

ON BOARD

January 2013

BY-THE-MINUTES REPORT

Superintendent's contract extended through 2016

In action during its regular January meeting, the CISD Board of Trustees extended Superintendent Blake Cooper's contract through June 2016.

Board President Willie Blow said, "Mr. Cooper has established the foundation for continual improvements in student performance with positive results already realized during his first four years as superintendent. By extending Blake's contract for another three years, the board is expressing our desire for him to continue his (and the board's) vision toward excellence for the district."

Superintendent's report...

Superintendent Blake Cooper reported enrollment was up six students from last month.

He also said that filing for the school board would be open on January 30, 2013 through March 1 at the CAB. Places 1, 2, 3 and 7 are up for election on May 11 at City Hall.

Mr. Cooper explained that he had contacted two drug testing companies and learned their prices were \$14-\$16 per test. Forward Edge currently conducts drug testing for district bus drivers and The Lab in Tyler, Texas, is another firm in the area conducting testing. More details will be available before a proposal is presented to the Board for random testing of students involved in extracurricular activities, Cooper said.

CHS seniors presented Board President Willie Blow with a panoramic shot of the Class of 2013 during the annual Board recognition. CMS, ACW and CES purchased library books in honor of each Board member. Board members include Mr. Blow, Russell Armstrong, Etta Herring, Bob McLeroy, Ted Oats, Randy Starks and Gabe Wittkopf.

Superintendent Blake Cooper thanked the Board for their service to the students.

Mr. Blow said, "It's easy being on the Board in Commerce."



ON BOARD

Campus report

It was Commerce High School's turn for the annual report to the Board and CHS principal Adam Rupert showed a video and thanked the Board for allowing educators to do their jobs with the Board's full support.

Technology teacher Glenda Henderson told how students used LearnKey online software to gain certification as a Microsoft Office Specialist. The District purchased 500 tests and students can take them at no cost. Since the 2010-2011 school year, 91 students have obtained the certification.

Science teacher Jason Thompson explained how students use Evernote to manage documents on the iPad. He said that paper had essentially gone away with the use of the iPads and the applications that go along with them.

Other Board action...

- The Board approved two budget amendments. One transferred funds so the band could attend the TMEA Convention. The other took \$12,000 from fund balance to allow Commerce Middle School to employ one person to man the computer lab for remediation during the school day. Principal Patrick Just rearranged the schedule and added an eighth period so more students could be impacted. After school tutorials, he said, were not as effective as holding the tutorials during the school day.
- The Board also approved an application for a district/campus charter grant. The action allows the district to seek funding if a different instructional arrangement is proposed for next year.
- A contract with Hunt County was approved for the county to conduct joint elections with the district, City of Commerce and North Hunt SUD.
- The Board accepted the resignation of Beth Mizell, CMS teacher, and employed Preston Hamm as a CHS teacher for the remainder of the school year.
- The next regular scheduled meeting will be held Monday, February 18 in the CISD Board Room. The Board will also participate in Team of Eight Training on February 26 to develop new goals. Community input will also be sought in goal-setting sessions in the spring.

Community Plaza set to graduate students in September

Commerce Community Plaza Director Maria Garza said that the program was improving the lives of many Hispanic families in the area by offering GED preparation classes in addition to gardening and welding classes. She expressed frustration that the adults wanting to take the GED test in Garland were discouraged by the difficulty of getting in for the orientation. Curriculum Director Julia Robinson said she was already working with Texas A&M University-Commerce to determine if the Spanish GED could be given on the university campus so it was more accessible to our local test takers.

Chief says safety preparedness ongoing

CISD Police Chief Joe Venable said he constantly works with school staffs to monitor and increase safety at the campuses. He said he has worked with principals to change some procedures based on suggestions from safety investigators involved in the latest school tragedy.

Mr. Cooper added that shelter-in-place drills were conducted at each school in the fall and administrators were looking at ways to make schools more secure, including buzzer entry systems with cameras. Severe weather plans will soon be discussed for spring.

The next regular scheduled meeting will be held Monday February 18, in the CISD Board Room.