Pilot Point ISD
Aubrey ISD
School Days
Tioga ISD

Friday, August 7, 2020

The Post-Signal
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The same COVID-19 pandemic that forced school buildings to close and educators and parents to scramble to figure out how to keep school going virtually in the spring has forced local districts to spend countless hours planning for the fall.

Although their approaches vary, Pilot Point, Aubrey and Tioga’s school districts have used community input and public health information to form their plans.

“The safety of our kids and the faculty and staff of Pilot Point ISD is absolutely priority number one,” Todd Southard said in a letter included in the Return to School Plan. “However, as I have heard from so many parents, there is certainly a concern about our kids’ emotional and educational well-being, too, during this pandemic.”

PPISD will begin Aug. 13 with in-person and virtual instruction, TISD starts the same day virtually only and AISD will start like Pilot Point on Aug. 17.

Pilot Point ISD

COVID-19 safety procedures will be added to the first day curriculum across Pilot Point, according to the plan the district published.

There will also be check-in screenings and mask requirements for all age levels as they come to school.

The screening includes a temperature check as well as questions about possible COVID-19 symptoms and potential contact with a COVID-positive person.

“If a student fails the screening, the student’s siblings, if applicable, will be quarantined as well on their respective campuses until parents can pick them up,” according to the district’s plan.

Once the kids head to class, students in third grade and younger, “or who have a disability, or who have a medical reason not to wear a mask, will not be required to wear a mask in the classroom,” the plan says.

Masks will be needed in the hallway and during dismissal for all ages.
Districts weigh health, return to face-to-face

the plan said.

Staff members will need to “perform a self-screening by filling out a Google form each morning before arriving on campus rooms/work areas,” according to the plan.

The plan also says staff members won’t be required to have masks on when they are at least “six feet away from students.”

Limiting communal supplies will be required this year, and no field trips will be planned for the foreseeable future in Pilot Point ISD.

And visitors will not have as much access to the campuses as they have in the past.

And if someone, whether students or staff, tests positive, the district has several guidelines in place.

“Students or staff members who have come into close contact with a positive COVID-19 individual will be required to self-quarantine for 14 calendar days and may not return to campus during that time,” the plan said. “For students, alternate methods of instruction will be provided during the period of quarantine.”

Someone who has had COVID-19 needs to satisfy the requirements to return to school “before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must obtain a medical professional’s note clearing the individual,” according to the PPISD plan.

Different districts made their own call on whether to allow students attending virtually to participate in extracurricular activities.

“For those students who choose to learn virtually, they will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities, and they will only be allowed to move to a traditional setting once a grading period (the end of each six weeks) has completed,” according to the plan.

Because of state attendance requirements, virtual learners across the board will have to sign on daily and be on for at least four hours a day for their districts to receive funding.

And while PPISD is mainly following the asynchronous model, “some courses may be offered live, and students may be required to login at specific times of the day in order to participate in the class,” according to the plan.

While it will still have school-provided transportation available, Pilot Point ISD has asked parents to bring their students to and from school as much as possible.

Bus riders will have to wear a mask no matter their age in Pilot Point, and the district said it will provide hand sanitizer but not masks for the students.

The plan also asks for students to sit either on their own or with their siblings in each individual seat.

Bus drivers will be required to wear masks unless they have an authorized exemption and to disinfect the buses after they are emptied of students.

To find the full text of Pilot Point’s plan, visit sites.google.com/pilot-pointisd.com/ppisd-covid19/covid-19-return-to-school-plan.

Aubrey ISD

Aubrey ISD also will require students attending face-to-face in fourth grade and higher to wear masks “at all times that social distancing is not possible,” according to the plan.

“The protection of the AISD workforce and student body is afforded by the protective triad of personal hygiene, social distancing, and the frequent disinfection of common surfaces,” the AISD plan reads. “Personal protective equipment adds another layer of protection that is appropriate to use under certain circumstances.”

Social distancing will be used “to the greatest extent possible,” according to the plan.

“Social distancing also means eliminating contact with others, such as handshakes or hugs,” the plan says. “Likewise, effective social distancing requires that people avoid touching surfaces touched by others to the extent possible and that they avoid anyone who appears to be sick or who is coughing or sneezing.”

There will also be arrows on the ground showing school community members where they can walk.

Inside the classrooms, if the students cannot be spread out six feet apart, the district is encouraging the use of other steps to help prevent the potential spread of the virus.

The Aubrey plan spells out its policies on staff travel, library visits and virtual access, as well as locker and locker room usage.

It also details out the way food delivery will occur.

Pilot Point High School is equipped with methods to attempt to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including face masks and face shields. The local districts have worked to be ready to face the challenges this year poses.

Abigail Allen/The Post-Signal

A sign at the Tioga High School office uses humor to illustrate the necessary dimensions of social distancing.

JT Strasner/The Post-Signal

It goes into the plans for P.E., recess and bathroom access.

“Physical education classes should be conducted outdoors whenever possible,” the plan says. “When outdoors, social distancing recommendations should still be followed.”

Staggered recess is also recommended.

And for screening, “touchless
thermometers on-site will be distributed” to each campus for students and visitors.

“To help prevent the spread of the virus and reduce the risk of exposure to our staff and students, we are conducting a simple screening questionnaire for visitors conducting essential business on campus,” the plan said.

Like PPISD, Aubrey ISD is asking families to take their children to school as much as possible.

The district plan also details out its response if anyone throughout the district contracts COVID-19, complete with an explanation of how to follow self-isolation and staying home protocols.

If students are attending virtually, they will be following the asynchronous model as well.

Third graders through high school seniors will use Google Classroom. Second grade and younger will use SeeSaw.

The plan also includes a sample virtual schedule.

Aubrey’s plan can be found at www.aubreyisd.net/Page/10242.

Tioga ISD

Tioga ISD is starting the year out virtually, just to be cautious.

