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NEWS BRIEFS

Redistricting committee to present recommendation to school board

The Comal ISD Redistricting Advisory Committee (RAC) on Thursday will present its recommendation for the boundaries of the seven single-member districts to the school board. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. and will be at the Support Services building, 1404 N. IH 35 in New Braunfels.

The RAC met in early September with a demographer and attorney to redraw the boundaries of the single-member districts based on the population changes from the 2010 Census. The RAC first reviewed an initial draft plan developed by the demographer. During the meeting, modifications were made to create a second draft plan (7-B).

The 7-B plan takes into account these federal guidelines:

- Similar population size
- Contiguous and compact geographic areas

- Follow county voting precinct boundaries, where feasible
- Consider residential location of current governing members in their separate districts
- Evaluate minority voting strength in terms of voting age population.

The recommended plan reflects the dramatic growth in Comal ISD over the past 10 years, which is spotlighted in the single-member district numbers. For example, in 2000, each of the seven single-member districts had an “ideal” size of 8,394; the total population of the school district was 58,755. In 2010, that “ideal” size is 14,171; the total population of the school district is 99,194.

The recommended plan and the corresponding population numbers are posted on the district website, http://www.comalisd.org/Board_of_Trustees/PDF/RAC-9911.pdf.

Co-chairs Scott Watson and Nellie Verlinden will present the recommendation to the school board at Thursday’s meeting. Following their presentation, the public will be invited to comment. The board is expected to vote on the plan at the Nov. 17 regular meeting. Following school board approval, the plan will be sent to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for pre-clearance.

Upon approval by the DOJ, the single-member districts will take effect in the May 2012 election. The seats currently held by David Drastata of District 2, Carol Kendall Keller of District 5 and Stephen Smith of District 1, will be up for election at that time. The school board discussed in September the option of moving elections to November, but by taking no vote agreed to keep the elections on the first Saturday in May.

School board meeting agenda includes School First hearing

The Comal ISD Board of Trustees on Thursday during its regular monthly meeting will conduct a public hearing on the district's rating of Superior Achievement by the School First system. The rating is based on analysis of staff and student data as well as budget and actual financial data for the 2009-10 school year. For the ninth year in a row, Comal ISD received the highest rating.

In other business the school board will consider the purchase of a chiller cooling tower at Smithson Valley High School and a chiller at Smithson Valley Middle School; and a settlement offer from O'Haver Construction Co., regarding the expansion and upgrade of the athletic field house at Canyon Lake High School.

The meeting will be at 5:30 p.m., on Thursday at the district's Support Services Building, 1404 Interstate 35 in New Braunfels. A recommendation and public comment regarding the Comal ISD Redistricting Advisory Committee's recommendation for single-member districts will precede the School First public hearing.

Red Ribbon Week

Red Ribbon Week, the oldest and largest drug prevention campaign in the country, will be celebrated at all Comal ISD campuses this week. Red Ribbon Week serves as a vehicle for students to make a commitment to live drug free lives.

Red Ribbon Week commemorates DEA Special Agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, who died while working undercover in Mexico at the hands of five men involved in the traffic of drugs.

An updated calendar of Red Ribbon Week activities at each campus is posted on the homepage of the district’s website, www.comalisd.org. Activities include assemblies; display of red ribbons throughout the campus grounds; giveaways such as pencils and stickers; door and hallway decorating contests; athletic competition between students and teachers; and dressing up to signify certain days.

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