

New Schools

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system of discipline—whereby the student can experience more immediate academic success ultimately raising self-esteem.

Former assistant principal of Alternative Learning Center (East) Wendi Witthaus was named director of ALC-W. Witthaus has spent all 15 years of her educational career in CFISD. She

taught for six years at Cook Middle School before serving one year as a mid-management intern and one-half year as an academic achievement specialist in special programs. She then took over her current role at the Alternative Learning Center, a position she has held for 7 1/2 years.

Economic downturn slows construction

Preserving its commitment to remain fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has delayed the opening of several new schools included in the 2007 Bond Referendum. Much like the effect that the economy has had on the construction industry nationwide, the economic downturn has caused the revision in plans for new school construction in CFISD.

The referendum passed a majority vote in November 2007, prior to the U.S. entering a recession in 2008 as a result of the subprime mortgage crisis. Housing dipped to new lows across the country, and the Cy-Fair area was no exception. While Cy-Fair home closings peaked at 7,533 in 2006, the figures dropped to 5,669 in 2007 and 4,000 in 2008. Although the rate of families moving into the area has decreased, the area continues to grow at one of the fastest rates in the state.

The decline in home closings, which is closely tracked with the economic recession, has affected the growth in student enrollment in CFISD. According to Dr. John Fourqurean, senior director of planning and research, even though student enrollment numbers continue to rise, the number of new students enrolling in CFISD will likely be less than the phenomenal increases the district has experienced in previous years.

As the recession comes to a close, Fourqurean said the development of new projects will take time—approximately six months to build a home and even longer to develop the infrastructure of a large residential project.

However, once these projects are complete, he added, home closing numbers should progressively increase. Historically, the district has delayed new school construction to align with student enrollment growth needs.

The first school affected by the delay is Elementary School No. 51, which was originally slated to open this school year. However, the school, which will be located on Round Robin Drive, has been postponed to open in 2010-2011 along with Elementary School No. 52, to be located in Towne Lake. As of now, Elementary No. 52 is still proposed to open in 2010-2011, the original date recommended by the Bond Steering Committee (BSC).

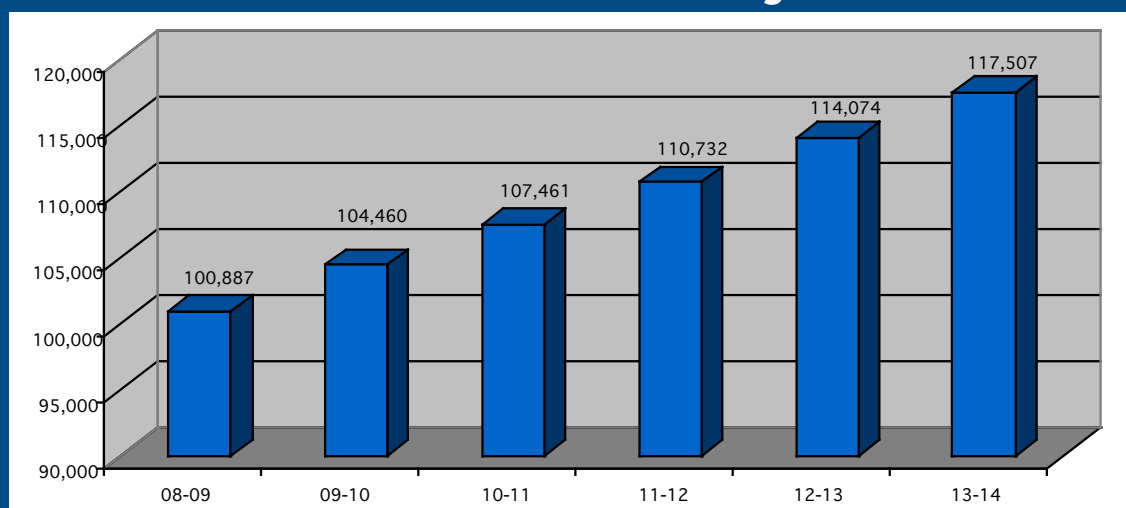
Opening dates for new schools under the 2007 Bond Referendum were assigned after the BSC was charged to provide a solution for the facility needs brought on by the district's rapid growth. Using the projected growth figures from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, the committee earmarked \$474.3 million of the \$807 million referendum to go toward building 13 new schools, a second Alternative Learning Center and the purchase of 10 school sites for a projected student enrollment of 116,000 by 2011-2012. (See *BOND 2007 Recap chart on page 3.*)

Enrollment projections have been revised since that time, and 110,732 students are expected to be enrolled by 2011-2012. (See *5-Year Enrollment Projections chart below.*)

Although the district will reduce the current Maintenance and Operations (M&O) budget by \$14 million this school year, the budget used for debt service is unrelated to these cuts. **The budget for debt service can only be used to pay back bonds purchased for construction and cannot be commingled with funds in the M&O budget. By law, both budgets must remain separate.**

According to Stuart Snow, associate superintendent of business services, CFISD has sold \$298 million of the \$807 million in bonds from the 2007 Bond Referendum. Selling bonds over time, rather than all at once, helps minimize the impact on the Interest & Sinking (I&S) Tax rate. For more information on bond sales, go to the *Bond Update* at www.cfid.net.

5-Year Enrollment Projections



PROPOSED

Opening Dates

New Schools

Proposed opening dates will continue to be reviewed and modified based on financial constraints and updated enrollment projections.

2009-2010

- Elementary No. 50
- Middle School No. 16
- 2nd ALC

2010-2011

- Elementary No. 51
- Elementary No. 52

2011-2012

- Elementary No. 53
- Middle School No. 17

2012-2013

- Elementary No. 54
- Elementary No. 55
- Elementary No. 56
- Middle School No. 18*

2013-2014

- Middle School No. 18*
- Middle School No. 19
- High School No. 11

2014-2015

- Elementary No. 57
- Elementary No. 58

2016-2017

- High School No. 12

**Proposed opening date may occur in either year (2012-2013 or 2013-2014)*