

The Bandera PROPHEET

February 17, 2022

Bandera ISD rezones elementary school boundaries, approves next school year calendar

By Jessica Nohealapa'ahi
The Bandera Prophet

Bandera ISD trustees approved rezoning the boundary lines between Alkek and Hill Country Elementary schools. The current dividing line at Rohrbach Road in Pipe Creek is moving west, and will incorporate incoming students as far as Bandera River Ranch and Bandera Ranch Acres on Polly Peak Road.

The difference between the two campuses is about 200 students, Transportation Department Director Kay Miller said, adding the expansion should be a long-term solution to the disparity that would otherwise increase over time. The cost in extra transportation for another bus route will be about \$18,000, Miller said - a savings compared to adding staff members and portables to Alkek Elementary, which is where the lion's share of students are enrolled.

District Superintendent Gary Bitzkie said families who are currently enrolled at Alkek and wish to stay may do so. Only newly enrolled students who live in the expanded zone will be mandated to attend Hill Country Elementary.

"We are not forcing our existing parents to do anything. They will have the option of changing or staying," Bitzkie said, adding once families within the new zone choose a campus, they will have to remain at that campus through the end of fifth grade.

The areas affected include residents on Bear Creek Road, Castle Lake, Privilege Creek Road, Cielo Rio Subdivision, Rohrbach Road, River Oaks Subdivision, Bandera River Ranch and Bandera Ranch Acres. The

extra driving distance to Hill Country Elementary versus Alkek from within the new zone is about seven miles, Miller said. The change will take effect in August, when the new school year begins.

Trustees approved the 2022-23 school calendar, which begins Aug. 15 and ends May 25. The calendar includes traditional holidays, two teacher work days, two early release days, two professional development days and incorporates a total of 1,350 embedded minutes to accommodate bad weather delays.

The only caveat, Director of Learning Laura Klein said, was stock show days may shift from Jan. 12 and 13, 2023, to Jan. 6, 2023. The Bandera County Junior Livestock Show aligns with Kerr County's, and Kerrville planners have reportedly discussed changing their dates. If they do, Klein said the BISD calendar will be amended.

In other business, trustees accepted a \$47,500 donation from RFS Rubber Flooring System, Inc., to the BISD Athletic Department. The donation includes labor, materials and installation of flooring in the high school main weight room, as well as resurfacing the concrete area adjacent to the weight room.

The planned work complements a \$19,000 donation from the former Bandera Athletic Capital Improvement Team, which paid for base floor materials for the weight room. The project is set to be completed before the next board meeting on March 21.

Finally, following a brief closed session, trustees unanimously approved hiring Bitzkie as the district's superintendent. Bitzkie was named the lone finalist during a special called meeting on Jan. 20, after serving as interim superintendent.