

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Julie Jerome
830.221.2621

Release Date: April 1, 2011

School board renews teacher contracts

The Comal ISD Board of Trustees on Thursday unanimously agreed to renew contracts for teachers, nurses, counselors, librarians and administrators for the 2011-12 school year.

In separate action, the school board voted to terminate the probationary contracts of four teachers.

Facing a possible \$16.7 million budget shortfall for the next biennium, district administration had recommended the elimination of 65 teaching positions; 17 of them were probationary teaching positions. All but four of the positions were accounted for by retirements or resignations.

Action on the teaching contracts was taken on Thursday because it was the last regular board meeting before the deadline to notify teachers of their contract status, as mandated by state law.

The school board will conduct a budget workshop on Tuesday, April 5, to delve further into the budget in the context of the latest action and discussion in Austin. The school board will discuss strategies for the district's fund balance, reductions in operations budgets, and future capital projects. The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. at the Support Services Building in New Braunfels.

Board member Carolyn Miller submitted her resignation on Thursday, effective April 7. The school board may appoint a replacement for single-member district 1 or it may choose to call an election in November, according to policy. The board will consider a strategy for Miller's replacement at the April 26 regular meeting.

Sandra Shelton, executive director of technology, gave the board an update on technology in the classroom, highlighting Studywiz, an online learning management system that allows access to digital classroom materials via a student's mobile device.

She told the board that all libraries at secondary campuses now offer to students for checkout Kindles (wireless reading devices), iPads (tablet computers that can be used as a platform for audiovisual material) and iPods (portable media players).

"Students can check these out and take them home," Shelton said. "Some are set up so they can access the Internet."

To complement this opportunity, she said, many of the books in the campus libraries are available online.

Shelton described some modifications to technology support for campuses, in light of budget reductions.

"With the cutbacks, we don't want to cut back on technology support," she said. The three high school campuses will serve as hubs, and training and support will be provided via videoconferencing to each of the high school's feeder schools.

"We believe teachers will get better support, quicker this way," she said. "So we are not losing support. We are actually gaining support, just doing it in a different way."

The school board unanimously approved the adoption of textbooks for: prekindergarten systems, English as a Second Language and English Language Arts for grades Pre-k through 12.