

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



ANTHONY

Dear CFISD Community Members:

One of the greatest responsibilities of a superintendent is to provide a quality education for the district's students while remaining fiscally responsible with tax dollars invested in public education by our community's property owners.

Decisions that impact our students must be made in tandem with consideration of our fiscal responsibilities to our taxpayers. A benefit that residents will realize again this year is property tax relief resulting from legislative action in 2006. Maintenance & Operations (M&O) Taxes that generate revenues to support the operations of CFISD were decreased from \$1.50 to \$1.354 in 2006 and property owners will realize another, much larger decrease in M&O Taxes in 2007 when taxes are lowered \$0.33 more to \$1.024. **This year's school district tax bills will be the lowest in the past decade for most residents.**

In my tenure as CFISD superintendent of schools, I have witnessed student enrollment increase from 79,000 students to a projected enrollment that will surpass the 98,000 mark in 2007-2008. During this time period, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD became the third-largest district in Texas while 13 new schools were opened: nine elementary schools, three middle schools and one high school. Three of these schools opened this year.

It is not unusual for the district to open three or four new schools each year, because the rate of student growth remains unabated and continues to increase rapidly. As a result, **the district has projected welcoming almost 24,000 new students during the next five years.**

Although six more construction projects (two high schools, one middle school and three elementary schools) are underway from funds generated by the 2004 Bond Referendum, current campus capacity will not meet the needs of a projected enrollment of 116,500 students for the 2011-2012 school year.

Sustained growth of this magnitude affects every operation in the school district from facilities and staffing to transportation and food service. For instance, CFISD maintains 33 schools built more than 20 years ago, along with 172 of our approximately 700 school buses that have been in service for at least 20 years. Both buildings and buses alike are well-maintained, but over time major renovation and replacement considerations must be made with facilities and vehicles, respectively.

In February, the Board of Trustees was informed that a Bond Steering Committee (BSC), made up of community members, parents and staff, was being formed to analyze the district's needs related to student growth and would be making a recommendation to the Board regarding a possible bond election. The committee presented its recommendation on June 28 after committing several months and many long hours to evaluating data and identifying instructional facility and technology needs resulting from rapid student growth.

With the committee's recommendation, input from the community, and its own study of the data, including the potential impact on the Interest and Sinking Tax rate, the Board voted to call an election for Nov. 6, 2007. In the months leading up to the bond election, informational bond presentations will be held throughout the community, and I sincerely hope everyone is able to attend at least one of these sessions. Information pertaining to the Bond 2007 is also available on the district's website at www.cfisd.net. Our goal is for voters to go to the polls with accurate information about student growth and how it relates to instructional facilities and technology equipment needs.

CFISD will address the challenges presented by the growth that our community is experiencing. The district has a longstanding tradition of providing a quality education to our students, and that tradition is sustained through the practice of business and community volunteers partnering and working together with the district.

Respectfully,

David Anthony, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Bond 2007 High Schools

The schools, planned for voter consideration in Bond 2007, are similar to Cypress Ranch and Cypress Lakes, currently under construction. There are some very specific reasons why the high schools in this bond package are budgeted at a higher cost than Cypress Ranch High School and Cypress Lakes High School (included in the 2004 Bond Referendum). Total projected cost increases are the result of unfunded state mandates and projected annual inflation rates, along with the facility additions designated and approved in the 2004 Bond Referendum for our high school students. Details follow:

- **Construction inflation rates:** The cost of construction has significantly increased in the Houston area and in Texas; the cost of school construction has increased at higher rates than general construction rates. According to Pat Kiley, Principal of Kiley Advisors, LLC, "in 2001 the Texas median school had yet to break the \$100 per square foot barrier." By January 2007, the median price of a Texas high school was \$158 per square foot.
 - In 2007, a Pearland ISD high school cost \$150.32 per square foot.
 - In 2006, an Humble ISD high school cost \$145.91 per square foot.
 - In 2006, Cypress Ranch HS in CFISD cost \$123.23 per square foot.
- **Additional spaces approved by the voters in the previous bond election:** The additions of a music room and a multi-purpose space for each high school were approved by the voters in a separate proposition in the 2004 Bond Election.
- **Construction of a practice pool at the high schools:** These pools had originally been included in the budgets for the middle schools, but, in order to decrease transportation costs and increase accessibility, they are now being built on high school campuses.
- **Legislative action – 4 x 4, college entrance requirements:** The state legislature recently passed a bill that requires high school graduates who are completing the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) to take four years of high school science. In addition, legislation was passed requiring students who want to attend a four-year university in Texas to graduate under the RHSP. To address this unfunded mandate, seven additional science labs/classrooms were budgeted for all new high schools. (The funding for the addition of science labs/classrooms at our existing high schools is included in the renovation portion of the referendum.)

COST SAVING STRATEGIES

Historic cost-saving practices in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District will be applied to future construction. Cost-saving strategies include:

- Large elementary, middle and high schools to accommodate student growth;
- Design prototypes;
- Cost-effective and energy-efficient materials that extend the life of the facility;
- Brick exteriors that require minimal maintenance and exterior surfaces that require no paint;
- Carpet with a 20-year wear guarantee;
- Ceramic tile flooring in high-traffic areas such as corridors and common areas; and
- HVAC systems that are designed to conserve energy by using less electricity during the day.