Superintendent Charles Holloway said he hopes students will be able to attend face-to-face again on Sept. 14, but the district will have to reassess based on the COVID-19 caseload trend as that date approaches.

Both Holloway and Assistant Superintendent Josh Ballinger have emphasized the fact that the situation is evolving and could change rapidly.

The district has released its own return to school plan.

It includes sections about student instruction, on-campus health protocols, protocols for people “confirmed, suspected or exposed to COVID-19” and general operating procedures.

Tioga plans to offer both synchronous and asynchronous options, according to the plan.

“Asynchronous Learning may include Synchronous Learning, which is two-way, real-time, live instruction between teachers and students through the computer or other electronic devices,” according to the TISD plan.

The TISD plan also specifically mentions the need to ensure any academic gaps that were caused by the spring instructional model are filled.

Tioga ISD’s plan can be found at bit.ly/30s35iQ.

A checklist and a thermometer like those pictured at Tioga High School will be well-used tools at schools this fall, as staff looks to help prevent COVID-19 outbreaks.
PILOT POINT ISD AT A GLANCE

www.pilotpointisd.com

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School Board Meetings
• Date: Second Wednesday of Each Month
• Time: 5 p.m.
• Place: Administration Building, 829 S. Harrison, Pilot Point, TX 76258

School Meal Prices
• Elementary and Intermediate: Breakfast - $1.50; Lunch - $2.80
• Middle School and High School: Breakfast - $1.50; Lunch - $3.30

2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Aug. 3-7: Staff Development (Non-instructional Day)
Aug. 10-12: Staff Development (Non-instructional Day)
Aug. 13: First Day of School/Begin First Grading Period
Sept. 7: Holiday
Sept. 25: End First Grading Period
Sept. 28: Staff Development (Non-instructional Day)
Sept. 29: Begin Second Grading Period
Oct. 2: Early Release
Oct. 12: Staff Development (Non-instructional Day)
Oct. 30: Second Grading Period Ends
Nov. 2: Staff Development (Non-instructional Day)
Nov. 3: Third Grading Period Begins
Nov. 23-24: PD Comp Day/Student Holiday
Nov. 25-27: Holiday
Dec. 18: Third Grading Period Ends (Early Release)
Dec. 21-31: Holiday
Jan. 1: Holiday
Jan. 4: Staff Development (Non-instructional Day)
Jan. 5: Fourth Grading Period Begins
Jan. 18: Holiday
Feb. 12: Fourth Grading Period Ends
Feb. 15: Staff Development (Non-instructional Day)
Feb. 16: Fifth Grading Period Begins
Mar. 12: Early Release
Mar. 15-19: Holiday
Apr. 1: Fifth Grading Period Ends
Apr. 2: Holiday
Apr. 5: Sixth Grading Period Begins
Apr. 23: Bad Weather Make-up Day
May 19: Sixth Grading Period Ends (Early Release)/Last Day of School
May 20: Bad Weather Make-up Day
May 21: Staff Development (Non-instructional Day)

BACK TO SCHOOL CALENDAR

Aug. 4
• Middle School Virtual 101 Parent Night, 6-7 p.m.
Aug. 5
• Elementary School Virtual 101 Parent Night, 6-7 p.m.
Aug. 6
• High School Virtual 101 Parent Night, 6-7 p.m.
Aug. 10
• Intermediate School Virtual 101 Parent Night, 6-7 p.m.
Aug. 11
• Elementary Meet the Teacher, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Aug. 13
• First day of school.
Putting the community in Community Journalism.
The Post-Signal/School Days Friday, August 7, 2020

Room to play

The new PPHS percussion room means percussion players will have the chance to watch their work in their reflections to make sure their drumsticks hit the right heights and to see how they match their fellow drumline members.

Band hall gets needed 3,000 square foot expansion

By Abigail Allen
Managing Editor

When the Pilot Point High School Band students walk into the band hall for their first day of school, the room is going to look different.

The practice rooms won't need to serve as storage rooms, and there’s an entirely new section that doubles the amount of space the band program gets to fill. And that will make spacing the students out because of the COVID-19 pandemic more workable.

“It could not have come at a better time, for sure,” PPHS Band Director Dan Balkema said. “With the current guidelines from UIL stating that we can’t have more than 50% capacity in the current band hall, this will help substantially.”

Having multiple spaces available that are large enough to accommodate groups of students who are practicing social distancing will be beneficial for the band as it practices inside.

“I can split up between the multiple rooms that are over here to make that work with the other adults that I have on staff,” Balkema said.

Some of the students, specifically the students on the leadership team and the percussion students, have gotten the chance to see the changes.

“They were really excited,” he said. “The band kids are going to love it once they’re able to get up here.”

The 3,000 square foot expansion has been in the works for more than a year.

Approved by the board during former Superintendent Dan R. Gist’s tenure, the addition that added a percussion room, three practice rooms and a storage room was constructed to extend the life of the band hall and accommodate a growing program.

Balkema’s band has grown to about 100 students.
"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

MARK 10:13-16

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Saturday | Reconciliation 3:15-4:15 p.m. | Mass 5 p.m.
Sunday | Masses 8 a.m., 11 a.m., 12:45 p.m. (Spanish) | Confessions 3:15-4:15 p.m.
Although the project ran into some delays thanks to the pandemic and the rain this spring, it is ready to house the students who are returning Aug. 13.

In the percussion room, mirrors line two of the walls, which will be useful for multiple groups in the band. “The mirrors are for the percussion kids to watch their stick heights,” Balkema said. “It’s kind of a multipurpose room, too, because I think our color guard is going to plan on using this for dance.”

Acoustic panels are spaced throughout the room near the ceiling to help dampen the sound. “It would get loud in here if it weren’t for the sound panels,” Balkema said, laughing.

As the program has grown and started to outgrow the space it had to fill, Balkema and the other band directors had to resort to having students practice outside, especially during solo and ensemble season. That meant they and their instruments were out in the elements and that they also were not in as secured of an environment as they are when they can practice indoors.

