

## Alvord ISD Community News

Alvord ISD Family: I have some highlights for you from the November 27, 2023 school board meeting.

**Retention Incentive** – the board approved a \$500 retention incentive when this year’s budget was adopted, all full-time employees received the \$500 before Thanksgiving. We received several notes of appreciation from the staff which were shared with the board members.

**Accountability Update** – we still have not received our 2022-2023 accountability ratings from the state. Over 100 school district have sued the Texas Education Agency (TEA) because they believe the criteria used to determine the ratings were changed during the school year. A trial date for the lawsuit has been set for February 12. TEA released a “What If” release of ratings for the 2021-2022 school year which show what ratings we would have received if the new criteria had been in place. None of our campus or district ratings would have changed except for Alvord Middle School which would had received an A rating instead of a B.

**Safety Audit** –The Texas School Safety Center Conducted an Intruder Audit at Alvord Elementary on November 8th. No findings were reported meaning all exterior and interior doors were secure.

**Safety Grant** –The district was awarded \$828,659 from the Texas Education Agency through the Cycle I School Safety Grant. Special thanks to Alvord ISD Director of Safety & Security / Police Chief Tony Vo and Director of Operations Charlie Mann for their work in applying for this grant. The grant is very specific on what the money can be used for. Initial plans are for the money to be used for issues such as addressing fencing and anti-scaling devices around the district, upgrading emergency egresses, re-keying of the district facilities, a district camera system, and upgrading mechanical door closers.

**K9 Grant** - We also received a \$10,000 K9 grant for the Alvord ISD Police Department, more information about the district K9 will be coming from Chief Vo soon.

**Legislative Update** – the House has again voted down vouchers, which were tied to school funding. If the additional school funding had passed Alvord ISD would have received approximately \$428,760 in additional revenue which could have been used to help offset inflation with increased pay for all staff members. Teachers, counselors, and nurses would have received a one-time \$4,000 stipend. Additional safety funding has also been proposed. We are waiting to see if Governor Abbott calls another special session.

## Staffing Update –

- The district will be advertising for an additional Dyslexia Therapist for the 2023-2024 school year due to the increase in the number of students receiving dyslexia services.
- We are advertising for two maintenance / bus driver positions.

- We are also advertising for translators for ARD and parent meetings as we have seen an increase in the number of student and families who are not fluent in English enrolled in the district.
- Employment opportunities can be seen on our district website at <https://www.alvordisd.net/employment>

**Food Services Update**– we received a \$30,000 Local Food for Schools Grant from the Texas Department of Agriculture. Special thanks to Alvord ISD Food Services Director Shelly Laaser for applying for this grant.

**Delaney Mancil Memorial Buckle Show** – Alvord ISD school board member Jim Looney thanked everyone who volunteered to work the Delaney Mancil Buckle Show including AHS Ag Teacher Brad Bland and the Alvord Middle School PTO for working the concession stand. 17 scholarships were given out to students.

**High School Ag Shop Renovation Project** – the project is on schedule to be completed before Christmas. A CNC Plasma Table and a new Plasma Torch for the new space have been ordered and are expected to be delivered in January.

**Fund Balance Analysis:** Our audited fund balances will not be final until the January board meeting, but we have projections from our auditor which should be close. The auditor is projecting a fund balance in the General Fund of \$4,539,953 which is a decrease of \$1,723,738.

- The board approved \$2,874,586 in budget amendments in the past year including \$1.7 million to pay down the \$3.5 million loan for the intermediate campus renovation project and for several other facility projects. These budget amendments are paid for out of the fund balance.
- This year we have to pay a minimum of \$291,267 on the loan for the intermediate campus renovation project. These payments will be paid for out of the fund balance.
- The loan payment and completion of the facility projects will bring our projected fund balance down to \$3,652,415 which is a healthy fund balance for a district of our size.
- We still had a very good budget year last year, with the budget amendments taken out we would have put \$508,508 back in fund balance.
- In summary we are not a financial position to consider any additional facility projects this year that will be paid for out of the fund balance.

**FIRST Hearing and Report** – I am pleased to announce we again received a Superior rating and a FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) report. The language below taken from the FIRST website explains the purpose of the FIRST system:

The state's school financial accountability rating system, known as the School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST), ensures that Texas public schools are held accountable for the quality of their financial management practices and that they improve those practices. The system is designed to encourage Texas public schools to better manage their financial resources to provide the maximum allocation possible for direct instructional purposes.

The electronic version of the 2022-2023 Alvord ISD FIRST report can be seen at

<https://tealprod.tea.state.tx.us/First/forms/District.aspx?year=2021&district=249901>

For more information about FIRST you can go to the website at

[https://tea.texas.gov/Finance\\_and\\_Grants/Financial\\_Accountability/Financial\\_Integrity\\_Rating\\_System\\_of\\_Texas\\_FIRST](https://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Financial_Accountability/Financial_Integrity_Rating_System_of_Texas_FIRST)

**2023-2024 Board Goals** – the board approved the updated board goals.

**Superintendent’s Evaluation Instrument** – the board approved the updated Superintendent’s Evaluation Instrument for the 2024-2025 school year.

**Appraisal District Ballots** – each year the board has the option of voting the in Wise County Board of Directors Election. The board voted to cast it’s votes for Noel Ruddick.