



## **Political Watch Committee**

**Arlington, Texas**

A combined Committee of Members of the Arlington Republican Club and  
the Republican Women of Arlington

Report #25

July 2026

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### **National Offices (by Dr. Mark Hanson)**

#### **Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)**

As you know, Senator **Cornyn** lost the Republican Primary to Ken **Paxton**. He has not endorsed **Paxton** but has not been publicly hostile either. Only time will tell if he will endorse before the November election.

In the past few months, **Cornyn** has authored or promoted several important items:

- Promoting the **CHIPS Act/CHIPS for America**, promoting the US over China in the Artificial intelligence war.
- Co-chaired a Drug Caucus hearing focused on national security threats posed by Mexican drug cartels.
- Introduced the **SABER Act** to help bolster Ukraine's defense arsenal using seized Russian sovereign assets.
- Introduced the reauthorization of the **POWER ON Act** to strengthen



Senator Cornyn (L) lost the Primary to Ken Paxton.

electric grid reliability/resilience against extreme weather and wildfires.

- Introduced the ***Eliminate Peoples Republic of China Organized Crime Act*** targeting PRC-linked influence via organized crime in Latin America.
- Helped secure Senate passage of the ***CLEAR Path Act*** to mitigate foreign influence on U.S. policymaking, which bans high-level former officials from lobbying for countries of concern.

**Cornyn** is proud of having confirmed 45 federal court judges (he is a senior member of the Senate Judiciary Committee) and 500 civilian nominees. Well done!

### Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)

Senator Ted **Cruz** is working with Ken **Paxton** to help get him elected US Senator.



Senator Cruz is working hard in the Senate

**Cruz** applauded the appointment of Aaron **Reitz** as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Texas. **Reitz** is a promising rising star in the Republican Party. Many of us met him in Arlington during his Attorney General campaign earlier this year. He is impressive and we will see him in the future!

Senator **Cruz** has been quite active in the Senate:

- He chaired a Judiciary subcommittee hearing titled ***Impeachment: Holding Rogue Judges Accountable*** and urged impeachment of Judges **Boasberg** and **Boardman**. These judges are always partisan and always rule against President **Trump**.
- As Senate Commerce Committee Chairman, **Cruz** is very proud of his bipartisan (co-authored by Maria **Cantwell** (D-WA)) ***Protect College Sports Act***, which advanced out of committee (19–9) and will be forwarded to the full Senate with passage very likely to happen. Even Coach Nick Saban is for it! This bill regulates NCAA College sports, including NIL, revenue sharing, transfer of athletes and unify standards across conferences, athlete compensation, etc.
- He is introducing the ***Mandatory E-Verify Act of 2026***. This measure will require employers to verify prospective employees are eligible to work in the US before hiring them.
- He introduced, with Senator Ron **Wyden** (D-OR), the ***JAWBONE Act***, formally known as the Justice Against Weaponized Bureaucratic Overreach and Expression Act. This bill would hold the government accountable for censorship and violation of the first amendment. It makes it easier for US citizens to sue over federal infringements of free-speech rights. We know that the **Biden** administration weaponized government to pressure Big Tech in canceling Americans who spoke out against vaccine

mandates and election fraud.

- He issued statements after the Senate passed **TREY'S Law** (Terminating Restrictive Enforcement of Youth Settlements) to protect child sexual assault victims. He worked with Kirsten **Gillebrand** (D-NY) and others to pass this bill.
- He delivered remarks as the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to pass the **Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program Expansion Act of 2026**.
- He issued statements, with Senator **Durbin** (D-IL), after Senate passage of a bipartisan resolution urging action to secure the release of political prisoners in China.
- He introduced the **Army Organic Industrial Base Mineral Partnerships Act of 2026** (with Senator **Cornyn**) targeting lithium supply-chain partnerships.
- He introduced the **No FED in West Texas Act** to prevent federal land overreach.
- He joined an effort to introduce a bill to prevent Treasury from requiring small businesses to collect personal information, which would be very costly.
- He filed a joint Artemis II resolution, again with Maria **Cantwell** (D-WA), lauding the mission's success on going to the moon.

