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Future school sizes approved by school board and possible bond issue discussed

The school board continues to discuss the possibility of a bond issue in order to manage the influx of new students entering Comal ISD each year. The district has been growing by 600 to 800 new students a year, or the equivalent of a new elementary school a year, and it's not projected to slow down anytime soon.

As a result, the board, in a 5 to 1 decision (Charles Burt voted against the motion and Rose Cervin was absent), voted to philosophically move toward maximum school sizes of 824 for elementary schools, 1,298 for middle schools, and 2,575 for high schools.

In a late July meeting the board decided that future schools would be Pk-5th for elementary; 6th through 8th for middle; and, 9th through 12th for high schools. The board also decided that the new Canyon Lake High School under construction north of the lake would include all communities surrounding Canyon Lake and would open in 2007 with 7th through 10th grades.

After studying the growth and facilities issue since September of 2004, a Strategic Planning committee of citizens recommended that the school board go to the voters with a bond election to build several new schools. To learn more about the committee's recommendation visit <http://www.comalisd.org/Growth/Growth.asp>.

Schools like Specht Elementary and Comal Elementary are expected to exceed capacity by 2006. Comal Elementary has two new portables (four classrooms) this year to accommodate the growth there and Specht Elementary, after moving 5th and 6th graders last year to Arlon Seay Intermediate, is now capped this year at 154 students per grade level. Any students enrolling beyond that number will have to attend Rahe Bulverde Elementary.

The board was told that, if a bond election is called and if it is approved by the voters, there would be little to no impact on the taxpayers. The tax rate needed to pay back bonds sold to build schools would remain the same as the projected rate for 2006 — approximately 30 cents per \$100 valuation — until 2008 when it would go up two cents.

On Wednesday, Aug. 17, the school board will once again discuss the possibility of a bond issue. Enrollment projections, feeder patterns, exact number of new schools needed, etc., will be discussed. That meeting is scheduled for approximately 6 p.m. in Canyon High School's library.