHS members). Multiple attendees expressed support for exploring a requirement -- such as 20 hours over four years -- as a resume builder and community connection tool.
- Attendees expressed interest in expanding internship and apprenticeship partnerships with local businesses, noting this could create a pipeline of work-ready graduates and strengthen community investment in the district.
- The district noted that program capacity varies -- some programs (such as welding) have equipment constraints -- and that an eighth-grade sign-up system helps manage enrollment.

### **Question 4: What are the most important ways the district can build trust and engagement with families?**

- Transparency was identified as the top priority. Community members asked the board to 'open the books,' acknowledge challenges openly, and share what is being done to address them.
- Attendees encouraged community-building events beyond academic nights -- casual family events that build connection without a formal agenda.

- The district's adopt-a-school program was highlighted: all campuses have been adopted by at least one outside organization (businesses or congregations), with a full-time community engagement specialist now on staff.
- Recognizing and celebrating volunteers, PTO members, and community partners publicly was suggested as a way to encourage further involvement.
- Community members who are new to the area noted that involvement in the school quickly connected them to the broader Willis community.

### **Question 5: As the world continues to change, what opportunities and experiences must schools provide to ensure students are future ready?**

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education generated substantial discussion. A parent raised concerns about inconsistent district policy on AI use in student work, including false positives from AI detection software on legitimate student writing.
- Staff confirmed the state has not yet issued guidance on AI policy. The district uses detection tools (including Turnitin) but acknowledged the issue is fluid and difficult to keep pace with.
- Community members stressed the importance of teaching students how to use AI as a tool ethically -- not abolishing it -- while ensuring foundational literacy, math, and critical thinking skills remain the core of the curriculum.
- One attendee with a background in biotechnology emphasized the importance of digital ethics coursework: just because a tool can be used does not mean it should be, and students need a framework for ethical decision-making in digital environments.
- A fine arts teacher shared that the district is opening AP Music Theory next year, using AI-generated compositions as analysis exercises -- an example of integrating AI as a teaching tool rather than a threat.
- The board president acknowledged that AI is changing industries rapidly, noting his son's internship at a major accounting firm will see significant changes before it ends.
- Community members encouraged the district to continue expanding career awareness events at the elementary level and to more explicitly connect those early experiences to middle school course selection and high school pathways.

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## **6. Closing Remarks**

Board President Hoegemeyer thanked all attendees for their time, noting that attendance at community events is one of the most meaningful forms of engagement. He acknowledged that the board would like to see broader participation at future town halls.

Superintendent Dr. James (Sarah) noted that a QR code survey was made available during the meeting capturing all five discussion questions, which will remain open for approximately two weeks to allow additional community feedback.

The district committed to sending a recap of the evening -- including a summary of discussion themes and select photos -- to all district families via email and social media.

The board president closed by reiterating the district's mission: one team, one purpose. He noted that all input received through this and future community engagement opportunities will inform the board's goals and be relayed to the superintendent for implementation.

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## **7. Action Items / Follow-Up Notes**

Item	Responsible Party	Notes
Develop and distribute a 'Wildcat Student Roadmap' -- a clear framework showing pathways, criteria, and course sequences from middle school through graduation.	Superintendent / CTE Director	Community-requested; noted by Board President
Evaluate district website for improved user-friendliness and accessibility of key information.	Superintendent	Specific parent feedback received
Explore and develop a consistent AI use policy for students, particularly at the high school level.	Superintendent / Staff	State has not yet issued guidance; district is exploring options
Investigate adding resume writing and job interview practice as a standard curriculum element for all students.	Superintendent / Curriculum Staff	Currently only in select CTE tracks
Explore a community service hour's graduation requirement and bring proposal back to the community for input.	Board / Superintendent	Multiple community members expressed support
Expand outreach for town hall events to increase community attendance at future sessions.	Superintendent / Communications	Board expressed desire for broader participation
Distribute meeting recap and survey link to all district families via email and social media.	Communications / Superintendent	QR code survey to remain open approximately two weeks
Better communicate CTE program options, internship opportunities, and career pathways to families early -- especially at the middle school level.	CTE Director / Communications	Attendees noted lack of awareness of available programs