Adding the three new practice rooms, each with their own Williams Rhapsody 2 electric piano, means solo and ensemble preparations should be improved.

“Having this additional square footage and space has really opened up the possibilities for us to be able to split and not be rained on outside, not freeze or be blown away,” Balkema said.

The practice rooms are all identical and good sized, Balkema said.

The storage room will house seasonal instruments and marching uniforms.

Even the external doors and the loading area have him excited. “This is awesome, where we have two ... doors, one size is bigger than the other, and the reason for that is our percussion instruments,” Balkema said.

The larger door will allow instruments like timpani to pass through. And the ramp has been planned ahead to make it easier if the program uses a semi to transport the instruments and equipment, he said.

The new storage room that runs the length of the percussion room next door is a game changer for the PPHS band program. Having the space for seasonal and uniform storage means the other spaces inside the pre-existing band hall can be used for their intended purposes.
**PPISD NEW TEACHERS/STAFF**

**HIGH SCHOOL**
- Michelle Booker: BIM/Girls Athletic Coordinator.
- Ali Bullard: Spanish.
- Carly Case: High School Dean of Students.
- Joseph Cohn: Assistant Band Director.
- Tabitha Gray: High School Art.
- Tonya Loftis: Instructional Coach.
- Jacob Williams: High School Principal.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**
- Larese Anderson: ESL teacher.
- Andie Clark: Seventh Grade LA/Coach.

**INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**
- Angel Copley: Third Grade ELAR.
- Pamela Harris: Sixth Grade Math.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
- Jennifer Allen: Kindergarten.
- Monica Bickers: Second Grade.
- Jannay Morgan: Second Grade.
- Brandi Shumate: Second Grade.
- Magali Tavera: Fifth Grade Bilingual.

**Ready & waiting**
Letter jackets that PPHS students ordered during the spring semester sit in the band hall after they were delivered to the school in mid-July. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the company that makes them, causing delays in production and thus delivery.

Abigail Allen/ The Post-Signal
Pilot Point ISD Superintendent Todd Southard wants the teachers at every district to know that the central administration office staff members are behind them and available to them.

By Abigail Allen
Managing Editor

For Todd Southard, work culture makes a huge difference.

That’s why he’s making a push to ensure his teachers feel supported and appreciated.

“I think happy teachers are better teachers,” he said. “I think they will go a little bit further for their kids, and, let’s just be honest, people who really enjoy their job do a better job.

If they enjoy coming into work every day, I think that pays off in the end for kids.”

Southard officially took on the mantle of Pilot Point ISD superintendent on July 1, but he’s not new to the district.

He worked as the Pilot Point High School principal from 2014 until he filled the superintendent’s seat. Former Superintendent Dan R. Gist resigned on April 1, and Assistant Superintendent Harold Colson served as the head of the district during that three month gap.

Before Southard joined the PPISD family, he served as the Silverton ISD superintendent from 2013-14. He was in Anna ISD before that, serving as assistant principal of Anna High School from 2005-07 and principal of Anna Middle School from 2007-13.

He taught English and was a coach before he made his transition into being an administrator.

Southard points to the culture he was able to cultivate at PPHS as a contributing factor in improving that campus, he said.

“When you look at the scores, we’ve done pretty well, and I think it’s because of—one of the reasons why and a big reason why—has been the culture and climate of that building,” Southard said.

Working with the principal

“Happy teachers are better teachers.” - PPISD Superintendent Todd Southard
Central office staff to be more present on campuses  

throughout Pilot Point ISD—Rae Ann Strittmatter at Pilot Point Elementary, Darla Wooten at the intermediate school, Robyn Leslie at Pilot Point Middle and Jacob Williams at PPHS—is what he loves most about his new job.

“The most important thing to me is that my principals know I’m there for them,” Southard said.

He’s taking that literally. On the morning of July 31, he visited each school.

“Just walked by and said, ‘Hey, are you good? Do you need help with anything?’” Southard said.

In that vein, he has asked the central administration office staff to be prepared to be more visible throughout the district.

“I think that helps with culture,” he said. “I think people like the fact that they see us out and about, and I don’t want my teachers to feel like central office is an island, we’re just over here doing our own thing. I want us to be out and be seen. I just think that helps things.”

And the central office staff has seemed receptive to the new change.

“I certainly think they see the merits of it and understand the reasoning behind it, and so we’re starting ... the Get Out Campaign,” Southard said.

Having that time of interacting with the people at each individual campus also gives Southard and his team of administrators the chance to see the good and the bad brought to their attention by the campus staffs for themselves.

“You can’t know what’s going on without being there,” Southard said. “... Seeing it firsthand gives you a lot better perspective as to what exactly is the issue. And so if I sit here in my office all day, I’m not going to know what’s going on, and that’s one of the reasons I’m going to be out and about a lot.”

Being present gives the principals a chance to bring up their concerns or questions in a more organic way, Southard said.

“I’ve gone to them every day and just checked on them,” he said. “There’s always something going on, whether it’s a personnel issue, a curriculum issue, obviously the COVID stuff has been a huge issue that they’ve had questions about. But I think it’s imperative for me to have that open line of communication with them.”

That’s not to say he wants to micromanage his principals. Drawing on his own experience as a principal, he said, he understands the challenges they face and the time constraints they have to handle.

“To try to help them out, that’s why I go to them rather than they come to me,” Southard said.

He added that he’s “got the easy job.”

Southard has been making himself especially available to Williams, who follows him as Pilot Point High School’s new principal.

“He works incredibly hard, he is incredibly smart,” Southard said. “I think he’s already started making connections with a lot of the teachers, and I do go by and check on Jacob quite a bit, because I know it’s hard being a first-year principal and being a high school principal, in addition to doing it in a pandemic.”

He also said “that guy, he’s got it.”

Williams appreciates Southard’s role as a mentor, saying that he’s excited to learn from him.