Senator **Cruz** is very pro-Israel and has criticized some of the President's overtures to Iran. He is also wary of being too nice to China.

Senator **Cruz** is always working and is seen by us as being extremely conservative. He verbally calls the Democrat Party radicalized, calls the NY City mayor "Comrade", and says Democrat Senate candidate **Talarico** is "dangerous." But somehow, he finds a way to find common ground on bills with Democrats in DC.

Oh, and he's running for the presidency in 2028.

### **Representative Jake Ellzey (R-CD6)**

Representative Jake **Ellzey** announced that the House Appropriations Committee had completed work on all **12 FY-2027 funding bills**, an important step in the federal appropriations. **Ellzey** is a key member of this committee and is important to our area.

**Ellzey** maintains an active role in Congress and has sponsored or co-sponsored several bills. A major relevant action was **Ellzey's** support for the **Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026**. He believes that Texas farmers and



Jake Ellzey is a key member of the House Appropriations Committee

ranchers need improved access to credit, stronger risk-management tools, support for agricultural research, and investments in rural communities. The bill also strengthens agricultural exports and rural development.

### Representative Roger Williams (R-CD25)



Roger Williams works for small businesses

Representative Roger **Williams** helped hold a full committee hearing titled ***AI on Main Street: How AI is Shaping the Future of Small Business***. He also held a full committee hearing titled ***250 Years of American Legacy: Small Businesses and the American Dream***. **Williams** held a full committee hearing titled ***From Startup to Scale: The Role of the SBA Office of Investment and Innovation in Powering America's Small Businesses***.

Representative Williams has also been very active recently:

- **Williams** introduced the ***Bulletproof Law Enforcement Vehicles Act*** to allow federal funds for law-enforcement vehicle security upgrades (including bulletproof windows).
- He introduced HR 4828, the ***Blue Shield Privacy Act*** seeking to protect law enforcement officers and their families from doxing attacks.
- He led a letter to Health and Human Services urging expedited treatments to prevent a **New World screwworm** outbreak in sheep and goats.
- He is also active in supporting the modernization of the electric grid.
- He is a strong proponent of Trump Accounts for our youth.

### State Offices (by David Rakes)

In our previous report we highlighted the three state runoff elections that were held on May 26<sup>th</sup>. We are pleased to report that all three races went in a favorable direction for conservatives. Former Texas Senator Mayes **Middleton** defeated US Representative Chip **Roy** for Attorney General. In the race for Railroad Commissioner, former Tarrant County GOP Chair Bo **French** bested incumbent Jim **Wright**. Finally, in the election for the Judge for the Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 3, Thomas **Smith** defeated Alison **Fox**. We are pleased with these results, as all three show promise of fighting for and upholding our conservative principles.

Now that we have selected our Republican candidates for the fall mid-term elections, we need to focus our efforts on winning in November. It's great to get conservative candidates nominated, but we must also get them elected!

In this report we focus on our Arlington representatives. They are:

## Texas Senate

**Taylor Rehmet (D – SD9)** – This seat was formerly held by Kelly **Hancock** (R), but is now occupied by Democrat Taylor **Rehmet**, who defeated Republican Leigh **Wambsganss** in a very light turnout in a special election in January to replace **Hancock**. Since the legislature has not met this year, **Rehmet** hasn't had any official duties yet. This seat is up for a normal election in November and **Wambsganss** will again face **Rehmet** in a more meaningful election, a full mid-term election as opposed to a runoff, and the winner of that race will assume the office for the next legislative session. We must work to win this race and flip the seat back to the Republicans.



