

Date: Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Time: 4 – 6 p.m.

Location: Fort Bend ISD Board Room

Attendance:

BOC Members:

Helen (Chips) Adams
Patrina Carter
Sabrina Devone
Yasmine Hypolite
Rashid Khokhar
Jim Levermann
Stephanie Means-Brown
Willie Rainwater

FBISD Staff:

Daniel Bankhead
Kathleen Brown
Bryan Guinn
Dr. Thomas Lawing
Beth Martinez
Chassidy Olainu-Alade
Long Pham
Chief Anthony Sanders
Anthony Sims
Jeanette Boleware
Brenda Garcia
Kelly Schlacks
Amy Soddy (Jacobs Engineering)
Jane Thompson (Jacobs Engineering)
Joaquin Mubarak (IT Support)

FBISD Leadership:

Board President Kristin Tassin
Dr. Marc Smith

BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Welcome

The meeting began at 4:03 p.m. with Bond Oversight Committee (BOC) Chair Rashid Khokhar and Deputy Superintendent Kathleen Brown welcoming attendees. Superintendent Marc Smith was introduced and he addressed the committee and thanked members for their service, patience, and commitment to the district, particularly their work supporting the 2023 Bond Program. He emphasized that the committee’s efforts were instrumental in bringing the bond to completion and recognized the community’s investment in students.

Key points included:

- Appreciation for committee flexibility due to rescheduled meetings.
- Recognition of the committee’s role in successfully advancing the 2023 bond.

- Reflection on a recent topping-off ceremony at Clements High School, highlighting progress made possible by the bond.
- Assurance that the district has not forgotten the committee and values its contributions.

Dr. Smith explained that, under the leadership of the Board President, the district is working to re-establish and strengthen advisory committee structures, including the Bond Oversight Committee. He stressed the district's goal of transparency, clarity around next steps, and open communication moving forward.

A committee member asked about notification and inclusion of the committee in topping-off ceremonies. Chief Communications Officer Chassidy Olainu-Alade explained that promotion and logistics are coordinated closely with construction teams and are sometimes limited by space. Staff committed to reviewing the distribution list used for such events and to following up with an update.

Dr. Smith then announced one of Board President Tassin's initiatives was the restructure of some district committees of which this is one. This evening's goal is to outline next steps and discuss the future of this committee. Ms. Tassin addressed the committee and presented future changes to the committee.

Board Update

Ms. Tassin addressed the committee, thanking members for their time, advocacy, and willingness to push for change. She shared her perspective based on prior service on advisory committees and her experience as a trustee.

Key points included:

- Acknowledgment of committee frustrations and communication gaps experienced in the past.
- Explanation that updating policy and restructuring advisory committees was a priority following her election.
- Confirmation that a new advisory committee policy was adopted earlier in the year.
- Ongoing development of internal procedures and a draft charter to support consistent, effective committee operations.

Ms. Tassin outlined expectations for the reconstituted committee:

- Committees will serve in a clearly defined advisory role, providing informed input and feedback to the Board.
- Improved communication regarding campus visits, ceremonies, and major milestones.
- The committee chair may be asked to report to the Board once or twice annually, depending on bond activity.
- Appointment of a Board of Trustees liaison to maintain consistent communication between the committee and the Board.

She emphasized the importance of establishing norms, maintaining institutional knowledge, and ensuring fidelity to policy and procedures over time. Going forward, the BOC will be dissolved with an

advisory committee taking its place. This will involve re-application by members to serve on the committee.

Ms. Tassin shared details about next steps:

- A new online application process for advisory committees is expected to launch in January.
- Committee membership is anticipated to be approximately 20 members, per policy.
- Current members are strongly encouraged to reapply, particularly due to their historical knowledge and experience.
- Committee members will receive direct notification when applications go live. The goal is to align the committee reset with the new calendar year and resume advisory work promptly.

A committee member expressed disappointment that a prior committee presentation to the Board did not result in on-dais discussion. Ms. Tassin explained Trustees must be mindful of legal and procedural constraints when speaking from the dais. Feedback from the committee had already been received, discussed, and incorporated through meetings, updates, and administrative direction. Also, members should know that a lack of public discussion should not be interpreted as lack of awareness or action.

Several committee members raised concerns regarding:

- Past transparency and communication gaps.
- Perceived limited influence of the Bond Oversight Committee compared to other groups.
- Frustration over reapplication requirements despite long-term service and community representation.
- Preventing corporations from having someone serve on the committee to obtain information on behalf of the company.
- Communication and meeting schedules.

