Inside Northside
BOARDTalk
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April 28, 2026

Superintendent's Report (Click HERE to view video of the Superintendent's full comments.)

Dr. Craft highlighted a series of milestones and events that showcase the vibrant culture and academic excellence of our district. They included:

- **Educator of the Year Celebrations** were a great success and provided a meaningful opportunity to honor the many wonderful teachers from across our NISD campuses. The 2026 award recipients, beginning with the Northside First-Year Educators of the Year: **Angie Reyes-Gonzales**, a Special Education teacher at **Franklin Elementary School**; **Gabriella Stewart**, a language arts and reading teacher **at Folks Middle School**; and **Kristin Alaniz**, a science teacher at **Harlan High School**. These rising stars are joined by the 2026 Northside Educators of the Year, who include **Melissa Tobias**, a bilingual/dual language teacher at **Burke Elementary School**; **Saul Cepeda**, a science teacher at **Hobby Health Science Magnet Middle School**; and **Patricia Zinn**, a bilingual/dual language teacher at **Clark High School**.
- **Partner of the Year Event** served as a platform to honor and celebrate over 100 campus and district partners whose contributions are vital to our schools.
- **Northside Communication Network** recently held its final session, and district leadership wants to thank all members for their consistent engagement and honest feedback.
- **Student Voice** group will hold its final meeting of the year soon; district leaders continue to deeply appreciate the valuable feedback and perspectives provided by these students.

Board Members' Report (Comments below are summarized. Click HERE to view video of the Trustees' full comments.)

- **Trustee David Salcido** attended an event at **Jay High School**, hosted by the campus PTA, where eligible students were provided the opportunity to register to vote. Inspired by the initiative, Salcido expressed his hope that all district high schools will offer similar opportunities to encourage civic engagement among our students.
- **Trustee Sonia Jasso** attended several Fiesta-related events, including the parades hosted at **Meyers** and **Knowlton** elementary schools. Jasso took a moment to recognize all NISD bus drivers in honor of School Bus Driver Appreciation Day, thanking them for their commitment.
- **Trustee Karla Duran** shared several updates from her recent engagements, highlighting her attendance at both the Educator of the Year and Partners of the Year celebrations, as well as a visit to **Knowlton Elementary**. She extended her gratitude to the student groups who showcased the district's spirit during the Battle of Flowers parade and enjoyed a recent tour at **Health Careers High School** during a Northside Education Foundation event. Additionally, she appreciated the dialogue at a recent Town Hall held at **Ross Middle School**. In honor of Administrative Professionals Day, Trustee Duran thanked all district administrative assistants for their contributions. She concluded her remarks with a moment of silence to honor the memory of **Raba Elementary** day tutor **Donna Wisniewski-Balinsat**, who tragically passed away recently.
- **Trustee Bobby Blount** announced that the Texas Caucus of Black School Board Members recently named **Joe Bishop**, Associate Principal at **Briscoe Middle School**, as their 2026 Administrator of the Year. In addition to celebrating this achievement, Blount extended his gratitude to **Burke Elementary** Principal **Marissa Pena** for her outstanding presentation to the group. The district also celebrated a successful Solar Cars event and the conclusion of the Great San Antonio Reading Challenge. While Freedom Elementary from Southside ISD took home first place, Trustee Blount congratulated the remaining "Final Four" campuses—**Chumbley Elementary**, **Burke Elementary**, and Kriewald Road School of the Arts (Southwest ISD)—for their incredible performance. A special thank you goes to

Zinnia Bayardo and the NISD Library Services team for their vital role in making this reading event a triumph for all involved. Blount expresses his thanks to all the librarians, reading specialists, and teachers for assisting with this program that significantly impacts 3rd grade reading proficiency and academic performance. Additionally, Blount was a judge for the annual **Scarborough** STAAR Pep Rally where each teacher grade entertains students with a lip sync competition. He also attended military appreciation celebrations at **Harlan High School** and **Tomlinson Elementary School.**

