

ON BOARD

BY - THE - MINUTES REPORT

APRIL 2016

Board approves massive list of projects

With the increase in enrollment this year, capital projects that were once on hold because of a lack of funds are now scheduled. The Board approved a list of improvements all across the District totaling in excess of \$780,000. The list includes:

- Drainage work at Commerce Middle School
- Parking lot projects at CES and CHS
- Camera surveillance system throughout the District
- Parking lot lights at CMS
- Resurfacing of track and construction of pole vaulting pit
- Resurfacing of tennis courts at CHS
- Clean existing and mount additional stage lights at CHS
- New light board, portable stage lights and rewiring sound board at CHS
- Construction of elevated areas to house lighting and sound equipment
- Restriping of parking lots at CHS, ACW, CES and Central Office
- Storage building project to store athletic and lawn equipment
- Concrete areas at baseball and softball fields for stands
- Playground equipment at ACW
- Fencing at athletics and bus barn
- Repainting lockers at CMS



Cooper resigns as superintendent

Eight years is more than a lifetime these days in the tenure of a school superintendent, but Blake Cooper isn't your average superintendent. However, Cooper's career here is ending June 30 as his letter of resignation to the Board of Trustees at its April meeting stated.

Under Cooper's leadership, CISD enrollment increased to a nine-year high with a record number of students attending who do not reside within district boundaries. Because of increased enrollment, the financial condition has improved which allows improvements to facilities, salary increases for staff and additional learning opportunities for students.

See more story on page two.



Blake Cooper received a standing ovation from the Board and administrators as he concluded reading his resignation letter, which thanked his staff for their commitment and loyalty.

"Under Blake Cooper's leadership, Commerce ISD has been transformed into a district that is focused on what's best for students. Because of the many initiatives he has put into place, CISD is poised to reach new heights in student achievement, making it a premier school district in northeast Texas."

Board President Kathleen Hooten

Powerlifters win state awards

Three CHS students placed in the UIL State Powerlifting meet. Left to right are Matthew Rumbaugh, 9th place; Nicole Barrett, 6th place; and Sierra Patterson, 5th place. They were recognized, along with Coach Travis Smith, at the April Board meeting.



Superintendent's report...

- Enrollment is 1633, one student down from last month. Mr. Cooper said enrollment is still 72 students above this time last year.
- The Commerce Schools Educational Enrichment Foundation hosted its annual Boots & BBQ Celebration and Fundraiser April 16 at CHS with its biggest year ever. Over \$19,000 was raised for teacher grants for innovative materials and teaching strategies.

In other action...

- The Board accepted the resignations of ACW administrators Trish King and Deanna Hays and Sherry Rector, CMS teacher
- The next regular Board meeting was set for Monday, May 16, 2016, with executive session at 6 p.m. and the regular meeting at 7 p.m.

BOARD MEETINGS

7:00 • 3315 Washington

Monday May 16

Monday June 20

Thank you, Blake Cooper 'Champion by Choice' role model for progress

Cooper oversaw the renovation of the old A.C. Williams Elementary School using district staff saving thousands of dollars. The former school houses the central administrative offices; Tri County SSA, a special education cooperative; NETCAT Career and Technology Consortium and Chartwells Food Service.

Support services, including food and custodial services, were outsourced during his leadership. This action has resulted in higher quality food choices and moving the district from a \$40,000 deficit when instituted to a \$25,000 surplus currently. Taking the management of custodial services outside of the district using GCA Services Group has increased efficiency and decreased cost.

An energy conservation project currently underway will update lighting, plumbing and HVAC systems throughout the district. The \$4.5 million cost is expected to be recouped through reduced energy usage. Another energy conservation project, put in place shortly after Cooper arrived, has met its goal of saving \$1 million over five years. An additional \$1 million in savings is expected over the next five years.

Cooper also put into place additional opportunities to showcase student talent with the Winter Arts Festival held in December each year. CMS and CHS bands, the ACW and CES choirs, the CHS drama department and artists from each campus perform or exhibit their artistic works at the annual show.

The Hall of Honor, established by Cooper in 2010, recognizes former students and staff who have made lasting contributions to our community and society. To date, 24 individuals have been inducted into the Hall of Honor in ceremonies that take place during homecoming in the fall. Dr. Jack Pirkey, Loretta Kibler, Janet Peek, Dr. Mary Hendrix and Conner John are included in the list of honorees.

Foremost in Cooper's accomplishments includes partnerships that he has developed with area organizations, including Texas A&M University-Commerce. He fostered arrangements to benefit students including an academy set to open at CHS next fall where area students can enroll in dual credit courses exclusively while continuing to participate in extracurricular activities such as band and athletics. Students from area districts will also be allowed to enroll.

In his vision to provide opportunities for students after high school, he instituted various career and technology certifications including electrical, welding and nurse's aide. He arranged for the total cost of dual credit classes with A&M-Commerce to be paid for by the district, making the cost of over 25 semester hours totally free for parents and students. He vision was furthered by his motto, "CISD students are future-ready."

Cooper was named the Region 10 Education Service Center's Superintendent of the Year in 2015.

The superintendency was the capstone of his career which began in 1982 when he was a graduate assistant at East Texas State University. He began teaching and coaching in public schools at Sheldon ISD. After another stint at ETSU, he taught at Sulphur Springs High School in 1988. He was also employed at Garland ISD and Winnsboro ISD. At Edgewood ISD, he served as teacher and coach before being promoted to principal of Edgewood High School. In 2006, he was offered the position of assistant superintendent at Kaufman ISD. He returned to Commerce with his family in January 2008.

Cooper plans to begin another endeavor after this retirement June 30 and spend more time with his family, who live in the area.