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News Release

Comal ISD trustees set 2011-12 tax rate

The Comal ISD Board of Trustees on Thursday set a tax rate of \$1.43 cents per \$100 valuation for the 2011-12 school year, which is 6 cents higher than last year's rate.

The increase is on the interest and sinking (I&S) rate of 39 cents per \$100 valuation. The maintenance and operations rate of \$1.04 per \$100 valuation remains unchanged from last year. The increase in the I&S tax rate is necessary to meet the district's bond payoff schedule.

The Comal ISD tax rate remains among the lowest in the state and is the lowest among seven neighboring districts: Seguin, San Antonio, New Braunfels, San Marcos, North East, Schertz-Cibolo UC.

Property values in Comal ISD have declined about 2.5 percent from last year, to \$9.2 billion and the average taxable value of a home in the district is \$162,626. A

homeowner whose home value did decrease by 2.5 percent, will see an increase of about \$17.43 on the annual tax bill.

The school board heard a report by Dr. Jodi Duron, assistant superintendent for academics and student services, regarding possible future policy and procedure changes surrounding the end-of-course (EOC) exams for secondary courses and the application of the “15-percent” rule, where the student’s score on the EOC will be worth 15 percent of the final grade for that course.

“On Aug. 26, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) posted new information related to EOC exams and the application of the 15-percent rule,” she said. “The new information was contradictory to everything that was communicated by TEA up to that point.”

Some of the logistical challenges include:

- How will the 15-percent rule work for courses credited on a semester basis?
- Will there be a state standard to translate scores on the EOC to a 100-point scale?
- How does rank-and-file and grade-point average fit into the 15-percent rule?
- How do districts apply the 15-percent rule when the results from the exam will not be sent until after the students’ last day of school?

Duron assured the school board that Comal ISD is working with districts throughout the region, as well as state organizations such as Texas Association of School Boards, to answer these questions and recommend policies and procedure changes to support them.

Some of the policies and procedures to be reviewed include: start dates and staffing of summer school; instructional calendar, graduation dates and requirements; and grading guidelines.

Duron updated the school board on the district's plans for Generation Texas Week (formerly Education, Go Get It! Week), which is Nov. 14-18. Course selection will coincide with this week as campuses will be conducting curriculum fairs and disseminating the course guides for 2012-13. Course selection begins on Nov. 28 and ends on Dec. 16, before the students are released for the holiday break.

Duron also gave the school board a report on the Alamo Colleges-Memorial Early College High School (AC-MECHS), which is one of only 44 in Texas and only 200 in the country.

AC-MECHS' freshman and sophomore class, each of about 90 students, have the opportunity to earn associate's degrees, or up to 60 college credit hours, in addition to their high school diplomas.

"Early college high schools are based on the concept that academic challenge—not remediation—will improve both high school and college graduation rates among those young people who are least likely to attend college," she said. "One of the core principles is the commitment to serving students who are at-risk, on free and reduced meals or are first-generation college goers."

Some of the academic advantages of the program include: sophomores and freshmen enroll in dual-credit courses; rigorous instruction; and smaller teacher-to-student ratios.

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