



# BOARD NOTES

## **A Summary of the August 22, 2016 Palestine ISD Board of Trustees Meeting**

### **Public Hearing**

A Public Hearing was held at 7:00 PM to provide an opportunity for community input regarding the 2016-2017 Palestine ISD Proposed Budget & Tax Rate and 2016-2017 Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (TACE) program pay for contract employees.

During the public hearing, David Atkeisson, Chief Financial Officer, presented the district's proposed budget and tax rate for 2016-2017. The proposed budget amount of \$28,691,093 is based on a flat enrollment estimate for the 2016-2017 school year. The proposed budget as presented would allow the district to continue to give step pay increases to staff, as well as, continue the benefits package the district has been able to give for the past several years. Proposed expenditures also include the continuation of the upgrade to the bus fleet with the addition of one new bus, additional bus cameras, one new staff vehicle, one new tractor for Career & Technical Education & PISD Maintenance Department, a Germ Blast contract for sterilization of classrooms, and the continuation of the landscape maintenance contract.

The proposed total tax rate of \$1.548 is a reduction from the amount adopted in the past five years. The reduction is due to the restructuring of the construction bond which reduces the district's total debt service payment by approximately 10%. This reduced obligation, coupled with the slight increase in taxable property value, caused the rollback rate to be reduced. In order not to trigger a rollback election, the district must reduce the interest and sinking (I&S) tax rate from \$0.396/\$100 valuation to \$0.378/\$100 valuation – which is a reduction of \$0.018. The proposed tax rate for maintenance and operations (M&O) of \$1.17 has not increased since the 2010-2011 school year. The tax rate is being reduced, but due to increased property valuations from the previous year, the district will generate more total dollars from tax revenue. Therefore, the district is required to state in a public hearing that the proposed 2016-2017 tax rate will generate more taxes for maintenance and operations than last year's rate. This language can be deceptive, causing some to think that the district is raising the tax rate, which is untrue. The district is in fact, lowering the total tax rate.

President Sepulveda offered an opportunity for questions or public comment regarding the 2016-2017 proposed budget/tax rate. There were no questions or public comments.

Also during the public hearing, Suzanne Eiben, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, presented information regarding 2016-2017 TACE program pay for contract employees. Mrs. Eiben stated that HB 483 amended Texas Government Code Section 180.007 prohibits a school district from paying an employee more than the person is owed under a contract without first providing a public hearing. Mrs. Eiben explained that tasks that are usually completed during an employee's contract day must be completed after hours on days when a teacher works in the TACE program. The public purpose that is served by making the payment is to benefit students with opportunities for academic success through the

supplemental instruction provided by highly qualified staff persons who are knowledgeable of the students' needs. The proposed payment amount of \$35 per hour would be paid to professional staff who assist in the TACE program. The payment source is federal funding, through TEA, from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Grant, with the terms of distribution of the payment being monthly according to submission of documentation of hours worked.

President Sepulveda offered an opportunity for questions or public comment regarding the TACE program pay for contract employees. Trustee Sheeley asked how many Palestine ISD teachers benefit from working in the TACE program. Mrs. Eiben estimated that approximately 30 staff members work each day, and that employees earn an additional amount of approximately \$6,000-\$8,000 during the year.

There were no other questions or comments from the public regarding TACE program pay.

### **Spotlight**

Barbara Dutton, Northside Primary Principal, introduced Ginny Gayso, Northside Primay first grade teacher and PISD Elementary Teacher of the Year who was recognized for being selected to receive the Region 7 Teacher of the Year award. Mrs. Gayso will represent Region 7 as a semi-finalist in the 2017 Texas Teacher of the Year competition.

### **Financial Update**

David Atkeisson, Chief Financial Officer, reported that the district is in good shape as the 2015-2016 fiscal year comes to a close, in spite of unexpected expenditures which include the replacement of an exterior canopy at A.M. Story Intermediate, April 2016 flooding repairs, and 2009 construction bond warranty items. Mr. Atkeisson stated that he expects the district's auditor to begin a routine preliminary audit for the district in September, 2016.

### **Preliminary Schools FIRST Rating**

David Atkeisson, Chief Financial Officer, reported that preliminary ratings for the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) have been released and that Palestine ISD earned the highest preliminary rating possible of A/Superior. Final ratings are expected to be released in October 2016. After the district receives the final rating, a public hearing will be held to announce the district's rating and to provide an opportunity for public comment.

