

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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School Board OKs elementary attendance zones

After lengthy discussion about future enrollment growth and related construction, the Comal ISD Board of Trustees on Tuesday unanimously approved elementary school attendance zones to accommodate the opening of Kinder Ranch Elementary School and the elementary school in Indian Springs.

With the new boundaries, Kinder Ranch, which is expected to open in August, will give relief to Timberwood Park Elementary School (TPES) with a current enrollment of 760 and Specht Elementary School (SES) with a current enrollment of 570. Kinder Ranch is expected to open with 395 students; TPES is projected to have 530 students and SES is projected to have 490 students next school year. The attendance zones for these three elementary schools take effect in the 2011-12 school year.

The new boundaries for the school in the Indian Springs subdivision will relieve Johnson Ranch Elementary School (JRES), with a current enrollment of 625 and Bill Brown Elementary School (BBES) with a current enrollment of 703. The attendance zones for these three elementary schools take effect in the 2012-13 school year. With the new boundaries, the school at Indian Springs is expected to open with 440 students; JRES is expected to have 317 students and BBES is projected to have 674 students.

Board members Frank Baker, David Spencer and Bill Swint expressed concern over less than capacity enrollment at the schools, including the decision to build the elementary school at Indian Springs.

“Indian Springs is our No. 1 fastest growing subdivision,” said Dr. Marc Walker, Superintendent of Comal ISD. “We will be opening that school and Kinder Ranch and we will not hire any staff whatsoever. We are going to reallocate staff. There will be some savings in the transportation department as well.”

Walker assured the board that this concern of opening schools with lower enrollment numbers in preparation of growth comes up every time an elementary school opens. “All of the elementary schools we’ve built are in the newest, fastest growth areas,” he said.

Walker added that *not* building the school is a greater concern because future construction costs could outweigh the cost of opening a school, particularly with the plan to reallocate staff.

“This attendance zone scenario is the one that lasts as long as possible,” without going back in a few years and changing the boundaries, he said. “Our goal was for it to last to 2017-18.”

The attendance zone maps are available on the district website, www.comalisd.org.

After an executive session, the School Board voted to extend Dr. Walker’s contract to 2014. He has served as the Comal ISD superintendent since 2005.

In other business, the School Board heard two audit reports, one for Comal ISD and one for the Comal Education Foundation (CEF), both of which received “unqualified” opinions, which translate into the highest level of assurance by the auditor.

Highlights of the audits include:

- Comal ISD has nearly \$56 million in unreserved fund balance, which is higher than the average school district but a healthy level for a fast-growth district;
- Property values in Comal ISD have increased to \$9.6 billion from \$5.3 billion in 2006;
- The district's general fund earned \$3.1 million because revenues were \$1.2 million higher than budgeted and expenses were \$2 million under budget, a positive trend that reflects good budget management;
- The CEF ended the year (August 2010) with net assets of \$192,460.