

EDUCATION



The VISD Board of Trustees approved a Bible literature course for the 2026-2027 school year at a Nov. 20 meeting. (John-Mark Smith on Pexels photo)

DIVINE CURRICULUM

Victoria ISD Board approves optional Bible literature course

MICHAEL MILLIORN

In January, the Victoria Independent School District (VISD) Board of Trustees voted against offering a Bible literature course for the 2025-2026 school year. After continued interest in making the class available as an elective, the Board revisited the proposal during its regularly scheduled meeting on Nov. 20.

The trustees unanimously approved offering the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament course for the 2026-2027 school year as an Independent Study in English/Dual Credit class. The course will be an optional elective offered through Victoria College.

District 2 trustee Bridgette Marshall was absent from the Nov. 20 meeting and did not participate in the vote.

According to school officials, a major reason the board voted against the course in January was the lack of developed training that was required for a district instructor to teach the course. The class that was approved in November will be offered as a dual credit course.

Dual credit instructors are not required to hold the same credentials as a VISD teacher, Jake Salcines, VISD chief of secondary schools, said. College professors operate under college-level faculty qualification standards and do not need to meet public school certification requirements.

“While traditional educators must hold state-issued teaching certificates, dual credit instructors are typically qualified based on advanced academic degrees or industry expertise as determined by the partnering college or university,” Salcines said. “This distinction ensures students receive instruction aligned with higher education expectations while still earning high school credit.”

A new opinion issued by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton played a role in the reevaluation of the course as well. In a Nov. 17 opinion, Paxton addressed the inclusion of religious texts in state curriculum.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) must establish the essential knowledge and skills (TEKS) related to the study of religious literature in Texas public schools.

“This will provide guidance on what students are expected to learn

while ensuring alignment with state educational standards,” Salcines said.

VISD does not currently offer any courses focused on the study of other religious texts. Students may still engage with content related to other religious traditions and texts in existing courses, such as world history.

All courses offered by VISD must align with state-approved course offerings. The state course list currently includes a limited selection of religious studies courses.

State approved courses focused on specific religious literatures include Special Topics in Social Studies: New Testament, Special Topics in Social Studies: Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and New Testament and Special Topics in Social Studies: Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament).

VISD has yet to receive significant feedback regarding the offering of the course. As students begin registering for next year’s classes, a clearer understanding of the overall interest in the course will be more apparent.

Michael Milliorn is a news reporter for the Victoria Advocate. He can be reached at michael.milliorn@vicad.com.

WATER



Unfiltered water from the tap in Victoria. (Lindsey Plotkin/Victoria Advocate)

City of Victoria taking preventative measures to avoid another boil water notice

BY LINDSEY PLOTKIN

Earlier this year, the City of Victoria had two boil water notices, and to prevent this, it established a new Water System Review Subcommittee. In City Manager Jesus Garza’s report at Tuesday’s city council meeting, he reported that the subcommittee has made the necessary changes to prevent the boil water notices from happening again.

The city saw boil water notices in July and August of 2025, both of which were caused by low chlorine levels that led to the potential for harmful bacteria in the water.

“The committee was established in response to the July 2025 boil water notice and right smack in the middle of some of the committee work, we actually had the second boil water notice in August,” Garza said. “The purpose of the committee was to basically take a deep dive into what happened to ensure that any core issues are addressed and to make sure

it does not happen again for similar reasons. Of course, there are things we can’t control, (but) in this instance there were definitely elements that were preventable.”

Garza and the committee have used the information learned from this study to make changes to the water structure in Victoria and to prevent these incidents from happening again. Action items that the committee has taken include flushing system lines and replacing aging infrastructure, among others.

The main reason for the two boil water notices was nitrification, which is the process that removes toxic ammonia from wastewater, converting it to less harmful nitrate. The committee created a nitrification action plan, which staff will need to stay on top of to ensure that this does not happen again.

“(The nitrification action plan) basically calls for different measures to be enacted as that chlorine residual starts to rise,”

SEE WATER, A3

CITY OF VICTORIA

Local company lands Community Center construction contract

BY LINDSEY PLOTKIN

Lauger Companies was officially awarded the contract for the Community Center expansion and renovation after much research by Victoria City Manager Jesus Garza and his team.

The Victoria City Council gave the green light unanimously during its regular meeting Tuesday night.

Lauger Companies is a local company that is now in its third generation of ownership by the same family in Victoria.

Garza said that the city chose a local company after using a point system, awarding extra points to companies that have worked locally. Lauger has an established relationship with the city, as it has constructed several high-traffic areas in Victoria, including the DeLeon Plaza expansion project.

As the selection process took longer than expected, construction on the Community Center

was scheduled to begin after the 2026 Livestock Show, but is now about a month behind.

“We’ve taken the (slower) approach all along as we want to get (the contractor) right rather than get it rushed,” Garza said. “We would rather get it right than (be) rash with certain decisions, so I think they are definitely taking that approach and that’s the approach we are going to take also when we want to begin construction.”

Garza also added that “it’s critical that we get Lauger on board as soon as possible.”

Vice President and Project Manager Corbin Lauger is the company’s third generation owner — his grandfather was the original owner of the company.

“I’m humbled, very humbled and appreciative to be standing here today and I appreciate y’all’s consideration of us in awarding us this project,” Lauger said. “Many years of being a young kid,



Construction on the Community Center for expansion and remodel was set to begin after the 2026 livestock show, but has been delayed. (Lindsey Plotkin/Victoria Advocate)

going to job sites with my dad, I didn’t know my grandfather, the first generation, he passed away before I was born but I learned a lot from him through job sites.

His knowledge was passed on to other tradesmen on job sites I’d be on. Seeing projects come through town and hoping for a chance one day to be that contrac-

tor and just buying time, working, becoming and doing the things we need in order to reach that level. I’m very humbled to be here, to be the contractor considered for this project. We take immense pride in all of our projects, but especially the community projects, being that I am third-generation born and raised here and very proud to call Victoria home.”

Lauger Companies went through several rounds of interviews to be considered for the project, and its local involvement pushed it to the top. Garza said that it was important for a local company to take on this project, as when it comes to cost, he believes Lauger will present a fair contract.

City staff are still working on final estimates, but the process will now move more smoothly due to having the contractor finalized. Right now, the biggest challenge is bringing the project within

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INSIDE

Failing at fitness

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WEATHER

TODAY
Mostly sunny



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TONIGHT
A moonlit sky



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DIESEL
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