

Comal Independent School District

NEWS BRIEFS

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Budget reduction discussion continues

Meeting the demands of a \$16.8 million budget shortfall has been on the minds of Comal ISD administration and school board as districts throughout Texas face similar challenges.

In a letter to Comal ISD staff on Friday, Dr. Marc Walker, Superintendent of Schools, listed the planned reductions that will be taken to the School Board at a workshop on Tuesday. They include:

- Freeze all hiring of new staff
- Relocate/reduce Central Office personnel, totaling \$1 million
- Elimination of 130 teaching positions, essentially composed of probationary teachers base on a campus-by-campus and certification plan
- Class size increases at every level
- The dedication of a portion of the district's \$57 million fund balance
- Reduction of department and campus operating budgets by 10 percent
- Zero budget for technology and deferred maintenance

"District staff has been meeting several times a week over the past three weeks to make the necessary reductions with surgical precision rather than chopping programs or closing schools," Dr. Walker said. "We will have to eliminate about 130 teaching positions."

Dr. Walker said that the district had hoped to gain many of the 130 positions through retirements and resignations.

“Given that every district in Texas is in a similar position, there is very little job movement from district to district,” he said. “We are not looking forward to eliminating any positions. In fact, we plan to move a number of people to campuses throughout the district in an effort to save as many positions as we can.”

The Comal ISD Board of Trustees, in a budget workshop on Tuesday, will look at administration’s recommendations and offer input as to the direction the budget should take.

Kinder Ranch Elementary Principal named

Judy Murray, principal of Arlon Seay Elementary School (ASE) for the past three years, has been named principal of Kinder Ranch Elementary School (KRES), which is scheduled to open in August.

Murray served as the assistant principal of Arlon Seay Intermediate School from 2004-08 and was a 5th grade teacher at the school from 1998 to 2004. She was named Teacher of the Year in 2002-03 for Arlon Seay Intermediate. She earned a doctorate from North Central University, a master’s degree from Texas Wesleyan University and a bachelor’s degree from University of Incarnate Word.

She worked at Adams Elementary School in Harlandale ISD from 1989 to 1998, when she joined Comal ISD. She was named Teacher of the Year of Adams Elementary in 1997.

KRES, located at Borgfeld and Bulverde Road in San Antonio, is part of the district’s 2008 bond package. It is situated in the Kinder Ranch subdivision

and will relieve overcrowding at Timberwood Park and Specht elementary schools.

In light of the current budget challenges, Dr. Marc Walker, Superintendent of Comal ISD, has said that existing staff throughout the district will be placed at KRES, as much as possible following certification guidelines, to open the school.

School Board filing runs through March 14

The annual board of trustees' election in Comal ISD is Saturday, May 14. Candidates interested in filing for one of the two seats up for election may do so between now and March 14.

The seat in Single-Member District 3, currently held by Frank Baker, and Single-Member District 4, currently held by Donna Holmes, are up for election.

An application for a place on the ballot is available at the Support Services Administration Offices, 1404 Interstate 35 North in New Braunfels, weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. For more information, please call 830.221.2000. Those interested in filing for one of the seats must be registered voters, live in the single-member district they are filing for, and have been residents of the district for six months. Voter registration cards include the single-member district.

Baker, vice president, has been on the school board since 2005. His area covers the north side of Canyon Lake and some of the Spring Branch area on Highway 281 North. Holmes, treasurer, has been on the school board since 2005, too. Her area covers the southern part of Canyon Lake, Startzville and south to Highway 46.