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News Release

Music marks dedication ceremony of Kinder Ranch

Sure, there was ample recognition, symbolism and ceremony at the dedication of Kinder Ranch Elementary School on Tuesday.

But the true “walkaway” for the nearly 200 parents, students, staff and community members who attended the celebration was the performance by the school’s 4th and 5th grade “Mallets,” who played several instrumental songs with xylophones and percussion. The students, under the direction of Kim Finkbeiner, earned the applause and standing ovation for the night.

“It is appropriate that we dedicate this school on Neighborhood Night Out,” said David Spencer, school board trustee. “This school is a community school. It has elements—a pedestrian walkway to the school, involved parents and a welcoming staff—of what a community school is all about.”

Kinder Ranch Elementary opened in August and was constructed as part of the 2008 bond package. The final new school in that package, Indian Springs Elementary, is currently under construction. Both schools are located in one of the fastest growing areas of the district, South Bexar County. Kinder Ranch's opening greatly relieved crowding at Timberwood Park Elementary and Specht Elementary.

"Where are all of these students going to high school?" Spencer asked. "We will be talking to the community about the need to continue building new schools. The elementary schools are the easy ones. The next round, which is middle school and high school, aren't so easy."

Secondary campuses require more time to construct, from 18 months to two years, more land on which to build, and more funds to build them with.

"This day wouldn't be possible without the support of the taxpayers of Comal ISD in the 2008 bond package," said Frank Baker, president of the school board. "If we did not open this school, Timberwood Park would be sitting at well over 900 students today."

With 600-700 new students "joining the Comal ISD family every year," Baker said, the opening of new schools is a way of life.

"We will need to make room at the middle school and high school levels now," he said, adding that the district owns 108 acres of land in the vicinity for a possible middle school and the district's fourth comprehensive high school.

The design of Kinder Ranch is based on the state-recognized design of Garden Ridge Elementary School, said Dr. Marc Walker, superintendent of Comal ISD, with a few improvements. SHW Group designed the school, which has many "green school" features

such as a living roof, skylights that provide natural lighting in the library, rainwater harvesting with on-site storage, and an energy conservation system that automatically adjusts lighting in the classroom.

Walker emphasized the need for new schools to address enrollment growth, saying that in three years, the district's demographer projects more than 1,000 students will move into the district every year.

"As they come, I imagine we will have to build schools," he said.

Julie Whitaker, president of the Comal Education Foundation presented Dr. Judy Murray, principal of the school, with a grant for \$2,500.

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