“He’s probably the best communicator I’ve ever seen,” Williams said. “And he keeps us in the loop, and anything I need, he’s right there to answer it.”

Although each campus has its own individual challenges, Southard said, some issues are the same, no matter the level.

“When it comes to personnel issues, the personnel issues that you have in an elementary school can be the same as ... a high school issue; discipline issue could be the same,” he said. “So, even though they’re different aged kids, there’s still a lot of common things among the campuses, regardless of the level.”

Even considering the upheaval of trying to balance the public health crisis with the desire students and staff have to be reunited, Southard said, he’s been happy in his new role.

“I’ve actually really liked my job, as crazy as that sounds,” Southard said. “I’ve actually really enjoyed it. It’s a challenge. I like it.”
PPISD wants to plan in advance for growth

By Abigail Allen
Managing Editor

Growth is coming to the area Pilot Point ISD serves, and its new superintendent wants to be ready to tackle that growth with numbers and planning.

Getting to that point, however, will be a multistep process, PPISD Superintendent Todd Southard said.

“The two big pieces are demographic study and what’s our bonding capacity,” he said. “Those are the two key pieces of information we’ve got to get. Have those numbers and know exactly what we can do right now, and then go from there.”

The district’s most recent demographic study, Southard said, was completed about five years ago.

“A lot can change in five years,” Southard said.

And more change is on the horizon. Southard has been establishing a relationship with Pilot Point City Manager Britt Lusk, who took on his role in the city in April and who Southard said he believes he’s “going to work well with.”

“He’s made it very clear to me that he wants to have a good working relationship with the district, and we want to have a good working relationship with the city,” Southard said.

A demographic study, Southard said, can help determine where future schools should be built to best serve the student populations.

The district’s boundaries are not contiguous, with the smaller geographical area of the district lying on the northern side of Ray Roberts Lake. All together, the district covers 126.15 square miles, and it touches Denton, Grayson and Cooke counties.

“And we’ve got to sit down and look at how we want the district to look in the future,” Southard said. “Do we want to go with the Allen ISD model where we have just one big high school, or do we want to go more to the Frisco model, where you have several high schools? So, those are the types of conversations that the board and I are going to have to have over the course of the next few years.”

Developers will often help school districts with locations for elemen-
PPISD administration looks to work with local officials

tary schools, Southard said, but they are generally not as willing to help find a spot for schools designed for older students “because it takes up too much land and it also adds too much traffic.”

In Southard’s opinion, that means the district needs to look at obtaining property that could house those types of buildings.

“I don’t want to get into a situation to where we’re having to pick and choose and get what we can get,” Southard said. “I want us to be able to kind of drive our future rather than having to piecemeal it.”

And, as Aubrey ISD experienced with the construction of Jackie Fuller Elementary, building a school takes a lot of time and effort and can face construction delays.

That, combined with the district’s failed bond elections in 2016 and 2017, is part of why Southard wants to get the details determined before attempting to ask voters to pass a bond issue.

“They’re going to have questions, and I can’t sit there and go in there and not be prepared, and so we’ve got to do our research and we’ve got to do those sorts of things before we get to that point,” Southard said.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a potential wrinkle in making the long-range plans, Southard said.

“The problem with the COVID-19 stuff, it just stops everything dead in its tracks,” he said. “I mean, it takes 99% of my day. That’s all I do. And so it’s really been hard to do a lot of the other things I’ve wanted to already start doing, because it’s constant.”

Southard plans to draw on his experience working in Anna ISD as it experienced heavy growth as he shapes the district’s approach to preparing for growth.

“The first year I was there, we grew by 18%,” he said. “That second year I was there, we grew by about 22%. So, I have had some experience dealing with that, and knowing it comes at you from every direction and it comes fast, and so we have got to start the planning process.”

The schools, as they stand, have plenty of room to accommodate growth for a few years, Southard said.

“Schools don’t necessarily outgrow themselves because of classrooms,” he said. “You can nearly always add another wing. Where you outgrow the building is ... the commons-type areas that can’t handle the growth.”

Another factor Southard, like Dan R. Gist before him, has to consider is the number of students who have left Pilot Point ISD to attend schools in other districts, including Tioga and Aubrey.

“It is certainly problematic, because that affects our funding, and so it all goes hand-in-hand,” Southard said. “... We’ve got to get our scores up. There are some areas that we need to improve upon to make the district more attractive than those around us.”

He also said he believes Pilot Point will be “a district here in about three or four years that people will take notice of.”

“I think we’re a good district, I do,” Southard said. “I wouldn’t have my kids here if I didn’t. Are there things we can improve upon? Absolutely, as every other district can. We’re not perfect. But I do think we’re a district that’s going to be on the rise.”
THE BEARCATS ARE BACK!

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL: THURSDAY, AUG. 13
Aubrey ISD opens third elementary for ’20-21 school year

By Abigail Allen
Managing Editor

Jackie Fuller Elementary is ready to open.

Aubrey ISD’s third elementary school, Fuller is equipped with up-to-date safety and learning features and it has a touch of Aubrey pride spread throughout.

“We just want to encourage literacy throughout the whole building, and that’s the whole point,” Superintendent David Belding said. “Literacy and mathematics, the whole nine yards, but we just really want kids to see any space as a learning space.”

The school was built within the Silverado development along FM 2931 just north of Providence Village. Its living namesake Jackie Fuller spent 21 of her 30 years teaching in Aubrey ISD.

On each wing—one for pre-K and kindergarten, one for first and second grade, and one for third through fifth grade, like the one above included in the third through fifth grade wing. The fabric furniture is made of a material that should hold up to heavy wear and tear.
grade, there is a collaborative learning space that has different styles of seating as well as whiteboards that are on tracks that can be moved easily by the teachers and positioned where they are needed.

“They do hook down in the floor, too, so when the kids are in here they won’t be swinging them,” Principal Kari Abrams said.

Two of the prominent features of the school, a reading nook inside and a spot for a circular table outside, are shaped like silos as a call back to the peanut dryer that stands so prominently in Downtown Aubrey.