- **Trustee Laura Zapata** shared a message of appreciation for the entire NISD community, offering a special shout-out to the dedicated students and teachers and recognizing their hard work.
- **Trustee Karen Freeman** highlighted the impactful partnership between NISD and the Assistance League of San Antonio, noting that the organization's Thrift Shop provides direct and meaningful benefits to students throughout the district. She extended her gratitude to **Sharon Sanchez**, Director of **Grants and Recognitions**, and her team for their diligent coordination of this collaboration. Freeman also shared her positive experience attending the successful Open House at **Kuentz Elementary School**, which was expanded this year to include all grade levels and featured school tours, bus rides, and a modern band presentation; she specifically praised the staff for their excellent management of enrollment and the high attendance from prospective families. Congratulations were extended to **Bobby Blount** for his leadership of two incredible events, Solar Cars and the Great SA Reading Challenge, which alongside the efforts of many others continues to promote literacy and academic excitement for the district's third graders.
- **Trustee Carol Harle** shared several celebrations from across the district, beginning with praise for the successful Free Book Giveaway events to be hosted at **Holmes and Brennan** high schools on April 30. She announced that the Northside Education Foundation (NEF) 5K Fun Run & Walk will be held Saturday, May 2 and celebrated the success of the annual Solar Cars event. Harle also extended her gratitude to the **Fine Arts Department** for showcasing incredible student talent during the Los Leones and Fine Arts Fest events. Special recognition was given to several ALE classes for their creative engagement—specifically for using NEF grant funds to develop a sensory classroom at **Holmes HS** and designing unique Fideo-themed Fiesta medals at **Sotomayor HS**. Special recognition to Sotomayor HS special education teacher **Gina Montemayor** and her students for the media feature highlighting their medal creations. Additionally, she congratulated student **Zachary Carrasco** and the **Taft High School Bike Club** for their featured appearance on a Fiesta parade float, and noted a memorable celebration at **Carnahan Elementary** where King Antonio joined the school's namesake, **Peggy Carnahan**, for Fiesta festivities. Harle expressed gratitude to **Aue ES** for hosting her UT San Antonio students in reading as part of the Great San Antonio Reading competition. Harle commended the **Clark High School** Model UN team for their performance at the Global Classrooms International competition in New York City, where the school earned the 2nd Best Delegation Award. Individual honors were earned by **Dillon Hensen and Yusif Shihadeh for Best Position Paper, while Allyson Appleby, Isabella Perry, Olivia Dilger, Zachary Miller, Allison Pomeroy,** and **Avery Wilson** were recognized as Honorable Delegates. Additionally, **Thomas Greene** and **Alexander Widish** received the prestigious Secretary General's Award for Best Delegates. She congratulated the team's advisor **Kevin Pumphrey, Clark High School** Social Studies Coordinator.

Recognitions

- **UIL Theatrical Design.** The UIL Theatrical Design Contest is a Texas-based University Interscholastic League (UIL) competition that allows students to showcase their artistic vision through the technical aspects of theater. Unlike the One-Act Play contest, which focuses on performance, this competition is centered on the design and conceptualization of a production rather than its live execution. With only 8 state qualifiers from the San Antonio area, six were NISD students.
- **VASE Winners.** NISD art students earned top spots at the 2026 Scholastic Art Awards for the Greater San Antonio region. Out of nearly 32,000 entries submitted statewide, only 151 artworks earn the prestigious Gold Seal distinction, with three NISD students selected for this elite recognition.
- **Speech and Debate State Winners.** Students from **O'Connor, Brandeis,** and **Warren** qualified for the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) Nationals in Richmond, Virginia, which will take place from June 13-20. These students did so through their performance at the NSDA Central Texas Qualifier held at Boerne Champion on February 19-21. Additionally, students from **O'Connor** competed at UIL State Championships for both Student Congress in January and Policy Debate in March.
- **Sotomayor HS Indoor Percussion.** Winter Guard International (WGI) is the world's premier non-profit governing body for indoor percussion and color guard competitions. The competitive season culminates each April with the WGI

World Championships in Dayton, Ohio, which draws more than 15,000 young performers and tens of thousands of spectators. This year, 52 high school percussion groups competed in the Scholarship Open division. After 3 rounds of competition, **Sotomayor** Indoor Percussion was named the WGI Percussion Scholastic Open World Champion.

- **Harlan HS Destination Imagination Team**. The Destination Imagination (DI) team from **Harlan High School** has earned a spot at Global Finals, where they will represent both Harlan and NISD on the world stage. As the only team from NISD and the Central Texas Region to qualify, their achievement is truly exceptional. Global Finals, set for May 21–24 in Kansas City, Missouri, brings together top-performing students from around the globe. Teams showcase their skills through STEAM-based Team and Instant Challenges, highlighting creativity, collaboration, and innovative problem-solving.
- **Taft HS Bowling Team.** For the first time since 2019, a NISD High School Bowling Team brought home the Texas team state title. The **Taft** Raiders won the Varsity Team State Championship!
- **Library Services.** NISD's Library Services has been selected as the Texas Library Association's 2026 Branding Iron Awards Digital Marketing winner for school libraries in recognition of its “Shoutout” Social Media Promotion. The Branding Iron Awards recognize outstanding creativity and excellence in library marketing and public relations projects.
- **Aguila Scholars.** Six NISD students have been named Aguila (Eagle) Scholars by the CECLEF Foundation and recognized for having risen above challenges, staying focused on their goals, and soaring towards opportunity.
- **Board of Trustees Scholarship Recipients.** The NISD Board of Trustees established the Northside Trustee Future Teacher Scholarship last year. The Board will present six scholarships to students planning to enter the teaching profession.
- **2025-2026 NISD Student Ambassadors.** This is the second year of the NISD Student Ambassadors program, which brings together a select group of students, chosen through a rigorous application process, to serve as the "Face and Voice of the District." Facilitated by the Communications Dept., these ambassadors assisted with public relations and communications, representing NISD at school and community events while working alongside NISD Board members and the District’s executive leadership team. Ambassadors gained valuable leadership experience, enhanced communication skills, and positively promoted NISD by engaging with students, families, staff, and the broader community.