In response, Ms. Tassin reiterated:

- The reapplication process applies to all advisory committees under the updated policy.
- Once the online application is completed, thorough vetting will take place, and the Board will appoint members.
- Changes are intended to correct past issues and improve clarity, transparency, and effectiveness moving forward.
- The focus is on establishing consistent expectations and stronger communication channels.
- The primary way the committee communicates with administration is through the chair. A Board liaison will also be appointed to attend meetings. Meetings will still be held quarterly but will be more frequent if needed.

Policy was passed in March and May 2025 to guide administration in developing charter and administrative procedures. Reapplication for committees is now required based on policy changes. Member roles and responsibilities will change as well.

Dr. Smith and Ms. Tassin acknowledged the concerns and emphasized commitment to improved processes and collaboration.

Staff provided follow-up information regarding recent policy updates applicable to the committee. Members were informed that all updated policies will be distributed via email and are also available on the District website for reference.

Two Board policies specifically govern the work of this committee:

- **BDF (Local)** – last updated **March 2025**
- **CCA (Local)** – last updated **May 2025**

When reviewing these policies, members were advised to note that the most recent revision date is listed at the bottom of each policy document.

A committee member inquired whether items previously presented to the Board of Trustees are being addressed in a way that allows the committee to view approval status (e.g., affirmative/negative actions or responses).

Staff confirmed that these items are being addressed; however, they may not appear consolidated in a single document or reflected line-by-line. Instead, the feedback and direction from the Board have been incorporated into:

- The committee charter, and
- The structure and operation of future committee meetings.

While individual action items may not be explicitly tracked in isolation, new committee members will be able to clearly understand how Board input has informed committee processes.

Members were also informed of a key structural change: the committee will transition from an **Oversight Committee** to an **Advisory Committee**. Under the revised charter, the intent is to evolve the meeting format to:

- Continue providing informational updates, and
- Actively receive feedback and input from committee members.

Staff emphasized that member feedback is welcomed and encouraged as part of this updated advisory role.

Introduction of New Team Members

Several new and continuing leadership roles were introduced:

- **Dr. Thomas Lawing** was introduced as the new **Chief Operations Officer**.
- **Brend Garcia** joined the Design & Construction Department as **Director of Bond Construction**.
- **Dr. Damian Viltz** will continue serving the District in an **Assistant Superintendent** role.

It was noted that the committee currently meets on a **quarterly basis**. Due to the significant level of bond-related activity occurring between meetings, staff shared that more frequent meetings may be considered in the future, depending on construction progress and District needs.

Members were advised that several bond program updates would be provided during the current meeting to reflect ongoing work across the District.

Bond Construction Update (slides 9-20)

Deputy Superintendent of Operations Kathleen Brown introduced Dr. Thomas Lawing, FBISD's new Chief Operations Officer. Brenda Garcia, the new Director of Bond Construction, was also introduced. Upon inquiry, Ms. Brown stated that Dr. Viltz is still with FBISD in an Assistant Superintendent role.

2018 Bond

Dan Bankhead, Executive Director of Design & Construction, presented the status of 2018 Bond construction. The \$993M bond has resulted in 62 of the proposed 63 projects so far. Through careful planning and execution, \$92M has been saved with \$83M being reinvested and redirected to support other projects or unanticipated repairs with Board approval. With these savings and funding redirection, the 2018 Bond program has achieved more than was originally promised. FBISD is trying to achieve similar fiscal results with the 2023 Bond program.

2023 Bond

Bond 2023 currently has 16 projects in the design phase with 40 projects in the construction or closeout phase. Approximately 38% of projects have been completed. \$28M has been saved through innovative project solutions, diligent management, and effective cost monitoring. \$68M has been given to support projects that do not have enough funding.

FBISD opened three new elementary schools in fall 2025:

- Mission ES
- Aldridge ES
- Henry ES

This resulted in over 70 new and updated classrooms; flexible, adaptive learning spaces; indoor/outdoor instructional areas; and state-of-the-art technology. These were delivered on time and on budget. All three schools held dedication ceremonies in October.

Topping out ceremonies were held at Coleman MS (opening fall 2026) and Clements HS (opening fall 2027). Both projects are on schedule.

Through collaborative teamwork, Clements HS is making great strides in progress with brick walls going up, ceiling grids installed, and the orchestra pit poured. The installation of “outsulation,” a continuous thermal barrier within the structure, will help energy savings resulting in cost savings over time.

The new aquatic practice facility will include a 50-meter pool with stretch lanes and warm-up lanes. The building will feature natural ventilation.

Challenges faced include:

- Clements HS – delays due to permitting and weather. Recovered lost time.
- Aquatic Practice Facility – soil conditions, cost overruns, and delays. Deeper foundation was needed which resulted in an impact on cost.
- Madden ES Foundation – complex work and a tight schedule. Larger scope of work than initially anticipated; better support is needed with slab repairs; still working on estimates, but costs are approximately \$19M at this time.

