

Comal Independent School District

NEWS BRIEFS

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Comal ISD Superintendent Addresses Budget Challenges

Two primary factors can be attributed to the statewide budget shortfall: the economic downturn, which is responsible for both a decline in sales tax revenues and an increase in social services, and the 2005 Texas Legislature's decision to compress the state's tax structure, according to Dr. Marc Walker, Superintendent of Comal ISD.

Dr. Walker described these factors and the impact this shortfall could have on district operations in his weekly letter to employees.

"The legislation to compress the state's tax structure reduced the school property tax with the expectation that margins on the state's business tax would replace lost revenues," he said. "But poor performance on the revenue through the business tax is adding to the state's shortfall."

Yet another contributor is the decision to direct some \$2.6 billion in federal economic stimulus funds, which are one-time expenditures, to recurring expenses, including raising teachers' salaries, he said.

"In Comal ISD, these monies totaled more than \$7 million," he added.

As district staff continues the annual work of developing a budget for the next school year, cuts ranging from \$16-\$18 million must be made.

“When 85 percent of the district budget is personnel, we will have to reduce staff in all areas to meet that target,” he said.

Dr. Walker said that superintendents throughout the state will be keeping legislators informed of the local consequences of their decisions.

“In our communities, we will continue to educate parents and businesses of our plight,” he noted. “We will do all we can to protect the classrooms, but the reverberations of these cuts throughout the local economy and ultimately the state economy will be powerful.”

Seven campuses nab “Higher Performing School” rank

Seven campuses in Comal ISD—Canyon Lake High School, Canyon Middle School, Comal Elementary School (currently Garden Ridge Elementary School), Hoffmann Lane Elementary School, Rebecca Creek Elementary School, Smithson Valley Middle School and Spring Branch Middle School—earned spots on the National Center for Educational Achievement (NCEA) 2010 Higher Performing Schools List for Texas.

The list identifies elementary, middle and high schools that have “consistently outperformed their peers that serve similar student populations.” The national organization also recognizes “achievement in bringing more students to college and career readiness than expected.”

“The schools on this list show that Texas is making college and career readiness a priority,” said Efrain Mercado, director of outreach at NCEA. “Making the list, and especially in all subjects is a great achievement for these schools.”

Schools are identified by one of two measures: academic growth of students and/or absolute achievement of students at the school using the TAKS commended performance level.

Bad weather makeup day to be Feb. 21

All classes in Comal ISD will be in session on Monday, Feb. 21 to make up the bad weather day on Friday, Feb. 4. Transportation will run the usual schedule and all district offices will be open the regular hours.

Parent /Community Summit draws families from all over district

Nearly 100 parents and their children attended the 3rd annual Parent/Community Summit, “Building Championship Families,” on Saturday at Spring Branch Middle School.

“All of our presenters were tremendous,” said Jamie Ezell, Comal ISD parent liaison. “They were well-prepared and offered so much information to our parents.”

Ezell noted the diversity of presentations—for Spanish-speaking parents, technology information, the new statewide assessment and motivational speakers, for example—plus the “great” exhibitors contributed to a successful event.

Larry Hill, Smithson Valley High head football coach and athletic coordinator, presented a breakout session titled “Motivating your Team” geared toward family strength. He thanked everyone in attendance for caring enough to be here and encouraged his audience to, “be a role model, an intentional parent

and to live a life of value.” “Thank you for caring enough about your family to be here,” he said.

‘Road Rules’ targets teen drivers

Karen Slay, vice president of the Texas PTA and an activist for road safety laws for teens and youth, will present “Road Rules” on Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 6:30 p.m. at the Smithson Valley High School (SVHS) cafeteria. Free pizza will be served.

The presentation includes laws and statistics involving teen drivers. Teens and their parents are encouraged to attend.

“I cannot say enough about how much fun our presenter makes the serious subject of teen driving,” said Julie Whitaker, of the SVHS PTA. “She is passionate and extremely well-versed in all laws, rules and safety aspects of our kids on the road.”

Whitaker said that teachers, parents and neighbors will benefit from the presentation.

Smithson Valley HS presents ‘Wizard of Oz’

Smithson Valley High School students will open the musical “Wizard of Oz,” in the school’s new performing arts center on Feb. 17, 18 and 19. Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for students and \$10 for adults and can be purchased at the door.

Students in choir, theatre and band, approximately 45 of them, are involved in the production.

Comal ISD seeks nominations for 'Outstanding Graduate'

Comal ISD is seeking nominations for "Outstanding Graduate," an outstanding person who graduated from CISD schools prior to 2001. For a nominee to be seriously considered, he or she should have been actively involved in his/her community; achieved extraordinary career status; made outstanding contributions to an area, state, etc.; and/or a combination of these achievements. The nominee must have graduated from Canyon High School or Smithson Valley High School at least 10 years ago.

The number of people affected and the depth of involvement are significant factors in evaluating the award nomination. For a nomination form, please contact Martha Miller, 830.221.2066, or martha.miller@comalisd.org.

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