Republican Leigh Wambsganss (Right) gets another shot at defeating Taylor Rehmet in November

**Phil King (R – SD10)** – Phil **King** holds this seat and is a solid conservative.



Senator Phil King Chairs the Senate Select Committee on Religious Liberty

While not up for election this year, **King** was appointed by Lt. Governor Dan **Patrick** to Chair the Senate Select Committee on Homeland and Border Security. This committee is examining the use of drones and their impact on public safety. While drones can be used by law enforcement to great effect, they can also be used in nefarious ways by drug cartels to monitor or even attack US Border Security.

**King** is also Vice Chair of the Senate Business & Commerce Committee. In this role, **King** and the committee have met to discuss emerging trends in blockchain technology (think Bitcoin) and cryptocurrency. They also received an update from the Broadband Development Office on the efforts to expand high-speed internet across Texas.

In our previous report we noted that Lt. Governor Dan **Patrick** created a Senate Select Committee on Religious Liberty, and Senator **King** is the chairman of this committee. **Patrick** reported on the 12 recommendations from the National Committee, and noted areas that Texas lawmakers should consider, such as training for educators regarding students' rights, protections for faith-based charities, healthcare conscience protections, and several others.

**Brian Birdwell (R – SD22)** – This seat is technically vacant since Brian **Birdwell** was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Army for Sustainment on May 26<sup>th</sup>. In the November election, Republican David **Cook** will vie for this seat with Democrat Amy **Martinez-Salas**. **Cook** is currently in the Texas House as the representative of House District 96.



House member David Cook will vie for the Senate seat vacated by Brian Birdwell

**Royce West (D – SD23)** – Royce **West** has served in the Texas Senate since 1993 and has been a liberal leader during his time. He is the Vice Chair of the Transportation Committee, and serves on the Economic Development, Education, Finance, Higher Education, and Local Government committees. In March of this year, **West** held a press conference to discuss litigation regarding the Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) program, which is intended to advocate for minority- and women-owned businesses.



Democrat Royce West is unopposed in the November Election

## Texas House

**Salmon Bhojani (D – HD92)** – Salmon **Bhojani** was first elected to the Texas House in 2022 and has served two terms. He was born in Pakistan, immigrated to Texas as a teenager, and was one of the first Muslims elected to the Texas House.

**Bhojani** served as Vice Chair of the Delivery of Government Efficiency Committee, and was a member of the Trade, Workforce, and Economic Development Committee, as well as the Workforce Subcommittee.



Salmon Bhojani is one of the first Muslims in the Texas House

In November, **Bhojani** will face Republican challenger JP **Woodruff** for this seat.

**Tony Tinderholt (R – HD94)** – Tony **Tinderholt** held this seat since he was first elected in 2014. He has been a conservative stalwart, which sometimes alienated him from his fellow Republicans. He is not running for re-election as he is a candidate for County Commissioner, hoping to replace radical Democrat Alissa **Simmons**.



Cheryl Bean is running for the open seat in HD94. (Shown here with Nate Schatzline)

In the November election, Republican Cheryl **Bean** will face Democrat Katie O'Brien **Duzan**.

**David Cook (R – HD96)** – David **Cook** was first elected to the Texas House in 2020 and has served three terms. He now prepares to vie for the Texas Senate seat vacated by Brian **Birdwell** (SD22). The former mayor of Mansfield, **Cook** is perhaps best known as having earned the Republican caucus vote to be Speaker of the House in the most recent session. He was thwarted by a coalition of moderate Republicans who broke with the caucus and joined with Democrats to elect Dustin **Burrows**, the hand-picked successor to Dade **Phelan**. With the conservative



Republican Ellen Fleischmann will vie for HD96 in November

momentum working against him, **Burrows** allowed some conservative measures be taken in the House, but blocked or watered-down more Republican priorities.

In the November mid-term election, Republican Ellen **Fleischmann** is running against liberal Democrat Ebony **Turner**.

