

Alvord ISD Family –

I have some highlights for you from the August 28 and August 30 school board meetings.

Enrollment Report – we currently have 846 students enrolled, we finished last year with 792 students. We have 233 students at the high school, 194 at the middle school, 106 at the intermediate school, and 313 students at the elementary school. If we had not opened the intermediate campus we would have 419 students at the elementary, which would be well over the practical capacity of 345 students for the elementary school building.

Student Transfer Report - 72 students are enrolled as transfers, which is down from 89 students last year and 104 students two years ago. We expect this number to continue to decrease as we have restricted new transfers due to our enrollment growth. Approximately 100 students who live in Alvord ISD were enrolled as transfer students in other districts last year, about half of those attend Decatur ISD. If all of those students attended Alvord ISD we would not have the space needed to keep our class sizes small.

STAAR Scores - thanks to the hard work of our teachers, students, and staff and with support and encouragement from parents we outperformed the state in every tested subject. We outperformed the state by 10 percentage points or more in 10 of the 17 tested subjects. 7th Grade Math, HS English I and HS English II all outperformed the state by 19 percentage points. I have copied the article from the Wise County Messenger highlighting our performance below:

<https://www.wcmessenger.com/articles/new-staar-results-released/>

Facilities Update – The intermediate school renovation project is complete except for the gym HVAC system which will not be installed until next summer due to supply chain issues. Some additional safety features are also in the works for the intermediate school. We are currently waiting on the engineers to stamp the revised plan for the high school ag shop expansion project.

Budget – the board approved the budget for the 2023-2024 school year which includes \$11,344,566 for general operations, \$706,084 for food service, and \$741,000 for debt service.

Tax Rates – the board approved an M&O tax rate of \$.7575, an I&S tax rate of .1247 for a total tax rate of \$.8822 for the 2023-2024 school year. The state legislators recently passed legislation that compressed our tax rates from last year which were \$.9429 (M&O), \$.126084 (I&S) for a previous total tax rate of \$1.0689. Voters will be asked to approve this legislation and tax rate compression in the November election.

Good Cause Exception for House Bill 3 Armed Security Officer Requirement –

House Bill 3 (HB 3), effective September 1, 2023, adds new Texas Education Code section 37.0814. This new law requires each school board to determine the appropriate

number of armed security officers for each district campus and, absent a good cause exception, ensure at least one armed security officer—specifically, a commissioned peace officer—is present during regular school hours at each campus. A school board can claim a good cause exception to this requirement due to lack of funding or qualified personnel. The state provided \$15,000 per campus in additional funding for this requirement. Due to the lack of funding provided by the state, the Alvord ISD school board approved a good cause exemption for this requirement.

Alvord ISD currently employs Tony Vo as the Director of Safety and Security / Chief of Police. The board approved the employment of an additional peace officer (more information below). The students of Alvord ISD are served on 3 campuses (High School, Middle School, Elementary / Intermediate School).

Since 2018, the Alvord ISD has successfully created, implemented, and sustained a Guardian program. The district has multiple district staff members who have met the board requirement to carry a firearm within the district. There are Guardians on each campus, throughout the district, that meet the requirements for alternative options to comply with HB3.

New Police Officer – the board approved the employment of Kirk Blakesley as a school police officer. Officer Blakesley has over 20 years of experience as a US Navy Corpsman / Medic including numerous combat deployments. He was hired by the Wise County Sheriff's Office in September 2020, he has served the past two years as the School Resource Officer (SRO) for Chico ISD. Officer Blakesely will primarily serve the elementary and intermediate campuses while Chief Vo will primarily serve the middle school and high school campuses.

Dr. Randy Brown
Alvord ISD Superintendent