

ON BOARD

BY - THE - MINUTES REPORT

AUGUST 2021

BOND ELECTION CALLED

In a special meeting on August 9, the CISD Board of Trustees voted unanimously to call a bond election for the construction of a new middle school, an agriculture building at CHS, turf for the baseball and softball fields, concessions and restrooms at the football field, and a parking lot near the softball and baseball fields.

An additional proposition is to construct a covered multipurpose facility which would be used for practices, performances, field days and community events.

The new structures would be located adjacent to CHS and cost approximately \$68 million.

Voter registration is open through October 4 online at votetexas.gov. Early voting will be held October 18–29 at Commerce City Hall. Election day locations are at the normal November locales.



Mask mandate defeated

In a four to two vote, the CISD Board of Trustees struck down a motion by Dr. LaVelle Hendricks to require students in third grade and above and all staff to wear masks.

Board President Kathleen Hooten began the discussion stating that Governor Greg Abbott ordered that governmental entities cannot mandate masks and said that the district could encourage mask use but not mandate it.

Dr. Hendricks said that he "respects others rights, but that doesn't mean I don't have rights." He said we needed to follow science and do the right thing.

Quoting former congressman John Lewis, Hendricks said we need to "get into good trouble" by working to change laws that need changing, alluding to Abbott's restrictions.

Parents Joshua Koch and Kevin Shaw shared their opinions of mask mandates during citizen's comments of the meeting. Koch suggested that we monitor the situation and if needed require masks in a phased-in approach with set parameters. Shaw stated that it was a waste of money and time to require masks. "We don't want to set up a situation where we decide which rules we follow and which ones we don't. What kind of example is that setting for our students," he said.

Board member Gabe Wittkopf said mask wearing should be a personal choice. Director of Health Services Kathy Myers said the district's current stance of daily personal screening for symptoms was the best option available for early detection.

The final vote was Hendricks and Dr. Ray Green voting for a district mask mandate and Kathleen Hooten, Gabe Wittkopf, Kelsey Lytle and Doc Pierce voting against.

Staff COVID testing required

Superintendent Charlie Alderman said COVID testing of staff with close contacts as required by the governor has resulted in four positive results. Abbott's order calls for testing staff with close contacts every other day for 10 days. Test kits throughout the region are in short supply, he said, and the state's promise to send test kits hasn't been fulfilled.

COVID leave approved up to 20 days

The Board approved a resolution allowing staff to receive paid leave for a test-confirmed positive COVID diagnosis. Employees will receive compensation up to 10 days for each separate instance, up to a maximum of 20 days. The diagnosis must be confirmed by a health care provider or the CISD Carevide Clinic. The measure is retroactive to July 1, 2021 and will extend to June 30, 2022. The resolution does not require district employees to exhaust all other leave before using the 10 additional local leave days.

ON BOARD NEWS

During the month of August, the CISD Board of Trustees met five times to conduct business related to the construction of a new middle school and various other structures and respond to an uptick in COVID-19 cases.

Earlier in the month, the Board adopted the tax rate for 2021 of \$1.3092 per \$100 valuation. The rate is down \$0.0506 from last year's rate.

The Board also approved the certified taxable values for properties in the district in Hunt and Delta Counties. Hunt County had taxable values of \$565,319,731 and Delta County \$3,439,924, up from last year.

CISD received the highest rating possible in the FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) – Superior. Director of Finance John Walker explained that the District had received the rating for the last 10 years.

Enrollment was down by approximately 100 students since last year. Alderman said that principals would be calling students who attended last year to determine why they are not coming back this year.

Other action...

The Board approved the following:

- the sale of 10 tax foreclosure properties
- policy revisions that ended the use of continuing contracts and another that gave police officers mental health leave after a catastrophic instance. The later was passed by the state legislature during the last regular session and
- contract with Hunt County Voter Administration to conduct a bond election on November 2.