



October 22, 2023

By Brady Keane

My family moved to Bandera in January of 2007.

I was a fourth-grade student in Aubrey ISD at the time, and loved where we had been living. I had a great group of friends, was involved in youth sports in the area, and was not particularly keen on the idea of packing up and moving across the state to the Cowboy Capital of the World. Little did I know at the time just how important the community of Bandera would become to our family.

My two brothers and I flourished in Bandera ISD as we had the opportunity to participate in such a wide variety of extracurricular activities that expanded our educational experience. I had the opportunity to begin a professional journalism career at the age of 14 because of the journalism classes offered at BHS. My brother Brendan was a national qualifier in Business Professionals of America and traveled to different parts of the country to compete on a national stage thanks to the BPA program offered at BHS. Brendan, the 2016 valedictorian, used his experience in the band at BHS to help him join the nationally recognized marching band at the University of Notre Dame, where he got to perform on some of the biggest stages of college

football. My youngest brother Aidan did a little bit of everything thanks to the small-town values promoted by our district, competing in five varsity sports and using his time with the BHS soccer program to fuel a collegiate athletic career at McMurry University.

Aidan and I are back in Bandera now as teachers and coaches, committing ourselves to helping the youth in our community pursue the same opportunities the district provided for our family just a few years ago.

This district, and its students are important to us.

I was disappointed by the failure of the Bandera ISD school bond in the spring, but I understood the concern of our community in regard to the potential tax rate increase the initial proposal would have on taxpayers. I was thrilled when the bond committee immediately went right back to the drawing board and came up with an even stronger proposal, this time with no tax rate increase for its constituents, while still addressing a host of major issues our schools face daily.

The updated bond addresses district wide safety, security, and student career prep. The bond committee, which included local citizens, parents, grandparents, students, teachers, staff, and business and community leaders, has a proposal in place that will help bring district wide safety and security updates, a brand-new career and technical education center, long overdue HVAC systems at Hill Country and Alkek Elementary, and ADA compliance.

According to the Texas Education Agency, a “district's property tax rate consists of a maintenance and operations (M&O) tax rate and, if applicable, an interest and sinking (I&S) tax rate. The M&O tax rate provides funds for maintenance and operations. The I&S tax rate provides funds for payments on the debt that finances a district's facilities.”

The Bandera ISD school board is fresh off lowering the district's total tax rate in September from \$0.9784 per \$100 valuation down to \$0.793 per \$100 valuation.

The 2023 M & O tax rate in Bandera ISD will be \$0.6692 per \$100 and the 2023 I&S tax rate in Bandera ISD will be \$0.1238 per \$100 for the 2023-24 school year.

The most recent information available for other nearby districts shows that Bandera ISD has now ensured its taxpayers pay a lower tax rate than those in nearby Devine ISD, Hondo ISD, Lytle ISD, Medina Valley ISD, D'Hanis ISD, Natalia ISD, Northside ISD, Kerrville ISD, Boerne ISD and Utopia ISD. In fact, Bandera ISD's 2023 tax rate will be among the lowest state-wide. The Texas Education Agency (<https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/state-funding/additional-finance-resources/school-district-property-values-and-tax-rates>) shows only 18 of 1,032 school districts with a total tax rate under \$0.8236 per \$100 valuation for 2022-2023, most of which are charter or magnet schools.

Passing the updated bond requires no increase of the district's tax rate, meaning taxpayers will pay the same amount of property taxes applicable to the school district regardless of whether or not the bond proposal is approved. Further, the school district does not, has not and will never raise your property values - that is the Appraisal District.

Early voting begins Monday, Oct. 23 and ends on Nov. 3. Election Day is Nov. 7.

As a Bandera High School graduate and now a teacher back on campus, I urge you to consider the improvements this will bring to our students' educational atmosphere. We have the ability to improve the opportunities afforded to our students, setting our future leaders up for success in the community of their choosing.