

## Board Highlights • October 2014

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### RECOGNITIONS

The superintendent recognized students and staff members for honors and achievements earned in recent weeks. Congratulations were extended to the following:

- **Cypress-Fairbanks ISD**, for receiving a rating of *Superior Achievement* by the Texas Education Agency (TEA)'s Schools FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) program, marking the 12th consecutive rating for CFISD. While a score of 52 indicated a passing score, CFISD attained the highest possible score of 70. The *Superior Achievement* rating is the state's highest mark, an indicator of the quality of the district's financial management and reporting system;
- The **CFISD Transportation Department**, for earning awards for its efforts to mitigate air pollution at the **Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) 2014 Clean Air Action "Best in Motion" Leadership Awards Program**. The **CFISD** honors are: **2014 Clean Air Champion** and **2014 Air Quality Leadership Award – Public Sector**;
- **Cypress Lakes High School**, for earning national certification for its **Project Lead The Way (PLTW) engineering program**. This recognition distinguishes schools who successfully demonstrate a commitment to the PLTW's national standards. This certification also provides students with opportunity to apply for college credit or receive college-level recognition at PLTW affiliate universities when they successfully complete select PLTW courses in high school. **Cypress Creek** also has a nationally certified PLTW program;
- Nine CFISD bands, choirs, orchestras and percussion ensembles who were selected by the Foundation for Music Education as "Mark of Excellence" winners. The following groups were selected among 224 ensembles from 35 states:
  - National Winners: Cook - advanced girls' choir; Labay – tenor bass choir; Cypress Ranch – percussion ensemble; and Jersey Village – symphonic 1 band; and
  - Commended Winners: Cook – percussion ensemble; Aragon – chamber orchestra; Cypress Ranch – symphonic band; Langham Creek – symphonic band; Spillane – symphonic band;

- the inaugural **CFISD Health Expo**, benefitting the **Health Organization of Physical Educators (H.O.P.E)** was held Saturday, Oct. 11. The event offered numerous health and wellness opportunities for parents, employees and the community;
- the **Cy-Fair Educational Foundation (CFEF)**, which has been ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> overall in the nation's only study and ranking of K-12 education foundations, "**Stepping Up: The Top K-12 Education Foundations in the Nation.**" Since its 1970 inception, the CFEF has awarded more than \$5 million in student scholarships and more than \$1.8 million in staff development grants; and
- **nine honorees of distinction**, who were inducted into the **2014 Wall of Fame** last month for their commitment and contributions to the educational experience of CFISD. The **Friend of Education** award was given to District 126 State Representative **Patricia Harless**.

## **TAX RATE**

The Board unanimously approved the 2014 Tax Rate, effectively lowering the tax rate from \$1.41 to \$1.40 per \$100 of property valuation.

The Board approved a cumulative tax rate that will be comprised of a \$1.04 Maintenance and Operations (M&O) tax rate and a \$0.40 Interest & Sinking (I&S), or debt service, tax rate. The I&S rate is a 1-cent decrease from the \$0.41 rate that has been in place in CFISD since 2012-2013.

The interest rate achieved with the Series 2014-C bonds came in at a significantly lower rate than the Long-Range Planning Committee conservatively estimated while preparing the \$1.2 billion 2014 Bond package. That savings, coupled with higher districtwide property values, resulted in the debt service rate decrease.

## **BOND UPDATE**

The Board approved the CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC Blanket Utility Easement to provide electrical service for Woodard Elementary School (No. 54).

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEFING**

The **Salute to the Stars Gala** will honor the district's Spotlight Teachers on **Thursday, Oct. 16** at the Berry Center. The Gala is sponsored by the Cy-Fair Educational Foundation.

CFISD will host the **University Interscholastic League (UIL) Region 27 Marching Contest** on Saturday, Oct. 18 at the Berry Center. Twenty-one schools will compete in the contest, hosted by Jersey Village High School.

CFISD will celebrate Red Ribbon Week **Oct. 23-31**, a national campaign designed to encourage healthy, drug-free and violence-free lifestyles among youth.

Employees and community members will have the privilege to exercise one of their greatest rights, voting, on Nov. 4. Early voting dates are Oct. 20–31.

The Northwest Harris County **Heart Walk** will be Saturday, Nov. 8. Last year, CFISD had more than **600** participants and raised more than **\$15,000**. The 3-mile walk will start at **Lone Star College – CyFair** and raises funds for the **American Heart Association**.

The district's new mass notification system, *SchoolMessenger*, is now available to keep CFISD families informed of district and campus activities, attendance, transportation, food service and most importantly, accurate, real-time information during an emergency situation. Visit the district website for more information.

## AGENDA ITEMS

In other action, the Board approved:

- awarding bids and contracts and/or authorizing purchase orders as recommended in the posted agenda item:
  - Automotive Lubricants; Coach Bus Service; Cosmetology Equipment and Supplies; HVAC Refrigerants; Performance Management Suite; Print Cartridges, OEM, Remanufactured or Compatible; Tree Trimming and Removal; Walker Elementary – Serving Counter (Food Service);
- and submitted to the Commissioner of Education a Request for Maximum Class Size Waiver;
- on second reading additions, revisions or deletions to district policies:
  - AE (LOCAL) Educational Philosophy (revise)
  - DAC (LOCAL) Employment Objectives: Objective Criteria for Personnel Decisions (delete);
- cancelling the special called board meeting boundary workshop on October 27, 2014;
- the tax refunds of \$500 or greater for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD;
- the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session Priorities developed by the Community Leadership Committee (CLC); and
- on first reading additions, revisions or deletions to district policies:
  - CPC (LOCAL) Office Management: Records Management (Revise)
  - DIA (LOCAL) Employee Welfare: Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation (Revise)
  - DNA (LOCAL) Performance Appraisal: Evaluation of Teachers (Revise)
  - FD (LOCAL) Admissions (Revise).

## PUBLIC HEARING

The Board held a public hearing at 6 p.m. on Oct. 13 on the 2012-2013 district's Schools FIRST accountability rating.

CFISD earned its 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive rating of *Superior Achievement*. The district's rating is based on an analysis of staff and student data reported for the 2012-2013 school year and the budgetary

and actual financial data for the 2013 fiscal year. All areas of the district's financial management were reviewed according to 20 indicators. A negative response to any of the first few criteria could have resulted in an automatic "Substandard" rating. While a score of 52 indicated a passing score, **CFISD attained the highest possible score of 70.**