The outdoor silo structure stands in the enclosed courtyard, which also features artificial turf. The courtyard is visible from both the art and science rooms, which both have doors that open into the space.

“The kids, when they maybe have an art lesson, they can go out and do their activity out in the courtyard,” Belding said.

And movable walls are also a feature in the school’s combination cafeteria and auditorium, which will allow the school to expand the seating capacity in the cafeteria for things like music programs.

“There’s a lot of things in the building that are flexible that can be used in multiple ways,” Belding said.

Another theme that’s carried throughout is the use of Aubrey’s school colors to decorate the building.

“We have a little bit of pop of green and some other colors here and there, but it’s the main theme of the building,” Abrams said.

Storage, which Belding said is usually a problem in schools, is not an issue at Fuller. Each wing has its own teacher workroom available, as does the office.

Another feature that was able to be integrated into the new elementary was a gym that doubles as a tornado shelter that is capable of withstanding an F5 tornado.

Belding said he’s grateful to the community for the 2017 $51 million bond issue that allowed the school, with its price tag of close to $23 million, to be built.

“The bond election will be three years ago this November,” Belding said. “So, that’s one reason why schools really need to plan ahead when they know they’re going to need space. It’s just not something you can do quickly.”
AUBREY ISD AT A GLANCE

www.aubreyisd.net

Administration
- 415 Tisdell Lane, Aubrey, TX 76227
- Phone: 940-668-0060
- Fax: 940-365-2627
- Superintendent: David Belding
- Deputy Superintendent: Terrie McNabb
- Assistant Superintendent for HR and Student Services: Shannon Saylor
- Chief Financial Officer: Eric Hough

High School
- 510 Spring Hill Road, Aubrey, TX 76227
- Phone: 940-668-3900
- Principal: Matt Gore, mgore@aubreyisd.net
- Campus Secretary: LaNise Heath, lheath@aubreyisd.net

Middle School
- 815 West Sherman Drive, Aubrey, TX 76227
- Phone: 940-668-0200
- Principal: Karen Wright, kwright@aubreyisd.net
- Campus Secretary: Tricia Noyes, tnoyes@aubreyisd.net

Brockett Elementary
- 900 Chestnut St., Aubrey, TX 76227
- Phone: 940-668-0036
- Principal: Courtney Siggers, csiggers@aubreyisd.net
- Campus Secretary: Rebecca Caranna, rcaranna@aubreyisd.net

Fuller Elementary
- 10825 Quicksilver Blvd., Aubrey, TX 76227
- Phone: 940-668-3800
- Principal: Kari Abrams, kabrams@aubreyisd.net
- Campus Secretary: Shannon Houck, shouck@aubreyisd.net

Monaco Elementary
- 9350 Cape Cod Blvd., Providence Village, TX 76227
- Phone: 940-668-0000
- Principal: Barbara Pitt, bpitt@aubreyisd.net
- Campus Secretary: Jill Bruce, jbruce@aubreyisd.net

Early Bird Learning Center
- 415 Tisdell Lane, Aubrey, TX 76227
- Phone: 940-668-0066
- Director: Pam Bloedel, pbloedel@aubreyisd.net
- Campus Secretary: Tina Cundiff, tcundiff@aubreyisd.net

School Board
- President: Joey Saxon, joey.saxon@aubreyisd.net
- Vice President: Jody Gonzalez, jody.gonzalez@aubreyisd.net
- Secretary: Annette Crooks, annette.crooks@aubreyisd.net
- Trustee: Jim Milacek, jim.milacek@aubreyisd.net
- Trustee: Colleen Dow, colleen.dow@aubreyisd.net
- Trustee: Trey Duncan, trey.duncan@aubreyisd.net
- Trustee: Carlos Urquidez, curquidez@aubreyisd.net

School Board Meetings
- Date: Third Wednesday of Each Month
- Time: 6:30 p.m.
- Place: 415 Tisdell Lane, Aubrey, TX 76227

2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Aug. 5-14: Student Holiday/Teacher Staff Development
Aug. 17: First Day of School/First Grading Period Begins
Sept. 7: Student/Teacher Holiday, All Offices Closed
Sept. 21: Student Holiday/Teacher Staff Development
Oct. 12: Student Holiday/Teacher Staff Development
Oct. 13-16: Parent Conference (window of opportunity)
Oct. 16: First Grading Period Ends
Oct. 19: Second Grading Period Begins
Nov. 23-27: Student/Teacher Holiday, All Offices Closed
Dec. 17: Early Release ALL SCHOOLS
Dec. 18: Early Release ALL SCHOOLS
Dec. 18: Second Grading Period Ends
Dec. 21-Jan. 1: Student/Teacher Holiday, All Offices Closed
Jan. 4: Student Holiday/Teacher Staff Development
Jan. 5: Third Grading Period Begins
Jan. 18: Student/Teacher Holiday, All Offices Closed
Feb. 15: Student Holiday/Teacher Staff Development
Mar. 5: Student Holiday/Teacher Staff Development
Mar. 8-12: Student/Teacher Holiday, All Offices Closed
Mar. 19: Third Grading Period Ends
Mar. 22: Fourth Grading Period Begins
Apr. 2: Bad Weather Day
May 25: Early Release ALL SCHOOLS
May 26: Early Release ALL SCHOOLS
May 26: Fourth Grading Period Ends
May 27: Bad Weather Day
May 28: Student Holiday/Teacher Staff Development
May 31: Student/Teacher Holiday, All Offices Closed

BACK TO SCHOOL CALENDAR

Aug. 3 & 4
- Schedule pickup, Monday for Last Names Beginning A-L, 7-9 a.m. & 4-6 p.m.;
- Tuesday for Last Names Beginning M-Z, 7-9 a.m. & 4-6 p.m. Aubrey High School.

Aug. 5
- AMS Sixth Grade Rookie Camp.

