

## *Coleman Board of Education Meeting Information- September 11, 2017*

*\*Information below was read at the beginning of the September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting to provide detail to the community.*

The Coleman Board of Education and Coleman Education Association (CEA) have come to a tentative agreement as of last Wednesday evening, It will be voted on later in tonight's meeting. We will be going into closed session prior to voting on the contract which is standard procedure. We are not able to discuss the tentative agreement in open session. We will then come back into Open Session for the vote. *(The Board later approved 6-0 to approve the tentative agreement. It will now go to a vote by the CEA members on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.)*

We would also like to share some detail about enrollment, historical background and the processes we have gone through this year.

While we have numbers in August, every year is different and sometimes those numbers hold prior to school starting. However, in years such as last year, there can be a significant drop the week before school begins. We decreased by 35 students from the Fall 2015 to Fall 2016 count last year. This year, at the current time, we have not only increased from last year at this time but also beat our trends. Our trends have shown an average loss of 24 students per year for the last 20 years and 27 students per year for the last 10 years. **This means that we are up 65 from the estimated budget which took into account those trends and 40 from last year's Fall State certified audit. Our current enrollment is 695. This is outstanding and to be celebrated! Our Count Day is October 4<sup>th</sup> and the State certified count will come from that.**

With our goal in the past year to be more transparent and communicate more information, more questions arise, many times because things happened just as a regular course of action in previous years but it was not publicized. We are trying to make sure the community knows more about the district as a whole.

In all districts, it is typical that there is movement of teachers near the start of school and at times after school has already begun. This has happened here for years as well when necessary. While everyone tries to avoid it, the typical plan in districts is to wait "until we see the whites of students' eyes" at school before assuming they are coming because of the significant impact on budget. Some districts even wait until Count Day the first week in October.

We posted prior to Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> for a Kindergarten teacher due to the numbers at that time (we have 70 Kindergarten students this fall!) and knowing we may have needed another teacher or two, began interviews with the other possible positions in mind.

This year, we shared the most up-to-date information with staff on their first day back, Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>. We let them know that if numbers held, we would be looking at possibly adding three more teachers and shared the particular grade levels. This would, they were aware, ultimately cause a shift for some of our current teachers. We felt, however, we had the numbers to make the switch BEFORE

school began and put students in classes so that we didn't have to move them after school started, as other districts and Coleman have done at times in the past.

On Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, our secretaries again called for the second or third time to all Clare-Gladwin RESD and Midland County schools' secretaries to ensure no Coleman students that we were unaware of had enrolled there. When we were confident in the numbers, Mrs. Araway let the teachers know that afternoon the placements they would be in. We look as an administrative team at what the teachers have taught before, where they are best suited and where it makes the least disruption. There are many factors involved in this. Reassignments occur many years not only in the past in Coleman, but also in other districts. We were, fortunately, able to do it prior to the start of school this year.

We were able to hire and complete all paperwork and fingerprinting for two teachers, Elizabeth Moore and Celeste Mills, Kindergarten and the 2/3 split, respectively. They were supported by other staff in order to be with students on the first day of school. We are still in the interview phase for our added 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and in the interim have a highly qualified substitute who is familiar with our building and has subbed there previously. It is our goal, always, to interview any and all candidates with strong backgrounds. We want to ensure that we hire the best candidate possible with solid credentials and skills while moving as quickly as possible.

**It is exciting to have such an increase in students and addition of outstanding staff. We attribute that to the exciting programs and public response to all that is going on in Coleman Schools. We have our teachers, support staff, community members, parents, students and administrators to thank for getting the word out about what makes Coleman a "preferred district". Thank you! Your efforts are greatly appreciated!**