

*The following are highlights from the Comal ISD regular school board meeting on July 15.*

## **Trustees approve teacher salary increase pending federal approval**

### ***Salary increases***

The Comal ISD Board of Trustees approved a teacher salary schedule reflecting an average teacher step increase of \$1,500 for the 2009-10 school year at its regular July meeting.

Because salary increases for teachers, nurses, librarians, counselors and speech language therapists are mandated by House Bill 3646, the raise is on hold until the district receives federal approval. If the federal government does not approve the use of the federal stimulus money for the raises, then the salaries are null and void. Please visit the following link to view the proposed 2009-10 teacher salary schedule:

[http://www.comalisd.org/Employment/Employee\\_Salary\\_Schedules.asp](http://www.comalisd.org/Employment/Employee_Salary_Schedules.asp)

A 3 percent increase for all non-exempt employees and a 2.25 percent increase for all exempt employees were also board approved contingent on federal funding.

### ***Retention bonus***

Because the district was able to retain approximately \$1.5-1.9 million from the 2008-09 budget, the board approved distributing a \$600 retention bonus to Comal ISD employees who were employed and qualified for a year of TRS service during the 2008-09 school year (minimum of 90 work days) and are re-employed for the 2009-10 school year. Employees new to CISD in 2009-10 do not qualify. Retention bonuses will be distributed at the district's annual school picnics in August.

### ***Health insurance rebate***

The district's health insurance provider Blue Cross Blue Shield will rebate approximately \$1.75 million from the 2007-08 school year.

The board approved for each employee who has participated in the health insurance program from 2007 to the present and is currently enrolled in the program for 2009-10 to receive \$1,200.

Each district site will also receive \$8,000 of the rebate for implementation of a wellness program.

## **Construction Updates**

The board approved a guaranteed maximum price of \$14.1 million for Phase C of construction on Smithson Valley High School, which brings the entire SVHS project to a total guaranteed maximum price of \$38.9 million.

Phase C includes interior renovations to all older areas of the school, a new culinary arts facility, renovations to existing gym and all locker areas, renovations and expansions on all science labs, expansion and the rebuilding of the main front parking lot, conversion of the current auditorium to a new choir room, and conversion of the current choir room to the Career and Technical Education building.

The board approved awarding the bid for additional roadway and site work for Specht Elementary School to Smith Contracting Company for \$374,666 with a \$100,000 (totaling \$474,666) contingency to be split between the district and the vendor to expand the scope of the project if necessary. The site needs to be brought up to code to meet Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) updated requirements.

Johnson Ranch Elementary School is set to open its doors on August 24. Although the school will be complete by then, construction will continue to disrupt a 2,000 foot stretch of FM 1863 in front of the school as contractors are working to widen the roadway and include a left-hand turn lane coming from Hwy. 281 and a right de-acceleration lane heading westbound on FM 1863. There is no other construction taking place on the school site. The FM 1863 construction is expected to be completed by the end of September.

For more information about all bond projects, please visit [http://www.comalisd.org/Bond\\_Information/Bond\\_2008.asp](http://www.comalisd.org/Bond_Information/Bond_2008.asp) or [http://www.comalisd.org/Bond\\_Information/Bond\\_2005.asp](http://www.comalisd.org/Bond_Information/Bond_2005.asp).

### **Changes to 2009-10 student/parent handbooks, grading guidelines approved**

Minor changes to the 2009-10 Comal ISD Student and Parent Handbook were approved by the board as well as minor changes to the 2009-10 Grading Guidelines.

The handbook and grading guidelines will be posted within the next few business days at the following link: <http://www.comalisd.org/Parents/>

### **Comal ISD administrators to make decision on recent HB3 graduation requirements**

House Bill 3 no longer requires students to take a high school health courses to graduate. HB3 also reduces the physical education requirements from three semesters to two, and technology applications courses are also no longer required. Districts may still carry these courses as local requirements.

Districts were informed of this change the first week of July. Because master schedules for students and staff are already in place, the board and administrators agreed to leave all course requirements the same for the 2009-10 school year. In the near future, administrators will research the pros and cons of following the new state graduation requirements and decide which local requirements will be in place for students in the future.

*The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held Aug. 27, 2009 at 6 p.m. in the Support Services board room located at 1404 IH 35 North in New Braunfels.*