Aug. 6
- AMS Seventh and Eighth Grade Schedule Pick Up. Online registration required. Morning: 8-11 a.m. Afternoon: 3-6 p.m.

Aug. 17
- First day of school.

Putting the community in Community Journalism.

THE POST SIGNAL
Welcome to Aubrey ISD!

The mission of the Aubrey ISD Chaparral family is to inspire, nurture, and empower all students to realize their potential and to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Aubrey ISD campuses

- **Aubrey High School**
  - 510 Spring Hill Road
  - Phone: 940-668-3900
- **Aubrey Middle School**
  - 815 West Sherman Drive
  - Phone: 940-668-0200
- **Brockett Elementary School**
  - 900 Chestnut Street
  - Phone: 940-668-0036
- **Fuller Elementary School**
  - 10825 Quicksilver Blvd
  - Phone: 940-668-3800
- **Monaco Elementary School**
  - 9350 Cape Cod Blvd
  - Phone: 940-668-0000
- **Early Bird Learning Center**
  - 415 Tisdell Lane
  - Phone: 940-668-0066

Meet the Teacher

Meet the Teacher details are still being finalized. Principals will email plans to families.

Communication Tools for Parents

- **Notification** - Please make sure your school's front office has your up-to-date contact information (emails, phone numbers). We will use that information to contact you through a mass notification system about upcoming events, bad weather and emergencies.
- **Website** - Families can access important information such as student handbooks, policies, and teacher webpages from our website at: www.aubreyisd.net
- **Social Media** - For up-to-date information and announcements become a friend of Aubrey Chaparral on Facebook at www.facebook.com/aubreychaparral.
- **Parent Portal** -- For information on your child’s grades and attendance, be sure to sign up for Parent Portal. Contact your child’s campus to receive a username and password in order to access the site.
- **Aubrey ISD App** -- The Aubrey I.S.D. mobile app is a one-stop shop for everything that involves Aubrey schools. The app provides the latest news from the District and individual schools, access to students’ classes and grades. Available free for iPhones and Androids.

Athletics -- Visit aubreysports.rankonesport.com for sports schedules and updates.

Start and End Times for the 2020-21 School Year

- **Brockett, Monaco and Fuller Elementary**: 7:45 a.m. – 3:20 p.m.
- **Middle School**: 8 a.m. - 3:35 p.m.
- **High School**: 8 a.m. - 3:38 p.m.
- **Early Bird Learning Center**: 7 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Lunch Prices for 2020-21

- **Brockett, Monaco, and Fuller Elementary Schools**:
  - $1.50 Breakfast (Student)
  - $2.75 Lunch (Student)
  - $2.10 Breakfast (Adult)
  - $3.60 Lunch (Adult)
- **Aubrey Middle School and High Schools**:
  - $1.75 Breakfast (Student)
  - $2.90 Lunch (Student)
  - $2.10 Breakfast (Adult)
  - $3.60 Lunch (Adult)

Tax Free Weekend is August 7-9
Hello Chaparrals!

We hope you are well. The 2020-21 school year is going to be different, but I have no doubt that we will all work to support one another and help our children succeed. Thank you for your support of our school district as we implement new processes to keep our students and staff healthy and safe. We are very fortunate to have a wonderful school community that is made up of talented students, families, teachers, staff, and community members. Aubrey ISD is committed to providing the very best educational experience and achievement for our students. Our vision is to be a “World Class” school district and to ensure our students are successful.

The Aubrey I.S.D. Mission Statement says, “The mission of the Aubrey I.S.D. Chaparral family is to inspire, nurture, and empower all students to realize their potential and to succeed in an ever-changing world.” We are certainly living in ever-changing times. We are on a mission to help our students prepare to succeed now and in the future. We want our students to be fully prepared to take advantage of choices: the choice of going to college, attend a technical school, pursue their chosen career, join the military, or whatever they may dream of doing as they grow. Students need to be prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Our district is committed to preparing our students for their future.

To achieve our Vision and Mission, the school district works diligently to ensure our teachers and staff have what they need to deliver high-quality instruction in the classroom. Our teachers engage in ongoing professional development to stay current on research based instructional delivery. We work diligently to meet the varying needs of our students and families. We are focused on working with families to help our children succeed in a safe and nurturing environment.

Aubrey ISD is committed to providing successful and engaging co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Our staff works hard to ensure each and every program is given every advantage to succeed and help our students develop their individual gifts and talents. Our programs such as art, athletics, band, agriculture, cheer, Academic Decathlon, UIL Academics, theatre, etc. are vital to the overall experience of our students. As a school community, we believe these programs teach students many life lessons and provide great value to their growth and development.

None of this is possible without strong relationships and partnerships with parents and the communities we serve. We are honored that you, our parents, have given our district the opportunity to work with and to educate your children. Thank you for your trust and support as we work to inspire, nurture and empower our children to succeed now and in the future. Being an Aubrey Chaparral is special!

We are fully committed to making the 2020-21 school year a success for our students! Together we will make this a special time in the lives of students, staff, families, and our community.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
David Belding, Ed.D.
Superintendent

~ A Great Place to Learn ~
Kari Abrams is anxiously awaiting Aug. 17, when she gets to welcome the first students to attend Fuller Elementary School. Abrams has been focused on Fuller since she was named principal in June 2019.

Setting the course

Kari Abrams opens Fuller with love of kids, Aubrey in mind

By Abigail Allen
Managing Editor

Kari Abrams has been a principal without students for a year, but that’s about to change.

The former Brockett Elementary principal is days away from welcoming students to Fuller Elementary, the elementary school she is getting to open.

“The community here is so excited about this school,” Abrams said. “They can’t wait to get in here, and I’ve had families tell me that’s why they bought in here, because the school was right here.”

She has been developing her plan for how to create and grow a brand new culture at the new school, which is the district’s third, as its inaugural principal.

