

EYES ON THE BOARD

a publication of the McAllen AFT



A Union of Professionals

September 2013

Volume 21, Issue 2

BIG MONEY DECISIONS MADE

THE MONITOR

An article relating to the cheating probe in McAllen--from law firm auditing the McAllen school district

Hats off to Jackson Elementary and it's Principal and Staff--winner of Scholastic Summer Challenge

MCALLEN ISD REGULAR BOARD MEETING-- SEPTEMBER 23, 2013

Board member Erica

de la Garza Lopez was absent.

The following are the main points of the meeting:

New Asst. Principal at Fields Elementary--Cynthia Cervantes. Vote 6-0

Board approved Maximum Class Size Waiver Application for 2013-2014--reason for asking for waiver--as of September 19, 2013 17 campuses were exceeding the 22:1 ratio in grade level or more in Grades K-4. Vote 6-0

Ponce's contract was amended and re-stated. The new change adds longevity provisions, TRS benefits, a wellness provision to the Superintendent's Employment Contract, and a contingency should the District convert from a self-insured medical plan to a fully insured medical plan. The amount of money involved is not clear--further study will be done.

Daniel Vela ask fellow board members to sign a letter in support of Superintendent Ponce's contract changes. Vote 6-0.

RACE TO THE TOP APPROVED

If the grant is won, all teachers (elementary, middle, and high school) evaluation will

be based on their students scores. Vote 6-0

CSCOPE under another name was approved by the Board. Vote 6-0

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH IN MCALLEN ISD WEEK 4 25,008

What a relief. Numbers at the beginning of the year were 23,000. If the numbers of students had declined, then jobs would have been cut. For the last two (2) years, the budget has been figured on zero growth in student population. Attendance has been important as that is how money is generated.



MEMBERSHIP IN MCALLEN AFT

The McAllen AFT team stand ready to help. If you have a concern, call us for a time to meet or discuss by phone (682-1143--office or 607-0193--cell), call or text .

You don't have to tell anyone your issue--meeting with McAllen AFT is confidential. Members should call us directly about handling concerns. We will see you as quickly as possible to get the problem solved.

McAllen AFT represents members legally. We have a local attorney for criminal issues. We employ him when needed. For educational issues we employ Martha Owen and her law firm in Austin (Martha is a educational attorney along with her staff. There are no educational attorneys in the Rio Grande Valley. No matter who tells you there are educational attorneys in the Valley--there are not.

One of our former members came to the office this summer to resign up. He said he went for cheap dues with TCTA. When a Valley TCTA Attorney representing him in a grievance did not show up for a grievance hearing, he knew that he could not afford to stay with TCTA--they let him down. Of course, he lost the grievance.

Yes our dues are a little higher--but we actually help you to survive in a fast changing educational world. McAllen ISD Administration has applied (with a 6-0 vote--Erica de la Garza Lopez was absent) for a grant for Race to the Top.

If the district gets the federal grant, then your evaluation will be tied to your students scores on all tests. All teachers will be affected--elementary, middle school, and high school.

If you are new to McAllen AFT, you should get your membership card in 6-8 weeks from AFT in Washington D.C. We have every benefit you can imagine. We have a scholarship fund both locally and nationally. You must be a member for 1 year before you are eligible for scholarships. We have three (3) events each year--Back to School, Holiday Celebration, and End of School (this is when you receive scholarships). All events are free.

OTHER BENEFITS

- **8 million in professional occupational liability insurance (in case you get sued)**
- **Local staff and leaders ready to assist you when you need help and information**

- **Legal defense funds (in case you need an attorney for a work-related issue)**
- **\$25,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy (included with membership, for as long as you are a member)**
- **A local office with full-time staff representatives in McAllen for your convenience (not an 800 number)**
- **Professional resources, workshops & trainings to help you succeed in your career**
- **Strong leaders and lobbyists advocating for your rights at the local, state and national levels**
- **\$10,000 free term life insurance for your 1st year of membership**
- **AFT PLUS savings and discounts for you and your family**
- **Educational resources and publications**
- **No conflict of interest-- Administrators cannot join**

REAL PEOPLE TO TALK TO!

