COMAL ISD
Comal Independent School District

BOARD REPORT

Board of Trustees
May 20, 2010
MEETING SUMMARY

The following are highlights from the Comal ISD Board of Trustees meeting on Thursday, May 20. The next regular board meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 22 at 6 p.m. in the board room of the Support Services building located at 1404 IH 35 North in New Braunfels.

Trustees take oath, board reorganizes

Comal ISD Board of Trustees David Spencer and Bill Swint took the Oath of Office after they both won the May 8 trustee election. Spencer was unopposed in Single-Member District 6, and Swint was re-elected to Single-Member District 7. The board also reorganized at the board meeting. Current board president Carol Kendall Keller, vice president Frank Baker and treasurer Donna Holmes were re-elected to their positions. Board member David Drastata was elected as secretary, replacing Carolyn Miller.

Board honors numerous employees

The school district's five-year strategic plan called for the development of a "grow your own" administrative program, and as a result, "Project LEAD" was developed. Project LEAD (Leaders Engaged in Administrative Development) is designed to prepare current Comal ISD teachers, district curriculum coordinators and specialists who have their eyes on a future job as an assistant principal. Acceptance into the Project LEAD program required interns to be on track to finish their administrative certification by the beginning of the 2010-11 school year. The program is one semester long and will be held in the spring each year. Some of the topics covered in the program are leadership development, employee relations, communication skills, curriculum and instruction, budgeting, purchasing, and school district operations; all designed to better prepare future administrators with information they need to be successful. The board recognized this year's LEAD interns for completion of the program. They are: ASES Teacher Kim Lyssy, BBES Teacher Debra Whatley, CES Teacher Cheryl Smith, CES Teacher Shirley Gerdes, FES Teacher Michael Smith, HLES Librarian Stacy Wilkie, JRES Teacher/GT Facilitator Jennifer Smith, OCES Teacher Trista De La Cruz, RCES Teacher Wendy Moore, RCES Teacher Melissa Johnson, STZES Counselor Kate O'Reilly, CMS Teacher Vanessa Brown, CMS Teacher Jessica White, CHMS Teacher Jarrett Cochran, CHMS Teacher Delia Castillo, MVMS Teacher Staci Weaver, MVMS Teacher Kathy Balmos, SBMS Teacher Tom Benich, SVMS Teacher Nannette Meyers, SVMS Teacher Margaret Hamilton, SVHS Teacher Dean Hofer, SVHS Academic Dean Jan Bettersworth, SVHS Teacher Martha Pittman, MHS Teacher Alan Davis, Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator Linda Dreibrodt, Math Curriculum Coordinator Joanna Henry, Math Instructional Specialist Shannon Piles, Science Curriculum Coordinator Aryn Standeford, and Social Studies Instructional Specialist Stephen Foster.

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Board recognizes numerous employees

The board also recognized Rebecca Creek Elementary School for receiving the Texas Education Agency's Title I, Distinguished Performance School award. This prestigious designation recognizes schools that have consistently demonstrated strong academic performance over a three-year period. All of these Title I, Part A schools achieved the Academically Exemplary rating for the present school year and have a residing population of 40% or more low income students - as reported on NCLB Consolidated Application for Federal Funding.

Canyon High School Air Force JROTC instructor Master Sgt. Edward A.Garcia was recently named the Air Force Association Alamo Chapter Teacher of the Year. The Alamo Chapter includes 22 high schools and two colleges in the greater San Antonio area. Garcia is also now eligible for the state Air Force Association Teacher of the Year. The results of the state contest will be announced in July.

Comal ISD has several military employees who have recently been called to duty, will be called to duty or have been in training for duty. The board and administration honored Smithson Valley High School teacher Scott Stoore and band director Jeff Lightsey for their service and dedication to our country and Comal ISD students. Stoore returned in February from three months of training and a nine month tour in Iraq. He is an Army Reserve Chief Warrant Officer and has served in the reserves for 23 years. He has taught at SVHS for 20 years. Chief Warrant Officer Two Jeff Lightsey is Commander of the 36th Infantry Division Band for the Texas Army National Guard. He has served in both the Army Reserve and the Texas Army National Guard for 22 years. He will deploy to Iraq in September for one year, which will be his first tour in the Middle East. He has been with Comal ISD for eight years, and seven of those have been spent at SVHS.