**Chris Turner (D – HD101)** – Eight-term incumbent Chris **Turner** will no longer represent HD101. He surprisingly lost his primary to radical Junior **Ezeonu**. The former leader of the Democrat caucus has been such a fixture in his district that no Republican even entered the race in this year's primary. This means that **Ezeonu** will be the next HD101 Representative. The former Grand Prairie City Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem has already earned a reputation as a radical Democrat despite his youth. He advocates for a higher minimum wage (kills entry-level jobs), throwing money at public schools (despite no direct correlation between spending and education quality), expanding free healthcare, and is anti-oil and gas.



Activist Junior Ezeonu will be the next HD101 Representative

### Other State News

Although Texas Senate Bill 840 (SB840) was passed in the previous legislative session (2025), it does have an impact on Arlington. It says that cities shall allow multifamily and mixed-use residential housing to be developed in areas that are currently zoned commercial or industrial. The law prevents eligible cities from requiring zoning changes or holding public hearings for this type of development. This applies only to Texas cities with a population greater than 150,000 that are located in counties with more than 300,000. Apartments can be built on any land that is currently zoned Commercial or Industrial without any approval from the Planning and Zoning Board, City Council, or most importantly, the residents of Arlington. It also reduced lot sizes to allow for Tiny Home development.

SB 840 passed the Senate on March 24, 2025, with a vote of 23 FOR and seven AGAINST. Thank you Kelly **Hancock** (R-SD9), Phil **King** (R-SD10), and Mayes **Middleton** (R-HD23) for voting against this neighborhood-destroying bill.

SB 840 passed the House on May 21, 2025 with a vote of 106 FOR and 33 AGAINST. There were only 18 Republicans who voted AGAINST. We have six of those right here in Tarrant County that truly represented us when they voted. Republican Representatives David **Lowe** (R-HD91), Nate **Schatzline** (R-HD93), Tony **Tinderholt** (R-HD94), David **Cook** (R-HD96), Giovanni **Capriglione** (R-HD98), and Charlie **Geren** (R-HD99) voted AGAINST the bill, while John **McQueeney** (R-HD97) voted FOR it.

Tarrant County has good representation with Representatives and Senators that care about their constituents.

## County Offices *(by Steve Eklund)*

The Tarrant County DNC chair, Allison **Campolo**, stated that the centrists and the progressive Democrats have set aside their differences to build a united coalition to get their candidates across the finish line in November. One of the Democrat front runners, far-left James Talarico (D) has reported over \$40 million in campaign donations as of July 4 for his race against Ken **Paxton** (R) for U.S. Senator. **Paxton** has raised approximately \$8.1 million.

The TCGOP midterm elections will focus on \$3.5 million in donations in its unified campaign.

Alisa **Simmons** (D-Commissioners Court Precinct 2) is running against incumbent Judge Tim **O'Hare** (R) in the November 3<sup>rd</sup> midterms. As reported by the Texas Scorecard, **Simmons** was an outspoken critic of the Republican redistricting plan championed by **O'Hare**, calling the new map and anybody who voted for it "racists." Precinct 2 was redrawn in June 2025 to favor Republicans, which would give the GOP a 4-1 partisan advantage on the county's governing body. To maintain Tarrant County as the last red Republican metropolitan county in the state, all conservative advantages must be utilized! And the judge seat of the County Commissioners Court must remain in Republican hands!



After a successful first term, Judge Tim O'Hare is seeking re-election

Jared **Williams** (D) stepped down in 2025 after four years on the Fort Worth city council representing the southwest part of the city to challenge state Representative Tony **Tinderholt** for Precinct 2 on the County Commissioners Court.



State Representative Tony Tinderholt looks to flip a seat on the Commissioners Court

A Commissioners Court resolution to support the Health Education Learning Project (HELP) to establish a Help Center for LGBTQ+ Health, which failed along party lines. Three Republicans voted against and two Democrats voted for the resolution. Republicans do not support a resolution to honor the Trinity and Arlington Pride festivals, which supports transitioning of children.

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Tarrant County Sheriff Bill **Waybourn** opened the newly renovated Law Enforcement Training Academy. Sheriff **Waybourn**, Commissioner **Ramerez**, and Judge **O'Hare** led the charge to make the renovated training facility a reality. This academy will train the best and brightest, helping to keep Tarrant County safe and prosperous.

