February 8, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARROLL
Independent School District

Carroll ISD Board Approves Special Education Stipends to Boost Recruitment and Retention

Southlake, TX - Carroll Independent School District (CISD) took a significant step towards addressing the challenges of recruitment and retention within its Special Education department during its February 5th Special Workshop. Following a thorough examination of the district's needs and market trends, the Board of Trustees approved the implementation of stipends aimed at attracting and retaining highly skilled Special Education professionals.

Dr. Tamy Smalskas, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, joined by Stacie Bonner, Executive Director for Special Programs, gave a comprehensive presentation during the meeting. The presentation highlighted the pressing issue of hard-to-fill positions within the district, particularly in specialized areas such as Special Education. Bonner underscored the importance of remaining competitive with neighboring districts in incentivizing professionals to join CISD.

“We are recommending these stipends due to these hard-to-fill positions,” said Bonner. “There is a shortage of special education teachers, and then when you're competing with other districts, the pool is smaller. So this is a recruitment tool.”

Smalskas also described the difficulty in hiring a number of positions throughout the district, in addition to the Special Education teachers and paraprofessionals. She said those positions include dyslexia therapists and speech language pathologists, and advanced placement course teachers, and these additional positions are under review via a third-party salary study. Findings will be presented at a later time and will be included as part of the overall budgeting process.

“Something we need to consider is that we do have some hard-to-fill positions, and we’re seeing other districts moving towards offering stipends or signing bonuses just to get quality employees into the district,” said Smalskas. “You are going to hear our recommendations for stipends, especially in the area of our Special Programs.”

Drawing from data collected from 21 area school districts, the Special Programs department reviewed stipend offerings for various types of classroom settings and student populations. The proposed stipends slightly surpass the average offerings in the region, a strategic move intended to provide the district with a competitive edge in recruitment efforts.

The approved stipend package encompasses a range of positions within the Special Education department. The following lists the stipends each type of Special Education teacher will receive:

- Teachers in Self-Contained Setting: $3,500
- Paraprofessionals in Self-Contained Classrooms: $2,000
- Resource Inclusion Teachers: $2,500
- Resource Inclusion Paraprofessionals: $1,000
- Dyslexia Therapists: $2,000

The board's approval of these stipends marks a proactive approach towards addressing staffing challenges within the district's Special Education department. By offering competitive incentives and recognizing the additional responsibilities shouldered by these professionals, CISD reaffirms its commitment to providing exceptional education and support to students with diverse needs. As the district continues to prioritize recruitment and retention initiatives, it remains steadfast in its mission to foster an inclusive learning environment to serve all students.