Trustees approve administrative appointments:

- **Melissa De Hoyos,** formerly Principal at Locke Hill ES, was appointed **Principal** at **Adams Hill Elementary School.**
- **Candace Maldonado,** formerly Principal at Meadow Village ES, was assigned as **Principal** at **Linton Elementary School.**
- **Ida Hinojosa,** formerly Associate Principal at Linton ES, was assigned as **Associate Principal** at **Beard Elementary School.**
- **Emma Sosa,** formerly Math Specialist at Colonies North ES, was appointed **Associate Principal** at **Northwest Crossing Elementary School.**
- **Corina Ramos,** formerly Administrative Intern at Glass & Martin ES, was appointed **Associate Principal** at **Boone Elementary School.**
- **Jarek Lancaster,** formerly Academic Intervention Teacher at Taft HS, was appointed **Associate Principal** at **Henderson Elementary School.**
- **Vincent Briseño,** formerly Assistant Principal at San Antonio ISD, was appointed **Associate Principal** at **Marshall Law and Medical Services.**
- **Brenda Avery,** formerly Grants Coordinator in the Grants & Recognitions Dept., was appointed **Director of Risk Management.**

Trustees hear report on District Optimization

Trustees heard a report from the Civic Solutions Group (CSG) on their work with NISD on district optimization. The presentation shared the process underway to develop optimization priorities.

Trustees hear report on budget planning for FY2026-27

Megan Bradley, Deputy Superintendent for Business and Finance, gave a status update on the budget planning for FY27. Budget assumptions included a projected student enrollment of 95,461; that no school closures would occur during the 2026-27 school year; and that student-teacher ratios would remain the same at this time. Input

for possible budget reductions was received by campus principals and Cabinet members, as well as a TASB salary study comparing salaries to the market and a stipend review. A Voter-Approved Tax Rate Election (VATRE) was also discussed.

Board approves resolution for after-tax contribution investment plan
The Board approved a resolution to amend the Education Service Center (ESC) Region 10/RAMS 457 Cooperative Master Plan agreement to allow employees to utilize an after-tax contribution investment plan.

Board hears report about retrofitting buses with seatbelts
Per Texas Senate Bill 546, all school busses (owned or contracted) must be equipped with 3-point seat belts for every passenger and the driver, with full compliance required by Sept. 1, 2029. If a District is unable to meet standards due to budget constraints, they must report the estimated costs to TEA by the end of this school year. NISD operates the second largest fleet of school buses in Texas. To retrofit 290 out of the 654 non-compliant buses, it would cost the district around $8.8 million.

Board approves facilities items:

- Contractor for air handler replacements at Locke Hill ES – Comfort-Air Engineering, Inc.
- Contractor for drainage upgrades at Mead ES – RCO Construction, LLC
- Contractors for MAC telecommunications cabling for 2026 summer portables – JLA Communications, LLC
- Contractors for relocations for 2026 summer portables – Dodson House Moving
- Contractors for sidewalk modifications at Boldt ES – R.L. Rohde General Contracting, Inc.

Bids for goods approved
Trustees approved the following bids, awards, and recognition items: food and grocery items for Child Nutrition; semi-truck (cab) and work vehicle rental services; school bus and light truck tires; Brandeis HS band uniforms; and Holmes HS band uniforms. Trustees also approved Purchase Orders to Daktronics for the purchase of replacing video center hung at the Northside Sports Gym. For more information, contact the Purchasing Department at 210-397-8700.

You may mail correspondence to:

Trustees
c/o NISD
5900 Evers Road
San Antonio, TX 78238

You may email them at info@nisd.net.

For additional information, call 210-397-8770.

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Board meeting information
NISD Trustees meet monthly in regular meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month. They may also meet in Called Meetings for workshops, retreats, or to handle routine business. Meetings are held at 6 p.m. in the Board Room, 5900 Evers Road, unless otherwise posted. Meetings are open to the public. Agendas are posted on the NISD website, www.nisd.net. Citizens who wish to address the Board must sign up to speak just before the start of the meeting.

Upcoming School Board Meeting(s): *(See posted agendas on the website as dates, locations, and/or times may change.)*

- May 12, 2026, 6 p.m., Board Room, 5900 Evers Road (Called Board Meeting)
- May 26, 2026, 6 p.m. Board Room, 5900 Evers Road (Regular Board Meeting)
- June 9, 2026, 6 p.m., Board Room, 5900 Evers Road (Called Board Meeting)
- June 23, 2026, 6 p.m., Board Room, 5900 Evers Road (Regular Board Meeting)