

EYES ON THE BOARD

a publication of the McAllen AFT



A Union of Professionals

January, 2012

Volume 20, Issue 5

BUDGET DATES GIVEN

Regular Board Meeting on 1/16/2012

All board members present.

Paula Gonzalez was named the new District Athletic Director.

Morris Middle School hosted a TLC3 meeting at 6:30 p.m. on the 24th. We attended this meeting, but came away with many questions that were not answered.

Alvarez PTO gave

a marquee donation to Alvarez Elementary.

Purchase of athletic lockers for Travis Middle School were pulled from the agenda.

A workshop on the 2012-2013 Budget just announced meetings for January 31, February 20 (staffing—nothing about cuts in staff), March 19, April 23, April 30, and May 21.

The budget will be approved on June 18, 2012.

Regular Board Meeting on 12/16/2012

All board members present.

This was a briefing meeting--most voting at next Board meeting on January 23, 2011. Most of the focus was an hour honoring the MISD School Board.

The following items were discussed:

Public Hearing for 2010-2011 District Academic Excellence on January 23, 2011.

Vaccinate Before You Graduate--Meningitis vaccination--required

for college in Texas.

Special Education materials, supplies, and equipment catalog bid.

Child Nutrition Program Point of Sale Management System for the Child Nutrition Program.

Library books and materials.

Health/Medical supplies and equipment catalog bid.

Voting will be done at the January 23, 2012 meeting.



PUBLIC COMMENT

Good evening. The McAllen AFT represents employees from the bus driver to the teacher.

We want to thank the members of the McAllen Board of Education for their service to the children of McAllen. As you move into the budget cycle for 2012-2013, we encourage you to add your collective voice to the call to de-emphasize standardized testing and support a broader, alternative vision of accountability.

“Despite recent changes around the edges of our state’s test-driven school accountability system—including the current move from TAKS to STAAR exams—it is increasingly obvious that our test-focused system is not delivering the quality education our students deserve. They deserve better than a fifth generation of standardized testing that drives schools to divert huge amounts of classroom time and resources, at huge expense, into narrowly focused preparation for simplistic standardized tests.

“There are better ways to measure the accomplishments of our students,

teachers, and schools, and better ways to drive school improvement that will deliver the well-rounded education our students need. Reform should start by putting the focus back on students and what they need, not on tests. Some parameters:

- * Multiple measures of student achievement should be used to gauge growth and shape instruction. These must include assessments of social/emotional learning, which is essential to success in life beyond high school.

- * Supportive interventions should take the place of punitive sanctions like school closure, which do not help students but do hurt communities and induce principals and teachers to focus more narrowly and obsessively than ever on test scores.

- * The legislature should halt the misuse of test scores as the basis for scientifically unsound “value added” measures of student, teacher, and school performance.

- * The legislature should hold itself accountable for providing the resources schools require and for bolstering neighborhood schools with a web of com-

munity support services to meet the needs of students and their families. Legislative accountability should start with restoration of the \$5.4 billion cut from per-pupil funding and vital programs such as pre-kindergarten grants and the Student Success Initiative affording extra help to at-risk students.

- * Interventions to improve schools should be based on what we know works: developing school leaders who can nurture leadership in others; building parent-community ties; continuously enhancing the professional capacities of faculty and staff; fostering a student-focused culture of support for striving and successful engagement in learning; a rigorous, well-rounded curriculum and the instructional tools needed to deliver instruction—including tests, in their proper place, as diagnostic tools.