The County Commissioners Court passed a Resolution recognizing the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Independence. It passed by three ayes and two abstentions. Alisa **Simmons** (D) and Roderick **Miles**, Jr. (D) abstained! So American patriotism and independence cannot be supported by Democrats? Why is that?

**Resolution Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the  
United States of America**

WHEREAS, on July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress, comprised of fifty-six patriots, adopted the Declaration of Independence, boldly affirming that all people are endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights and launching the great American experiment of liberty, self-government, and human dignity; and

WHEREAS, the principles that shaped America are founded in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which affirms that human liberty is gifted by the Almighty God, as acknowledged by the Ten Commandments Monument on the 1895 Historic Tarrant County Courthouse; and

WHEREAS, the United States was founded as a constitutional republic and the Constitution of the United States stands as one of the greatest governing documents in human history, establishing a framework of limited government, separation of powers, individual liberty, self-defense, and the rule of law that has preserved freedom and prosperity for generations of Americans; and

WHEREAS, the continued success of the United States depends not only upon its institutions, but upon the character, virtue, and civic responsibility of its citizens, who are called to preserve the blessings of liberty for future generations. As John Adams said, “our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other”; and

WHEREAS, Tarrant County reaffirms its deep and enduring support for the men and women of the United States Armed Forces—honoring their sacrifice, supporting their families, and upholding the values of duty, courage, and devotion to country that have safeguarded the blessings of freedom for 250 years; and

WHEREAS, celebrating 250 years offers a unique opportunity for all Americans to celebrate our shared heritage and consider the pledge of the signers of the Declaration as we too can pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor for the greatest nation the world has ever known; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Commissioners Court of Tarrant County, do hereby celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America, honoring the legacy of our Founders, the sacrifices of those who have defended our freedoms, and the enduring strength of the American people; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage all residents to participate in semiquincentennial celebrations, reflect on the responsibilities of citizenship, and join in gratitude for the nation we are privileged to call home.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and caused the Seal of Tarrant County to be affixed this the 9<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2026.

## ***City Offices – City Council Meetings (by Richard Weber)***

Voters elected Jason **Shelton** (over Melody **Fowler**) in the June District 8 Runoff Election. The May 2<sup>nd</sup> Election did not have anyone receive over 50% (Ms. Fowler leading a pack of three) causing the need for the June Runoff Election.

At the June 9<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting the council voted 4-5, failing to approve zoning at approximately 7600 U.S. 287 Highway (and other addresses) for low-income apartments. At the June 23<sup>rd</sup> City Council meeting the council voted 6-3 to reconsider and then 6-3 to approve those very same low-income apartments. (They somehow decided the best use of that land was low-income apartments.)



Jason Shelton beat Melody Fowler in a runoff for a seat on the Arlington City Council

[Commentary: In my coverage of two decades-plus of city council meetings a “reconsideration” has occurred less than a handful of times. When the council votes they know what they are voting on and there is rarely a change of the thought pattern.

The last time a reconsideration was used was in 2021 to expedite a new zoning case. In 2021 the developer wanted straight zoning for RM-12 (townhomes) on a small lot of land (just over half an acre) and was denied 4-4-1 because straight zoning cannot be “restricted” by the council and that zoning would have allowed for short-term rentals. So at the meeting following the failed vote the council reconsidered it and allowed for a public hearing for a planned development (NOT a total reversal of the decision as in 2026) instead of straight zoning where the council could restrict/deny any short-term rental use.

There are nine council members. District 8 **Odom-Wesley** voted in support on June 9<sup>th</sup> and the newest council member, Jason **Shelton**, also voted in support on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Of the other eight votes, four of the eight changed their vote. Those four did what next to never happens on the same vote. Is there a stench in Arlington? I believe so. Are there backroom deals going on? I believe so. Is there money being passed under the table? I do NOT know, but it certainly would not surprise me if it were true.

