

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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Release Date: Feb. 20, 2008

\$205.85 million bond issue called for May 10

The Comal ISD board of trustees voted unanimously tonight to call a \$205.85 million bond issue, or Bond 2008, for Saturday, May 10, in order to address the school district's fast growth rate and need for more classrooms over the next several years.

Board members were advised by their bond advisor, SAMCO Capital Markets, that the bond issue would not require a tax rate increase on the debt service portion of the tax rate because of growth in the district, increasing property values, and the district's aggressive refinancing of "old" bond debt.

The bond issue, 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. Dr. Marc Walker, superintendent, announced 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 — would also 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 would be standardized and all middle school and elementary school gymnasiums would be air conditioned. Other capital projects would 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. (*See details of Bond 2008 at end of this news release.*)

The \$205.85 million bond issue is about \$4 million less than the initial proposal made by the Bond Citizens Committee. The additional funds in Bond 2005 to build the Avery Park elementary initially proposed in Bond 2008 allowed the board to reduce the total amount of the bond and allocate more money to the middle school expansions.

Comal ISD has been growing by an average of about 5.5 percent since 2003, according to Nancy Cobb, the district's demographer, and the trend is expected to continue for at least the next seven years. That translates into about 1,000 new students a year or the equivalent of an elementary school a year.

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.

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 cent decrease on the debt service tax rate used to cover Bond 2005 (from 30 cents to 27 cents) because of the growth, property values, and refinancing of old debt.

District officials are available to present information about the bond issue to community groups. All Bond 2008 information and documents are available at www.comalisd.org (within the next few working days). People can email questions or requests for speakers to Bond2008@comalisd.org.

BOND 2008 Projects

CHS and SVHS Expansions to capacities of 2,575 \$75 million

3 New Elementary Schools \$48 million

(FM 306 in Canyon Lake; Kinder Tract near Borgfeld Rd.; Garden Ridge)

Middle School Expansions to capacities of 1,150 \$23 million

CMS: Kitchen and cafeteria expansion, new library, new classrooms

SBMS: New classrooms, library expansion, locker room expansion

CHMS: New kitchen and cafeteria, new classrooms

SVMS: Convert wood shop into classrooms, build new wood shop

Capital Projects \$10.75 million

Standardize elementary playgrounds and canopies

Air condition all elementary and middle school gyms

Restructure Specht Elementary traffic and parking areas; redo play area

Replace kitchen at Goodwin Frazier Elementary

Build ag barn and expand locker room facilities at Canyon Lake High

Provide general improvements to Bill Brown Elementary

Land Purchases for Future Schools \$8.5 million

Technology Upgrades Districtwide \$8.3 million

(wireless access in all schools; mobile labs for schools; interactive technology for ESL, advanced instruction, and special education; laptops for teachers; decrease the student to computer ratio)

Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment and Inflation \$32.3 million

TOTAL BOND \$205.85 million

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