In August, Comal ISD received a health insurance rebate from Blue Cross Blue Shield. Each employee enrolled in the program received a rebate, and every school received $8,000 to go toward a wellness program on the campus. As a result, employees began a Biggest Loser competition in January when Morningside Elementary proposed a districtwide challenge. Thirteen groups joined the competition. The Community Education Department is the biggest group loser for losing a total of 5.03 percent body weight. The competition's biggest individual loser is Smithson Valley Middle School's Amanda Custy-Schaas for losing a total of 11.8 percent body weight. A total of 246 people participated and lost 1,429 pounds. Comal ISD's health and physical education specialist Rene Schafer thanked the board and the superintendent for helping make the rebate possible. You may follow this link to view the presentation: http://www.comalisd.org/Curriculum_Instruction/Health_PE/Principal_Meeting_Presentation.pdf.

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Comal Education Foundation recognizes sponsors, partners

The Comal Education Foundation recognized their Foundation Partners for their support of the Foundations' mission by presenting them with a piece of childrens' art work made by students in Elaine Eickenroht's classes at Specht Elementary. Foundation Partners for 2009-2010 are: SHW Group- sponsor of the CEF Golf Classic; Wells Fargo Bank of New Braunfels- sponsor of the Jan Heckendorn Academic Recognition Banquet; Baird/Williams Construction, Ltd.; Fugro Consultants, LP; Hunter Industries; Pfluger Associates, PLLC; Texas Intrepid Ventures; Drymalla Construction Co., Ltd.; Herff Jones- The Overall Graduation Office; Joeris General Contractors; Mays Family Enterprises; Mr. & Mrs. Dan Comer; Randolph Brooks Federal Credit Union; Riata Financial Services, Inc.; SAMCO Capital Markets; and Walsh, Anderson, Brown, Schulze, and Aldridge PC.

Board approves hiring of school nutrition management company

The board hired Chartwells School Dining Service to manage the district's child nutrition department effective immediately. Four bids were received including Sodexo, Southwest Food Service and Aramark. Chartwells is one of several companies owned by Compass Group, which owns 38 percent of the food service business in the world, and Chartwells has the lead in the K-12 market with 28 percent ownership.

As part of the contract, Chartwells will invest around $130,000 into each of the district's three high schools, which will fund design changes to each of the schools' cafeterias. Extensive renovations will take place to introduce new food station concepts, points of service and student stores. The seating will change to more resemble a college atmosphere, and the serving lines will reflect more of a restaurant style. These changes will take place over the summer, and students will come back to their new and improved cafeterias at the start of the 2010-11 school. Although the schools will receive physical changes to the cafeterias, the new menus will not be available until sometime in October because the Texas Department of Agriculture requires the district to use its current menu plan for the first 21 days of school.

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Current Comal ISD child nutrition employees will remain Comal ISD employees or have the option to become a Chartwells employee. Chartwells will hire new employees as needed. Current employees' salaries and hours will remain the same, although some employees' job descriptions and responsibilities are expected to change.

The decision to increase school breakfast and lunch prices will still be determined by recommendation of the administration and approval by the school board. Ultimately, the district maintains all control over the food service program. Chartwells is available as a resource and to assist in professionally managing the program.

The quality of the meals is expected to improve. At the May 14 board workshop, the school board, administrators and even students were able to sample a variety of menu items provided by Chartwells. Child nutrition employees will be expected to cook more and will undergo training by Chartwells staff in cooking, presentation, preparation and more.

For more information on Chartwells, please visit: https://www.comalisd.org/Chartwells/Chartwells.htm. Or you can visit www.comalisd.org click on "About Us" and then click on "Chartwells Presentation."

Board approves policy updates

TASB (Texas Association of School Boards) periodically issues Localized Policy Manual updates in response to changes effected by legal authority governing school districts. TASB (LEGAL) policies re presented to the board for its review and (LOCAL) policies are presented for its consideration and adoption.

TASB Policy Update 87 represents the second of two post-legislative updates and encompasses changes in law from the 81st Legislative Session. Update 87 includes new codes on accountability, required Web postings, tax rates and bonds, employee resignations, and more.

Teachers will want to make note that the school board approved a change to board policy DNA (LOCAL) regarding the evaluation of teachers. Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, all observations will be unscheduled. If a teacher requests a second observation, that evaluation will be unscheduled as well. Administrators have been conducting unscheduled classroom walk-throughs for the last two years but the actual observations have been scheduled.

Board policy DEC (LOCAL) regarding leaves and absences was also modified by the board. Up until now, all employees were eligible for temporary disability leave (TDL) for up to 180 days. Effective immediately, only full-time exempt employees are eligible for TDL. Full-time exempt employees are personnel who are paid from the teacher's salary schedule or the exempt salary scale. Exempt employees requesting TDL must contact Valerie Galan, benefits coordinator.

To review board policy online, please visit http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/046902/. The policy updates approved May 20 will take several weeks to be updated online by TASB, but they will go into effect immediately.