### **2016-2017 Tax Rate**

The Board voted to adopt a tax rate of \$1.17 for maintenance & operations, and a tax rate of \$0.378 for interest and sinking, for a total tax rate of \$1.548 for the 2016-2017 school year.

### **2016-2017 Budget**

The Board adopted a General Fund budget for 2016-2017 in the amount of \$28,691,093.00, a Debt Service Fund budget of \$3,827,507, and a Food Service Fund budget of \$2,011,864.

### **Consent Items Approved**

- Minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 18, 2016
- Minutes of the Called Meeting of July 11, 2016
- Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 11, 2016
- Bills paid for July, 2016
- Financial Report
- Monthly Investment Report
- Tax Collection Report
- Donations
- Palestine ISD

Deep tine aeration of Wildcat Golf Course valued at \$2,500.00 from Terry Brown of Turf Punches, L.L.C.

- Budget Amendment for unexpected expenditures not directly related to the 15-16 budget including Story canopy, April flooding FEMA claim, 2009 bond warranty issues associated with Balfour-Beatty lawsuit.
- Resolution Regarding Budget Transfers Between Functions: The Board authorized for Administrative staff to transfer budget allocations between function provided there is no change in the amount of the total budget.
- Resolution to Adopt Prevailing Wage for A.M. Story Intermediate Canopy Project
- 2016-2017 Honors Classes: Algebra 1 & 2 PAP, Calculus AP/Dual Credit, Pre-Calculus PAP/Dual Credit, Pre-Calculus PAP, Geometry PAP, Statistics Dual Credit, English 1 & 2 PAP, English 3 AP/Dual Credit, English 3 Dual Credit, English AP/Dual Credit, English 4 Dual Credit, Spanish 2 PAP, Spanish 3 PAP, Spanish 4 AP, Biology PAP, Biology 2 AP/Dual Credit, Chemistry PAP, Chemistry 2 AP/Dual Credit, Anatomy & Physiology PAP Dual Credit, Environmental Science AP, Principals of Engineering PAP, Government/Economics AP, US History Dual Credit, US History PAP/Dual Credit, World Geography PAP, and World History PAP.
- 2016-2017 Certified Appraisers for Evaluation of Teachers: Sheila Bradley, Jaime Clark, Stephen Cooksey, Dee Dietz, Barbara Dutton, Suzanne Eiben, Michael Esparza, Rhonda Herrington, Linda Holmes, Rebecca Huff, Stephanie Johnson, Tammy Jones, Chris Kiser, Larissa Loveless, Linda Luce, Grace Mancilla, Joseph Mason, Melissa Molandes, Breck Quarles, Sharon Reed, David Richardson, William Stewart, and Cody Tunstall.

- 2016-2017 Teacher Appraisal Calendar

First Date formal observations may be conducted for appraisal purposes:

Formal observations are prohibited on the following dates, including days before and after a holiday, semester and end of year exams, and required testing days as applicable for each campus.\*

September 5, 2016  
October 13 & 17, 2016  
November 18 & 26, 2016  
December 12-16, 2016  
January 3, 13, & 17, 2017  
February 16 & 20, 2017  
March 10 & 20, 2017  
\*All campus state assessment testing days.

First date annual summative conferences may be conducted:

March 28, 2017

Last date formal observations may be conducted for appraisal purposes:

April 20, 2017

Last date for annual summative conferences:

May 4, 2017

End of the appraisal period and date written Summative annual appraisal report shall be placed in teacher's personnel file:

May 25, 2017

\*Dates for additional testing/assessments where a choice for the scheduled time is allowed and/or where state assessments are applicable to specific segments of the student population are also dates when formal observations are prohibited for those areas of the campus. Appraisers are required to follow the prohibition of observations according to the campus testing calendar.

- 2016-2017 Teacher Shortage Area Stipends: Bilingual/English as a Second Language (Elementary and Secondary levels), Career and Technical Education, Computer Science/Technology Applications, Mathematics, Science, and Special Education (Elementary and Secondary levels)
- 2016-2017 Student Tuition Fee: \$2,000.00 (Amount calculated by the Texas Education Agency, Division of State Funding)

- Certification of Justin Florence for a School District Teaching Permit for Noncore Academic CTE Courses
- 2016-2017 Region 7 Education Service Center Service Agreements

**Update on 2015-2016 STAAR District & Campus Academic Accountability Ratings**

Tammy Jones, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, reported that Palestine ISD as a district, as well as, each PISD campus received a Met Standard rating for 2015-2016 STAAR tests. The district expects to receive additional information from the Texas Education Agency in September, 2016.