Mr. **Galante** said he changed his vote because he had supported the resolution of support for the 9% tax credit earlier in the year. However, when considering zoning, if the proposed use does not fit the site, that should outweigh any prior resolution of support – especially one made before the zoning issues were studied. In my opinion, Mr. **Galante** was wrong to use that as a reason for changing his vote. Still, at least he offered an explanation, even if it was a weak one.

That leaves Mr. **Ware** and Mr. **Pham** sitting in the middle of this large pile of dung. No reason given; just stupidity at work. Evidently, they would appear to believe

that low-income apartments are what is needed to Make Arlington Great Again. They are so wrong!

Arlington already has one of the highest, if not the highest, densities of the North Central Texas Council of Government (NCTCOG) area. Our density is far greater than Dallas or Fort Worth. IT IS NOT OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GO OUT OF OUR WAY TO HOUSE FUTURE GROWTH AND CONSEQUENTLY OVERLOAD OUR INFRASTRUCTURE!!! You will often hear city management talk of the lack of Arlington's "green" space instead of the high cost of expensive redevelopment, yet this is what our council allowed to be put there.

Tom **Ware**, Mauricio **Galante**, and Long **Pham** should be ashamed of themselves and the ridiculous reasons they might use to justify changing their opposition to this trash. They seem to prefer backroom deals over what is best for Arlington.

#### **Other items:**

The council's transportation committee gave the go ahead on raising fare rates for handi-tran when one of the points is NOT in Arlington. Arlington taxpayers greatly subsidize these fares and with budget shortfalls it is time to fix a problem. Though they gave the OK, it will be possibly 4-8 months before the plan is actually put into ordinances because of many requirements.

The developer of "The Knox", low-income apartments along Watson Road in east Arlington, has run into a funding gap issue, and the city is looking at several ways to help, which would include the cutting of the permit fees that would go to the city.

The downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) was extended 20 years (even though it was not scheduled to expire until 2038). Basically how a TIRZ works is the area contributes to the general fund at old (in this case 1998) prices and values, and the difference is put in a fund controlled by the TIRZ board, which can now get their projects funded vs. having to compete for funding in the general fund where the money would/should have been going.

August is the month of many, many budget agenda items and discussions. There are town halls on the budget scheduled on August 13 (South Police Center) and August 26 (City Council Chambers). The official public hearings for the budget and tax rate and the approval will be in September.

#### ***Arlington ISD (by Jan Tyler)***

On May 2, 2026, the local elections included two school board places, 6 and 7, and a bond election with three propositions. Places 6 and 7 retained the incumbent members. Six of the current members have been on the Board for three or more years. The 7<sup>th</sup> member, Larry **Mike**, is beginning his third year.



Larry Mike is bringing transparency to the AISD School Board

- Proposition A (\$438M for building and maintenance) passed.
- Proposition B (\$45M for technology) passed.
- Proposition C (\$31M for turf replacement and athletic related needs) failed.

The Citizens Bond Oversight Committee suggested options on how to continue to pursue the needed Prop C items.

- Option 1: they could not take any action and just put items on HOLD,
- Option 2: use the 2019 bond interest money (\$45M) to purchase the items,
- Option 3: put Prop C on the ballot in November or some future election, or
- Option 4: expand the proposition to additional athletic needs.

These options and others were discussed by the Board members, and action will be determined at a future time. The approved budget for 2026-27 is \$656M in expenditures and \$596M in revenues. The AISD School District has approved a deficit budget each year since 2022-23.

