

EYES ON THE BOARD

a publication of the McAllen AFT



A Union of Professionals

December, 2011

Volume 20, Issue 4

NO DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

December 21—All Board members were present.

The McAllen Memorial High School Football team was honored for their outstanding season.

The Board approved iPads and iPods for 14 Campus Technology Leadership Cadre Student Groups. Vote was 7-0.

School and Office Furniture for Travis Middle School was approved--\$108,000. Vote was 7-0.

Generators were purchased. Vote was 6-0 (Farias ab-

stained--unclear why). Training was approved for Travis--Student Differentiating Teaching Strategies. Vote was 7-0.

Superintendent's Employment contract was amended to comply with the Affordable Care Act and IRS Notice 2011-12. Vote was 7-0.

December 19—The Board voted to name the new De Leon Middle School Assistant Principal--Maria Chapa--7-0 vote.

Items discussed in detail were as follows: StAAR testing, Investment policy (Local MISD CDA),

Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions--Board voted on June 20, 2011 approved a resolution to commit approximately \$760,583 to the committed fund balance for Fund 461--Campus Activity Funds; Board approved on December 13, 2010 an additional \$100,000 for classroom furnishings, equipment, instructional supplies, materials and miscellaneous items (that will be a total of \$646,000); Board discussed the purchase of math and science equipment, supplies and materials catalog bid estimated at \$220,000; TASB

Manual Update 91 discussed; kitchen improvements for Gonzalez and Jackson Elementaries were approved—Vote was 7-0; Employee Wellness Program was discussed using a PowerPoint. \$50,000 is available for wellness program on a reimbursement basis from Blue Cross Blue Shield.

21st Century Community Learning Center--funds this year are \$843,750.



NEW AND OLD

STAAR TESTING

The Texas House Public Education Committee will hold a hearing at 1 p.m. on January 23, 2012 on a hot-button topic—monitoring state and local implementation of the new state testing system (STAAR, for State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) this school year. The formal hearing notice says the committee will look specifically at “the impact on students, instruction, teachers, and graduation or promotion rates.” As part of that review, the committee wants to find out “how districts are implementing the requirement that the end-of-course assessment count for 15 percent of the student’s grade.”

The hearing notice also says the committee’s task is to recommend “any changes to graduation or testing requirements that promote instructional rigor and support post-secondary readiness while appropriately limiting an over-reliance on standardized testing.”

Texas AFT will be there to represent you on January 23, 2012. Public testimony will be taken. As

the hearing date nears, we’ll provide additional background information on the current implementation of the new STAAR system and the questions lawmakers should address.

PUBLIC COMMENT

December 19, 2011

Good evening. My name is Ruth Skow, and I represent the McAllen AFT (American Federation of Teachers). We represent employees from the bus driver to the teacher.

I would first like to thank the Board for continuing to approve the PCI Clinic for all employees. In these difficult times for employees, the Clinic has made a great difference in employee health care. Tonight we would like to give each of you a copy of the Clinic petitions indicating employees’ support.

As you continue to work on the budget for 2012-2013, we want you to know there are many areas where the budget can be trimmed.

First we would suggest that CScope be dropped. This Region I curriculum requires

tremendous time as it is incomplete and poorly written.

Second the CILT concept being used for peer reviews is a very divisive technique used since caveman times—DIVIDE and CONQUER—in this case—school staffs. This methodology is very expensive and time consuming (taking principals and staff from their campus responsibilities with children). This is just another test, the test, nothing but the test score.

Third, we suggest that the Board purchase classroom sets of IPODs and IPADs for this next school year. In tough times are you letting teachers and librarians go to pay for this technology?

Thank you.