

# Comal Independent School District

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **\$205.85 million bond package approved by voters in Comal ISD**

Voters in the Comal Independent School District overwhelmingly approved today a \$205.85 million bond package to expand Canyon and Smithson Valley high schools, build three elementary schools, expand the four existing middle schools, upgrade technology, purchase land for schools, and initiate capital projects on school grounds across the district.

The bond issue will not increase the tax rate used to pay the debt service (new construction) portion of the district's budget. The debt service tax rate will remain at 27¢ per \$100 valuation for the foreseeable future.

Bond 2008 was approved with 7.5 percent of Comal ISD's eligible voters casting votes — 3,011 voted for it and 1,269 voted against it. Percentage wise, 70 percent of those casting votes were in favor, compared to 30 percent against the proposition.

"We're pleased that voters approved Bond 2008 so we can address the 5.5 percent average annual student growth rate we're experiencing in Comal," says Dr. Marc Walker, superintendent. "We appreciate our patrons' support."

Comal ISD is one of the fastest growing school districts of its size in the state, according to Texas Education Agency data. Approximately 1,000 new students registered in Comal ISD schools each year. Projected enrollment by 2012 will exceed 20,000 students.

Seven schools will be over present capacity by 2010 — Freiheit Elementary, Startzville Elementary, Smithson Valley High, Canyon High, Canyon Middle, Smithson Valley Middle, and Spring Branch Middle.

"We will be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars," says Bill Swint school board president. "We aggressively refinance old bond debt in order to

create more bonding capacity because we are a fast-growth school district. In fact, we've saved more than \$10 million since 2004 by refinancing when we can."

Bond 2008, proposed by a 22-member Bond Citizens Committee, calls for the expansion of Canyon and Smithson Valley high schools so they may each accommodate up to 2,575 students when completed. Canyon is built for 1,750 and Smithson Valley is built for about 2,000. Their present enrollments exceed those capacities.

In addition, the bond includes three new elementary schools in the Canyon Lake area, Bulverde/Bexar County area, and Garden Ridge. Walker announced earlier this year that a fourth new elementary, Avery Park in New Braunfels, will be covered out of the current issue, Bond 2005.

Avery Park was initially in the Bond 2008 proposal but strong fiscal management and oversight on the current bond (Bond 2005) is allowing the district to build two additional elementary schools, Avery Park and Rahe Bulverde, through Bond 2005.

Four of the district's middle schools — Canyon, Church Hill, Spring Branch, and Smithson Valley — will be expanded in Bond 2008 to accommodate up to 1,150 through the expansion of some of their core facilities and additional classroom space.

All elementary playgrounds will be standardized and all middle school and elementary school gymnasiums would be air conditioned. Other capital projects will be done at Specht Elementary, Goodwin Frazier Elementary, Canyon Lake High, and Bill Brown Elementary.

About \$8.3 million for technology upgrades to include mobile labs, laptops for teachers, video conferencing equipment, and wireless access in all schools, is included in the bond issue.

Money for land purchases for future schools and funds to handle inflation and furniture, fixtures, and equipment also are in the bond.

Current enrollment is about 15,100. By 2014, total enrollment is projected to be more than 22,500. In fact, projections are that a fourth high school and a sixth middle school will probably be proposed in the next bond issue which could occur in about two years.

The district's last bond issue, approved in December 2005, was for \$189 million. Projects still under construction will be completed no later than the end of 2009. Taxpayers received a 3¢ decrease on the debt service tax rate used to cover Bond 2005 (from 30¢ to 27¢) because of the growth, property values, and

refinancing of old debt.

Detailed information about the projects in the bond issue can be found at [www.comalisd.org](http://www.comalisd.org) under the Bond 2008 link.

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	FOR	AGAINST
Early Voting	2,351	722
Faith United Church of Christ	73	55
Community Resource & Recreation Ctr	17	22
Fischer Community Center	46	86
Canyon Lake Golf & Country Club	62	61
Spring Branch Volunteer Fire Dept.	38	21
Bulverde City Hall	200	207
Specht Elementary	34	14
St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Church	40	13
Bulverde United Methodist Church	24	19
Garden Ridge Municipal Complex	114	42
Comal Elementary	12	7