### **New Demographic Study Indicates Changes Must Be Addressed**

This Spring, the Board was presented with an updated Demographic Study done by Population and Survey Analysts (PASA). It supplied data that presents the district with a challenging mandate to make changes that require hard decisions or face financial jeopardy. AISD enrollment is down by 12,000 students since 2015-16 school year. The number of employees has stayed at or around 8200, since 2018-19. PASA reports that by 2033 the enrollment could be 43,000. With the declining enrollment, the Board realizes by the data that it will likely necessitate school closures and personnel changes. Some schools could see their functional facility usage drop below 50%. Hale, Miller, Beckham, and Patrick Elementaries are below 50% currently. We have 53 elementary buildings and in 5 years, we may only need 30. The challenge gets more critical when the budget numbers are examined. To be in financial compliance with TEA they must keep a Reserve Fund equal to 90 days of operating expenses. The Reserve Fund in 2025 had 152 days of funding. In 2026 the fund had 133 days of funds. The projection for 2027 is 107 days of funding reserves. The Board is very concerned about fast approaching the 90 day limit for operational fund reserves.

The Board has taken the following actions to begin their task to align revenues and expenditures:

- May 7<sup>th</sup>, Superintendent Matt **Smith**, announced a reorganization of positions that would cut the budget by \$9M. The cuts are set to not impact classroom teaching positions. The affected employees have received their notices.
- June 16<sup>th</sup>, four options were presented to the Board for consideration for employee compensation. Option 1 passed unanimously for 0% salary adjustments. Sometime this school year a Healthcare Clinic Network for employees, those participating in the



Superintendent Matt Smith announced cuts in order to trim the budget deficit

Premium District Wellness Program, will get an additional \$28.25 for Platinum participants, and the Special Education Specialized Program stipend will increase by \$500.

**Virtual Learning** will be implemented this school year, since data shows that attendance in other districts is increasing. They hope it will increase enrollment and revenues. Two programs are offered for the secondary level only. The first offering is live instruction on-line at Arlington College and Career High School through Tarrant County College. Students can earn college hours free while working on their high school diploma. A second offering is available to ONLY Juniors and Seniors in high school. It is a hybrid mix of a few classes on-line at their own pace at home, while also attending campus-based classes. The instruction will be provided by Edmentum Ed Options Academy.

June 16<sup>th</sup>, the Board voted to **transition 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the Junior High schools**. Trustees **Fowler** and **Wilbanks** voted against the move. The Board realizes that this will take much planning and feels it is a good decision based on what is best for the students. This move for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> to be in one building should realize an 80-100% utilization for the Junior High buildings.

The district continues to do a good job of advertising the positive educational opportunities in AISD and also the successful student outcomes. They have a campaign to bring students back from Charter Schools. They survey parents, students, and staff about their experiences in AISD. They realize that our enrollment and daily attendance affect our revenues.

### **Additional Board Reports**

Dr. Michael **Hill** reported some considerations for the Code of Conduct. The committee suggests adding “pantsing” as a violation whether with or without exposure, prohibit performing or allowing body piercing or tattoos at school, and prohibit taking photos or videos in unauthorized areas. No action was taken at this meeting.

Dr. **Champion** reported the End-of-Year 2025-26 assessments for Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades in Reading and Math. The number represents the percent of district students who met the standard score for the grade level. The Reading assessment was mClass and Math assessment was NWEA MAP.

- Kindergarten: Reading 71% met the standard; Math 68% met the standard
- First Grade: Reading 68%; Math 57%
- Second Grade: Reading 66%; Math 45%



Dr. Bret Champion is the Chief Schools Officer for AISD

The annual required report for the Optional Flexible School Day Program that is offered by AISD was given. The schools that offer this program are Venture High School, Arlington College and Career High School, and Arlington Collegiate High

School. They offer classes to accommodate students who have special needs for classes in the evening, weekends, or extended day hours. The purpose for this program is to help students receive their high school diplomas when they have qualifying circumstances. One must apply for this program.

### **Texas State Board of Education**

On June 26, 2026, the State Board of Education added Bible stories and passages to a required reading list for K-12 students that contains 200 classical works across all the grades. Bible stories will be required beginning in 1<sup>st</sup> grade with picture book stories like “David & Goliath” and “Daniel in the Lion’s Den.” By 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will encounter New Testament passages. High School students will read selections from Job, Genesis, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This mandate is set to begin in the elementary grades in 2030.



