



# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

May 17, 2011

**CONTACT:**

Tina Veal-Gooch  
Director of Public Relations  
903.794.3651 ext. 1013

**NEW CURRICULUM FOR DUNBAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,  
THIRD BUDGET READING AND LEVEL 1 REDUCTION IMPLEMENTATION  
DISCUSSED DURING MONTHLY TISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

*Texarkana, TX* – During their Tuesday, May 17, 2011, regular session of the Texarkana Independent School District Board of Trustees, members were updated on future changes to Dunbar Elementary School.

Beginning the 2011-12 school year, Dunbar Elementary will be transformed into the Dunbar Intermediate Center as the Innovative Connections Academy at Dunbar (iCA@D) serving students in grades 3 thru 5.

According to Lori Ables, Director of Curriculum & Instruction for TISD, “the exciting changes for the Dunbar campus will bring increased opportunities for our students and will integrate Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) into all subject areas.” “Our goal is to replace the current educational model with more student-centered instruction, project-based learning and performance-based lessons,” she said.

“Additionally, we will be using with our staff the TISD Professional Development model which has been recognized as a state-wide exemplary program through the Texas High School Project and Texas Education Agency. Teachers will participate in graduate coursework and will complete a Masters Degree in Curriculum & Instruction.”

In other business, the Board of Trustees approved the Third Reading of the 2011-2012 budget which included three varying projection scenarios.

The first budget presented reflects revenue projections under current finance law for a total budget of \$56,144,928. “This is our ‘if life were perfect’ projection that keeps all things as they currently are – no expenditure reductions and same revenues received,” stated Deidra Reeves, Chief Financial Officer.

**-MORE-**

The second budget is based upon the Deuell Amendment for Committee Substitute Senate Bill 22 (CSSB) that is currently being discussed by legislative leaders. It reflects a \$518,207 deficit on a projected revenue budget of \$52,919,791 which in turn would have a reduction effect of \$2,900,137 in revenue.

The final budget presented is based upon Committee Substitute House Bill (CHSB) 2485 that is now "dead." However, legislators are hoping to attach it to another bill at a later date. This budget represents a \$1,217,145 deficit with projected revenue of \$52,220,853 giving a total reduction effect of \$3,599,075 in revenue.

In preparing for the anticipated budget shortfalls from the State of Texas, TISD has moved forward with the implementation of net reductions totaling \$3,096,469 for the 2011-12 school year. Overall, \$1,935,729 was reduced on the District level and \$1,160,740 was reduced on the Campus level.

"We began the process of discussing reductions with our employees in February once we knew there were going to be funding issues from the state," commented James Henry Russell, Superintendent of Schools. Our goal was to find reduction availabilities needed to meet our budgetary restraints while at the same time saving as many jobs as possible. Through close work with our Principals and department leaders, we believe that our current reduction levels are conservative but effective for the coming year."

Through the development of an Early Notice Incentive program for contracted/certified employees, TISD requested that employees notify them earlier in the school year of their pending retirement or resignations at the end of the current school year. The benefits of knowing early exit or early resignation information allowed the district to determine what financial savings could be generated through attrition.

"Typically, in a given year, TISD has around 60 to 80 resignations and/or retirements. This year, we received 92 resignations/retirements – 30 through the Early Notice Incentive program," continued Russell. "Knowing that information now has helped us to not only save and keep as many jobs as possible within the district but has lessened our lay-offs and also allowed us to truly evaluate our reassignment needs. I am pleased that our reductions reflect only the loss of 25 full-time employees through attrition, 20 employees who will be reassigned and 6 employees, who unfortunately, will be laid-off."

"I have been amazed at our Tiger Family and their willingness to pull together, give a little here and there in order to make our needed budget reductions work for the coming year," said Russell. "There is still time for the community to let their voices be heard."

**-MORE-**

“We have been successful in this budget process and getting to where we need to be and school is going to start in August 2011. The cuts that we have made are the best ones that were available, but they do impact our students and the community overall. We need the public’s voices to be heard along with ours. I encourage every person in our area to call, email, fax or write every elected official in Austin that you know and demand that they make education a priority. Our future depends on it.”

**###**