**Report on 2016-2017 Paper & Electronic Textbooks**

Larissa Loveless, Director of Public Relations & District Testing/Textbook Coordinator, reported on the district’s transition from the use of print textbooks to digital textbooks. Mrs. Loveless informed the Board that the district focuses mainly on printed textbooks and materials for kindergarten through grade 6 students. K-6 students are also introduced to digital textbooks so that they become comfortable with working with the digital textbook at a young age. Each K-6 grade student is provided a textbook for all subjects except Social Studies where teachers chose to have classroom sets. For students in grades 7-12, there is a greater focus on the use of digital content, but students do have access to printed textbooks. Teachers have classroom sets of textbooks with extra copies available for students to check out. Textbooks are also available to grade 7-12 students in the PHS library, and reserve textbooks are kept by textbook custodians for parents to check out to utilize at home. In Math and Science, grade 7-12 students use work texts instead a hardback textbook. Mrs. Loveless shared that overall the district’s philosophy is for students to begin with a print textbook so that they learn how to interact with the text, then as students’ progress in age the goal is for students to become more digitally savvy and more able to work with digital textbooks.

**Policy Update 105**

The Board approved the adoption of Policy Update 105 revisions, affecting local policies BJCF, BQ, CLB, CLE, CPC, DBA, DFBB, DFFA, DFFB, EHBD, and FDC.

**Policy Update 106**

The Board approved the adoption of Policy Update 106 revisions, affecting local policy EHBAF.

**Policy EL (Local)**

The Board approved revisions to Policy EL (Local) involving charter schools.

**2016-2017 TACE Program Pay for Contract Employees**

The Board approved pay for contract employees providing instruction in Texas Afterschool Center on Education Programs as recommended.

**Personnel Approved**

Rhonda Herrington	Fine Arts Director	Palestine ISD
Leslie Johnson	Nurse	Washington Early Childhood Center
Tonya Johnson	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	A.M. Story Intermediate
Joshua Moore	Business	Palestine High School
Kimberly Simmons	TACE Coordinator	A.M. Story Intermediate
Sherry Tubbs	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Northside Primary
Wesley Vinson	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	A.M. Story Intermediate
Donna Weldon	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Southside Elementary
Tiffany Wilbourn	LSSP	PISD Special Education

Superintendent Jason Marshall accepted resignations from Vicki Hills, Jordan Joyner, Nikki McChesney, and Korina Wood.

### **District of Innovation Resolution**

Superintendent Marshall presented information regarding procedures for becoming a District of Innovation. If the district were to be approved as a District of Innovation, this would allow for increased flexibility in the school calendar, employee contracts, as well as, encourage out of the box thinking within the school district.

The Board adopted a resolution for Palestine ISD to initiate the process to explore and consider a designation of the District of Innovation under HB 1842.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Jason Marshall reported on the following:

#### 2016-2017 First Day Student Enrollment:

Student enrollment on the first day was 3,335 which is the highest first day enrollment in many years. Over the past three years student enrollment increases an average of 120 students from the first day of school to the tenth day of school. If enrollment increases during the first ten days of school by that amount this year, the district may reach an enrollment of approximately 3,460 students within the first three weeks of school. This would be the highest enrollment for the district in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### Extracurricular Update:

Volleyball, football, and cross country seasons have started for the 2016-2017 school year, and cheerleaders, drill team, and band are also busy each week preparing for games.

#### Summer Learning:

PISD students participated in TACE and Jump Start programs during the summer where they received skills testing. The information gained from the testing will be used by the district to determine student needs for the school year.

#### 2017 Texas Legislative Platform:

The Board discussed the possibility of a meeting in October or November, 2016 with other Anderson County school districts to determine needs and begin planning for the 2017 legislative session. Senator Nichols will host a meeting at Palestine ISD on October 12, 2016.

#### Title IX/Transgender Restroom Update:

Mr. Marshall reported that on August 22, 2016, a Texas Federal Judge issued a stay on President Obama's transgender restroom decision. Therefore, school districts do not have to allow the use of female restrooms to male students and vice versa. Palestine ISD will follow the Texas Federal Judge's ruling and will provide an alternative restroom to accommodate the needs of transgender students in a way that does not make the student feel uncomfortable.

**Next Regular Board Meeting  
September 19, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.**