BP027 is restroom upgrades. The project is 70% complete with it being on schedule for substantial completion in May 2026. 185 restrooms have been completed on 16 campuses so far. The scope of work was expanded to include plumbing infrastructure work, servicing drain lines, etc. Like other improvement projects, this was undertaken with the goal of creating an environment in which students thrive.

HVAC systems were replaced with nine chillers, two cooling towers, 29 air handlers, four boilers and other key pieces such as ventilators being installed. Phase II of this project will begin in summer 2026.

Multiple projects have already been completed such as 11 playground renovations (four play courts and four walking trails); interior renovations at eight campuses; upgraded stage curtains at 13 campuses so all stages now have fire retardant draping.

Committee members raised questions and concerns about the following:

- Is the Madden ES foundation on piers? No, it is a continuous slab. With slab repairs, better support will be needed.
- Cost concerns were expressed regarding the Madden ES foundation. At this time, the estimated cost is approximately \$19M. Final figures will not be known until after the project is closed out.
- A question was raised regarding an unfinished portion of the Willowridge HS parking lot. This area is where the new fine arts addition will be built, so finishing this portion would not be beneficial.

- What is being done to encourage energy efficiency? “Outsulation” on Clements HS will result in energy savings. In addition, HVAC system replacements at schools will result in a possible 70% energy savings as the energy footprint of campuses will be more efficient. In addition, light at some facilities/campuses have been changed out to energy-saving LEDs.

Overall, FBISD is delivering on Bond 2018 and Bond 2023 by opening new schools, improving existing schools and supporting student equity and excellence.

Transportation Update (slides 21-22)

Anthony Sims was introduced as the new Executive Director of Transportation. He informed the group that all 20 special needs buses and 10 regular buses that were purchased through Bond 2023 are in operation. All bus tablets and cradle mounts were installed, and all ID badge printers were installed on campuses. He is now strategically planning for the use of remaining transportation funding from Bond 2023.

Technology Update (slides 23-27)

Chief Information Officer Long Pham presented the technology update. Bond 2018 is 95.6% complete with the “Go Guardian” filter deployed on all student laptops. It was not well-received by students, so it works well! A refresh of elementary school iPads will begin in January 2026 along with CTE computers.

Bond 2023: Proposition A (network refresh, SIP migration, storage refresh, phone refresh, secondary firewall, etc.) projects are 49.6% complete. The secondary data center is complete with the primary data center portion moving slower as it is completed mostly at night.

A committee member inquired about the following:

- Why is the data storage center delayed? Mr. Pham stated FBISD is awaiting the awarding of a grant that will be utilized for the storage center, so IT does not want to expend any funds until the grant is received.

Bond 2023: Proposition B (computer refresh) is 40.7% complete.

Communications Update (slides 28-32)

Chassidy Olainu-Alade, Chief Communications Officer, the Communications department continues to support Bond 2023 through their social media campaign “Your Fort Bend ISD Bond Dollars at Work;” promoting new school openings, coordinating topping out ceremonies; and through the website and “Let’s Connect.”

“Let’s Talk” transitioned to “Let’s Connect” about one year ago. “Let’s Connect” has been regularly active (approximately 1800 visits/clicks per month on average). It features a button dedicated solely to bond inquiries and about eight bond inquiries per month have been submitted. All inquiries have been addressed within two weeks and there are currently no open inquiry tickets.

Safety & Security Update (slides 33-35)

Chief Anthony Sanders was introduced as the new FBISD Chief of Police. He provided an update on the following bond purchases for the district:

- Security cameras – the district has over 7,000, so there is a constant “change out” of equipment when needed.
- Vehicles – 15 new vehicles were purchased and equipped. They are now in service.
- Floor mount door locks – these have all been installed.
- Standardized weapons and response kits – these have been purchased with arrival expected in February 2026.
- Emergency Notification System – currently vetting vendors.

With remaining funding, the Police department would like to purchase a mobile command unit as well as a virtual reality training system.

Committee members inquired/expressed concerns about the following:

- Do all campuses have security officers? Yes, FBISD is in compliance with this requirement. Every elementary school has one security guard, and secondary campuses have police officers on site.
- Speeding through school zones has been an issue at Commonwealth ES. Many of those speeding are parents and the crossing guard on site has stated they are ignored. What can be done? More officers can be placed on patrol, so tickets can be issued. Fort Bend County is collaborating with FBISD in “speed blitzes” to discourage speeding. Also, 25 buses have been equipped with stop arm cameras so offenders can be documented.