Signs hang in her office that bear descriptions titled “Our Legacy,” “Our Why,” and “Our Niche” with words or phrases that capture a snapshot look at what she wants to instill in the school’s culture.

One way Abrams is working on building a culture that complements that of Aubrey ISD as a whole is by incorporating a mix of teachers from both Monaco and Brockett as well as some who are new to the district and even teaching in general.

“The people that I hired I tried to balance as well, with some experience and some first-year teachers,” Abrams said.

Spring influenced that, as well, she said.

“With going online and with COVID, our teachers did plan across campuses and they worked very, very closely weekly together, so that kind of set the tone even for moving into this year,” she said. “They’re already planning across campuses. They’re including all the new teachers, as well, in their planning.”

Inside Fuller, Abrams’ design touches can be seen throughout the building.

“We’ve learned through this, she’s more the decorator and I am not,” Superintendent David Belding said during a tour of Fuller Elementary.

For Abrams, seeing her ideas become a reality inside the school has been exciting.

“I’ve been part of the process from the very, very beginning,” she said. “From the original design team where we were cutting out little squares.”

She also said Huckabee, which designed the school, “really saw our vision.”

Abrams has been a part of Aubrey ISD for several years. She was assistant principal at Brockett for two years and then its principal for another two. In June 2019, she was named Fuller’s principal and her former Assistant Principal Courtney Siggers took over as Brockett’s principal. They and Monaco Principal Barbara Pitt have a great relationship, which translates to the three working well together.

“That is really neat that the three of them are getting along really well, which means their campuses are going to collaborate effectively together,” Belding said. “If the leadership is effectively working together, then the teachers will and the students will be able to do that more effectively, so it really sets the culture.”

Belding said he’s glad Abrams was so involved in the planning stages.

“With the instructional spaces that are unique and specialized, since she’s been involved all along the way, she’s going to really understand the intent behind them and be able to help her teachers utilize them for the students and really put them to use,” Belding said.

She toured three new schools in nearby Argyle ISD, Denton ISD and Northwest ISD.

“I went and visited with their principals and was able to learn some do’s and don’ts and what to look out for with the construction process,” Abrams said. “So, that ... helped me along the way as well on our construction meetings and just walking the building and knowing what to look for and ask about.”

Having her in place in advance also made sure someone was available to check in new furniture and devices, Belding said.

“I couldn’t imagine not being involved the entire time,” Abrams said. “We definitely wouldn’t be where we are if the board hadn’t supported the principal being in place.”
Aubrey ISD welcomes new teachers, staff

By Amy Ruggini
Contributing Writer

Sarah Moore will be teaching kindergarten at Fuller Elementary. She attended the University of Phoenix and Western Governors University online. Moore started teaching kindergarten at Brockett last year.

Toni Bodine will teach first grade at Brockett Elementary. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Tarleton State University. She was a part of the Brockett family as a paraprofessional last year and has also worked as a substitute teacher.

Julie Eskander will be a prekindergarten teacher at Fuller Elementary. She received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas-Arlington. She has seven years of teaching experience.

Jennifer Woltman will be a third-grade teacher at Fuller. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of North Texas. She has seven years of teaching experience.

Allison Herge will teach fifth grade at Fuller Elementary. She received her bachelor’s degree from TCU. She has six years of teaching experience.

Brynn Hardin will be a kindergarten teacher at Fuller Elementary. She received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Arkansas. This is her first year of teaching.

Erin Zachry will be teaching third grade at Brockett. She received her bachelor’s degree from the University of North Texas and earned her master’s degree at the University of Dallas. She has six years of teaching experience.

Mandy Duncan will be a special education teacher at Monaco Elementary. Duncan is no stranger to Aubrey ISD. She was a paraprofessional the last three years at Monaco, was a substitute and also a PTO volunteer with the Meet the Masters program. She received her undergraduate degree from TCU.

Brigette Yarbrough will be a third-grade teacher at Fuller Elementary. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Texas Woman’s University and has three years of teaching experience.

Michelle Askew is the assistant principal at Brockett. She started at Brockett last August and is starting her second year at Aubrey ISD. Askew earned her bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies from Texas A&M University Commerce and her master’s degree in administration from Concordia University-Texas.

Angelia Covington will teach second grade at Brockett. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Tarleton University. She has 13 years of teaching experience.

Abigail Brewer will be teaching kindergarten at Monaco Elementary. She graduated from Aubrey High School and then went on to earn her undergraduate degree from the University of North Texas. She is starting her first full year at Aubrey after joining the Chaparrals last year.

Elliott Clayton will be the music teacher for Fuller Elementary and the choir teacher at AMS and AHS. He attended Texas A&M College Station and Texas A&M Commerce. This is his first year teaching.

Sarah Braggs will be a first-grade teacher at Monaco Elementary. She received a bachelor’s degree in psychology from SMU. This will be her second year of teaching.

Annalise Allen will be a fourth-grade teacher at Brockett Elementary. She earned her bachelor’s degree from McMurry University. She has 13 years of teaching experience.

Elizabeth Hulslander will be a fifth-grade teacher at Brockett Elementary. She graduated with her bachelor’s degree and MAT from WTAMU. She has three years of teaching experience.

Kristina Love will be a special education teacher at Fuller Elementary. She received her bachelor’s degree from the University of North Texas. She has seven years of teaching experience.

Amy Bee will be special education teacher at Brockett Elementary. She received her bachelor’s degree from

The Aubrey Independent School District
Public Notification of Nondiscrimination in Career and Technical Education Programs
2020-21

The Aubrey Independent School District offers career and technical education programs. Admission to these programs is based on availability in the master schedule.

It is the policy of The Aubrey Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of The Aubrey Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The Aubrey Independent School District will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator, Terrie McNabb, at 415 Tisdell Ln. Aubrey, TX 76227, 940-668-0060.

The Aubrey Independent School District
Notificación Publica de No Discriminación en Programas Vocacionales
2020-21

The Aubrey Independent School District ofrece programas vocacionales. La admisión a estos programas se basa en disponibilidad en el programa maestro.