SBOE member Brandon Hall helped fight to restore Biblical values to the curriculum

The SBOE also adopted a new K-12 Social Studies curriculum that focuses on Texas and U.S. History in chronological order. The new TEKS (Texas Essential Learning Skills) will strongly support the factual events both positive and negative that make-up the history of our country and state. The new TEKS and reading list will spotlight the fact that America is a Christian Nation under God.

### **Final Thoughts**

You can go to [Arlington ISD Board Meetings](#) to watch live meetings, usually held on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 7 pm. The next meeting is July 30, 2026. The meetings are archived, so you can always watch them at your convenience.

Only 15,000 voters participated in the May 2<sup>nd</sup> election. They decided for our city of 400,000 how our schools will be governed. Our schools are rated “C” by the state. I am not satisfied with that rating. I can’t help asking why all of the shortfalls have not been addressed before now. Trustee Larry **Mike**, who has the least amount of tenure on the Board, is asking good questions with an intention to address the issues that face the Board. Check out his Facebook page “[Larry Mike for AISD School Board](#)” and get some additional graphical data concerning our district.

## ***Mansfield ISD (34% of MISD students live in Arlington) (by Keziah Farrar)***

### **Mansfield ISD Adopts 2026–2027 Budget**

The Mansfield ISD Board of Trustees recently approved the district's budget for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. The adopted budget includes investments in employee compensation, additional support for special education, and increased contributions toward employee health insurance.

At the same time, the board approved a **deficit budget**, meaning the district plans to spend more than it expects to receive in revenue during the coming fiscal year.

According to the adopted budget, Mansfield ISD projects **\$503.5 million in total revenues** while budgeting **\$528.1 million in total expenditures**, resulting in an overall budget deficit of approximately **\$24.6 million**. The district plans to cover that shortfall by using existing fund balances.

The district's **General Fund**, which supports the day-to-day operations of our schools, including teacher salaries, classroom instruction, transportation, utilities, and campus operations, reflects the largest gap. General Fund revenues are projected at **\$391.7 million**, while expenditures are budgeted at **\$415.3 million**, creating a projected operating deficit of approximately **\$23.6 million** before transfers.



Superintendent Kimberly Cantu and the MISD Trustees are facing another budget deficit

District leadership has emphasized that Mansfield ISD maintains healthy reserves and expects to end the fiscal year with approximately **\$69.3 million in the General Fund balance** and **\$156.3 million across all operating funds**. Those reserves provide financial stability and allow the district to absorb short-term budget shortfalls.

While maintaining reserves is an important component of responsible financial management, deficit spending cannot become a permanent budgeting strategy. Long-term fiscal sustainability requires recurring revenues to support recurring expenditures.

Like many school districts across Texas, Mansfield ISD continues to face significant financial challenges due to inflation, rising operating costs, and a state school finance system that has not kept pace with increased expenses. As these challenges continue, taxpayers should expect transparency, accountability, and careful stewardship of public funds as district leaders work toward restoring structural balance in future budgets.

Political Watch Committee (PWC) members are members of the [Arlington Republican Club](#) and the Republican Women of Arlington (RWA): Steve Eklund, Dr. Mark Hanson, David Rakes, Richard Weber, Jan Tyler, and Keziah Farrar.

A link to this report may also be found on the [Arlington SPECTATOR website](#). The SPECTATOR provides in depth analysis of Arlington city politics and is run by Richard Weber.

Disclaimer: The reporting and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the official policies and agenda of the Arlington Republican Club (ARC), nor those of the Republican Women of Arlington (RWA). This report draws information from other media and agency sources. These include school board and city council sites, as well as media sites such as Arlington Spectator and UTA's The Shorthorn.

If you want to send a “**Letter to the Editor**” or just your comments regarding this report, please send it to: [eklundastephen@yahoo.com](mailto:eklundastephen@yahoo.com). Thanks!