Debt & Finance Updates (slides 36-42; refer to the slides for complete financial details)

CFO Bryan Guinn presented budget updates, contingency planning, and financial accountability for Bond 2023. The total bond budget was \$1.26B and there is approximately \$868M remaining in balance. About 64% of debt principal outstanding will be retired in 2026. Laptops and computers purchased with bond funds will be paid off early as these will not be amortized over 30 years (do not pay for unusable devices).

It was noted that through the tax-exempt commercial paper program, this provides a means of cash funding projects before debt is issued. FBISD has avoided \$36M interest cost utilizing this program to date. In April or May, FBISD will reset debt bond to a new rate period or will fix it out depending upon market conditions. Paying off a portion of weighted assets will be done per Board policy as the average economic life cannot exceed the life of an asset by 120%.

Member Questions:

- When was the last time FBISD’s credit rating was evaluated? This was done last May as it is typically done just prior to each transaction. FBISD is A rated by both Fitch and Standard & Poor’s.

- What is the rate on commercial paper? It varies depending upon when it is issued. Typically, it is much lower than what is being paid on fixed rates (ex. About 3% -3 ½% maybe higher).

Overall Presentation Questions / Answers / Concern / Comments:

- Do we expect a reduction in size of the school district? Are we expecting this in the next 1-2 years? Recent legislation passed school vouchers entitled “School Choice.” FBISD expects to experience a decline in enrollment. During this school year and the previous enrollment was approximately 1,800 fewer students than anticipated. There will be a period of enrollment stabilization, so FBISD will probably be in the 78,000-enrollment range in the next 3-7 years. The district demographer will provide that information to the Board.

FBISD is going through a long-range school boundary planning review to balance facilities. This will ensure campuses are better utilized for the student population. Therefore, some campuses may close. This will ensure appropriate student ratios are maintained throughout the district. This is a planned process that occurs over a three-year cycle. Therefore, this is reviewed every three years.

FBISD is seeing this trend as other districts across the state and nation are experiencing similar issues. This district is almost “built out” with only a couple of areas of development and that development has slowed. Along with “School Choice,” this is an issue to be dealt with – an almost built-out school district.

On Monday, December 15 at 5 p.m. a special called workshop will be held to hear from the district demographer, outside boundary planner and an architectural firm to discuss the Facility Condition Index (FCI). Draft plans regarding zoning, school closures, etc. will be presented.

- How has the demographer’s projections been in years past? The demographer has been extremely accurate (99.2%) except for the COVID pandemic. Last year and this year were the first times it was off by approximately 2%. Two years does not show a trend, but it can be cause for future concern, especially when Texas has school vouchers.
- Is there a budgetary impact? In the corporate world, the first thing to do when facing something like this is to undergo layoffs. However, teachers are on a Chapter 21 contract which means the district must declare fiscal exigency to do any layoffs of Chapter 21 employees and it is a very rigorous process. This is important because if students do not show, the district still carries the cost of teachers with no revenue from students.

The district recently enacted “disaster pennies” to cover raises for classroom teachers and certain other staff members. Therefore, the tax rate increased for one year only and it will be mandated to decrease. This is a one-time, two-year supplement.

- Is there a plan in place for vacant facilities? Although vacant, there are some costs associated with keeping a building open such as HVAC, security, etc. If the Board deems the property to be “surplus,” it can be sold.
- Do property sales help with finances? Yes, but sales are only a one-time solution that cannot be used on an ongoing basis. These can be used for staff retention supplements, bridge funding gaps, etc.
- Is Texas the only state with “School Choice”? Did demographers take historical data from other states into account? Multiple states have private school vouchers. The legislature expects a 1-3% decline in public school enrollment based on based on the number of private schools in the region. District staff does know that most private schools in Houston are at or near capacity.

Demographers always provide three scenarios – 1) growth, 2) stable, and 3) decline. Data was analyzed and it was determined FBISD would experience approximately a 1% (about 800 students) enrollment loss.

The meeting concluded with appreciation expressed to committee members for their service and continued engagement. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Action Items:

1. Distribution of updated Policy BDF (Local) and Policy CCA (Local), which outline the structure, responsibilities, and expectations for advisory committees within Fort Bend ISD.
2. The district will finalize and publish the advisory committee application in January.
3. Committee members will be notified directly when applications open.
4. Administration will continue the development of the charter and administrative procedures aligned with Board policy.

Links:

- Board Policy Manual – Information concerning policies can be found online at:
 - **BDF (Local)** - <https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=483&code=BDF#localTabContent>
 - **CCA (Local)** - <https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=483&code=CCA#localTabContent>
- Past BOC meeting minutes and presentations are located on the FBISD website at: <https://www.fortbendisd.com/Page/103972>.