



# BOARD NOTES

## **A Summary of the November 16, 2020 Palestine ISD Board of Trustees Regular Meeting**

The Board of Trustees of the Palestine Independent School District held a Regular Meeting on November 16, 2020 at 6:00 PM, at the Palestine ISD Administration Office, located at 1007 East Park Avenue, Palestine, Texas 75801.

### **Spotlight**

Larissa Loveless, Director of Public Relations, introduced the spotlight portion of the meeting which included recognition of Students of the Month and Junior Rotarians for the months of October and November. A video presentation highlighting the accomplishments of each student was shown:

#### Junior Rotarians

October: Monique Cooper and Gage Concilio

November: Lesley Chavez and Justin McGuire

#### Students of the Month

October: Ashley Kiser and Grant Shiller

November: Nicholla Webb and D'Marius Session

### **Public Comment**

There were no requests for public comment.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Jason Marshal reported on the following:

- **COVID-19 Update**  
(Due to the number of Palestine High School staff and students who have tested positive for COVID or have been exposed to the virus, the PHS campus will be closed from November 12, 2020, and is scheduled to reopen on Monday, November 30, 2020. No other COVID-19 related campus closings are expected at this time.)
- **In-Person/At-Home Learning Update**  
(The district would like to keep the At-Home Learning option so that there are fewer students at school which allows for better social distancing for In-Person students. However, due to some At-Home Learning students failing to complete assignments satisfactorily; the district is encouraging students to be more diligent in completing work, and the district will continue to monitor the success of students in the At-Home Learning program.)
- **Student Enrollment as of November 12, 2020: 3,405**  
(November, 2019 Enrollment: 3,440)
- **Extracurricular Activities**  
(Cross Country: Boys advanced to the Regional Cross Country Meet for the 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, and advanced to the State Meet for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Girls finished 7<sup>th</sup> overall, and Emerith Hernandez qualified for the State Meet. Football: Varsity placed 1<sup>st</sup> in District and made it to the first round of the playoffs. The JV Team was undefeated and

the Freshman Team with only 1 loss, each claimed a District Title. Winter activities (Basketball/Soccer) are underway.)

- **Turkey Distribution**  
(A Turkey Distribution celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> year of turkeys will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2020.)
- **Thanksgiving Holidays: Mon-Fri, November 23-27, 2020**
- **Performance Incentive Distribution**  
(The district will provide a Performance Incentive to staff in December, 2020.)

### **Financial Report**

David Atkeisson, Chief Financial Officer, presented a Financial Report. Mr. Atkeisson shared the following information:

- District will submit a waiver for 3<sup>rd</sup> six weeks attendance to the Texas Education Agency.
- District financial audit is in progress with new audit firm of Pattilo, Brown, and Hill (PB&H). Audit is being conducted virtually due to COVID-19.
- Tax collections are good for this point in the school year as compared to previous school years.

### **Public Hearing: FIRST Report for 2019-2020**

Vice President Stanley Sokolowski announced a Public Hearing for discussion of the 2019-2020 FIRST Report. David Atkeisson, Chief Financial Officer, presented a report on the district's FIRST Rating. As has been the case for several years, PISD received the highest rating of A or Superior. Mr. Atkeisson informed that PISD scored 96 of 100 points, and that although the score reflected a loss of 4 points; the district was satisfied with the score because the reduced score was based on the district's debt to student ratio due to the district's many facility improvements. Vice President Sokolowski offered an opportunity for public comment. There were no questions or concerns.

### **Consent Items Approved**

- A. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 9, 2020
- B. Minutes of the Special Meeting of November 2, 2020
- C. Bills paid for October, 2020
- D. Financial Report
- E. Monthly Investment Report
- F. Tax Collection Report
- G. Donations
- H. PHS Fishing Team  
\$250 from Shaver Auto Sales & Service  
\$250 from Golden Aqua Culture  
\$250 from Belinda Wigley
- I. Credit by Exam – December, 2020 Administration
- J. Bilingual/ESL Program Evaluation Annual Report (2020)
- K. Tuition Waiver for PISD Student

### **Fall Academic Report**

Chris Kiser, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, presented a Fall Academic Report that included grade level passing percentage comparisons of 2019 and 2020 beginning of year Math and Reading Assessments.

### **Personnel Approved**

- |                  |                       |                              |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Davis, Carmen | 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade | A.M. Story Intermediate      |
| 2) Reeves, Erica | Remote Learning       | Palestine Junior High School |
| 3) White, Pamela | Special Education     | Palestine ISD                |

### **Performance Incentive**

Superintendent Marshall shared information regarding the district's Performance Incentive Program and reminded that STAAR results are one of the components that the district has used to determine staff incentive amounts since the Performance Incentive program was implemented. Since no STAAR tests were administered in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board and Superintendent discussed how Performance Incentive amounts should be determined. A decision was made to reduce the amount but to still provide a Performance Incentive to employees in December, 2020.

### **Thanksgiving Contribution**

Supt. Marshall reminded that the district had been providing each employee with a turkey prior to the Thanksgiving holiday for the past 9 years, and that this would be the tenth year if the district chose to do so again. The Board discussed and approved to provide each employee with \$50.00 in addition to a turkey to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Thanksgiving turkeys.

### **Calendar Adjustment**

Supt. Marshall and the Board discussed the school calendar in relation to Friday At-Home Learning days that the district implemented in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board voted to extend Friday At-Home Learning (for In-Person Learners) for the remainder of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester.

### **Grade Point Average Item Tabled**

Supt. Marshall informed that when the district began offering the At-Home Learning program, due to the COVID-19 pandemic; there was a concern that students who opt for At-Home Learning could potentially have a GPA advantage over students who opt for In-Person Learning. Supt. Marshall informed that there had not been any issues at this point and that no adjustments to the GPA guidelines were needed at this time.

### **Review of Legislative Platform**

The Board reviewed a draft of the Anderson County School Districts' Joint Legislative Platform for the Texas 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.

The platform consists of the following seven (7) priorities:

- 1) School Finance - Continue funding all portions of HB 3 (2019) at current levels as well as continuing to fund full-day preK (put in statute)
- 2) Assessment & Accountability - Remove the ST AAR test and all A-F accountability for 2021 and 2022
- 3) School Choice - Prohibit the use of public tax dollars to support private education (vouchers) and the expansion of charter schools
- 4) Broadband Access - Expand broadband access to rural areas with no further expansion of remote learning until access has been constructed and granted
- 5) Career and College Readiness - Require the Commissioner of Education to expand the list of CTE certifications for A-F Accountability purposes
- 6) School Governance - Continue to support and expand Districts of Innovation including school calendar and teacher certification flexibility
- 7) Teacher Recruitment - Expand TEA's Grow Your Own Program and college tuition forgiveness provision for teachers, especially in rural and low socioeconomic areas

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.