Es la norma de The Aubrey Independent School District no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo o impedimento, en sus programas, servicios o actividades vocacionales, tal como lo requieren el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, según enmienda; el Título IX de las Enmiendas en la Educación, de 1972, y la Sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, según enmienda.

Es la norma de The Aubrey Independent School District no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, impedimento o edad, en sus procedimientos de empleo, tal como lo requieren el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, según enmienda; el Título IX de las Enmiendas en la Educación, de 1972, la ley de Discriminación por Edad, de 1975, según enmienda, y la Sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, según enmienda.

The Aubrey Independent School District tomará las medidas necesarias para asegurar que la falta de habilidad en el uso del inglés no sea un obstáculo para la admisión y participación en todos los programas educativos y vocacionales.

Para información sobre sus derechos o procedimientos de quejas, comuníquese con el Coordinador del Título IX, el Coordinador de la Sección 504, Terrie McNabb en 415 Tisdell Ln. Aubrey, TX 76227, 940-668-0060.
AISD welcomes new teachers, staff members for ’20–’21

Mary-Hardin Baylor. She has three years of teaching experience.

Imani Williams will be an English teacher at Aubrey High School. She grew up in Las Vegas and attended undergraduate school at Loyola University at New Orleans and graduate school at St. Joseph’s University.

Randy Teel will be a Spanish teacher at Aubrey High School. He attended Baylor, Texas-Arlington and the University of North Texas. He has 19 years of teaching experience.

Nicole Bell will be a math teacher at Aubrey Middle School. She graduated from the University of Houston and has 23 years of teaching experience.

Jason McNabb will be a math teacher at Aubrey High School. He attended Aubrey High School, NCTC and Texas Woman’s University. This will be his second year of teaching.

Amber Knafe will be a special education teacher at Aubrey Middle School. Knafe grew up in Aubrey, attending Brockett Elementary and graduated from Aubrey High School. She received her bachelor’s degree from the University of North Texas.

Justin Hardin will be special education teacher and coach at Aubrey High School. He attended the Devry Institute of Tech. He has 20 years of teaching experience.

Ashley Neely will be a seventh grade math teacher at Aubrey Middle School. She received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas at Dallas and has three years of teaching experience.

Samantha Trent will be teaching science at Aubrey High School. She graduated from Texas A&M and has two years of teaching experience.

Teana Coffman will be the new counselor at Aubrey Middle School. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Midwestern State and her master’s degree from Lamar University. She has 10 years of experience in education.

Melissa Haas will be teaching Earth Space and Environmental Systems at Aubrey High School. She is starting her second year at AHS after teaching at AHS last year. She graduated from Texas A&M.

Lisa Griffin will be the ninth and 10th grade counselor at Aubrey Middle School. She received her bachelor’s degree from Texas A&M and her master’s degree from University of North Texas. She has 14 years of experience in education.

Brandy Gutierrez will be teaching English at Aubrey High School. She attended the University of Houston and has two years of teaching experience.

Kevin Hamlin is the new assistant principal at Aubrey Middle School. He earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Tarleton State. He has 24 years of teaching experience.

Sarah Jennings will be teaching seventh and eighth grade math at Aubrey Middle School. She attended Austin College, Collin College and Texas Woman’s University. This is her first year of teaching.

Rana Samanie is the new ESL teacher at Aubrey Middle School. This is her second year at Aubrey. She graduated from University of Louisiana at Lafayette.
Construction on the Aubrey ISD Agricultural Science Center was completed in the spring, but COVID-19 has kept the pens empty until now.

The three-building center incorporated old and new facilities to create a larger space for the district’s FFA program to fill.

“We are so very blessed to have an administration and school board that believes in our growing program,” said Jennifer Gilbreath, one of the three Aubrey ISD ag teachers. “The larger, updated facility will allow more students to raise animal projects, more room to host our local shows and other events throughout the year. We are so excited to see our hard work come together.”

The agriculture center, like Fuller Elementary, was funded using the proceeds of the November 2017 $51 million bond. The total set aside for the center was $1,000,000.

That paid for a pen barn with 48 pens and six washout stalls, a new show arena, four cattle pens, renovations to the existing structure along U.S. 377, fence enclosures and a secured entrance gate.

“This is where any animal project could be kept,” Belding said in the new pen barn. “It could be pigs; it could be goats or sheep. We also have some over here in the old part that’s like an overflow or in case there’s some illness.”

Each pen includes a watering system with a pressure sensor and collection bowl that will allow the animals inside to have on-demand water access. Each water tree also includes an individual shut-off.

Efforts were also made to help reduce the road noise from U.S. 377 to ease the stress the animals may experience from it.

“It’s not 100% where you don’t hear any traffic, but it’s not like what we had,” Belding said.

The pens in one of the new buildings at the Aubrey ISD Agricultural Science Center stand ready and waiting for animals to move in.

The barn also features a couple of giant-bladed fans to help air circulate on hot days, six roll-up doors that will allow cross ventilation, an exhaust fan and a heating system that will help in the winter.
Ag program plans to host events in new, renovated buildings

“Those two here on the end line up with the two roll-up doors in the new arena, and that way, honestly, you could drive a four-wheeler all the way through both of them,” Belding said.

He added that having those large doors and having so much open space on two sides of the pen barn is “nice for future expansion.”

The floors are also sloped so that the water and waste washed out of the stalls runs to the drains outside of the pens, which was based on the input from people involved in the agricultural science program.

Belding also pointed to the gates surrounding each pen and the gates on the washout areas.

“The kids installed these, the students did, this summer,” Belding said, indicating the grating added to the pen walls. “That way when the pigs are little babies, they can’t get their head in between [the bars].”

When students are preparing their animals to be shown in either the pen barn or the cattle pen area, they will be able to access the electrical outlets that have been strung from above as they shear their animals.

A sound system that was installed throughout the three structures will come into play when there are shows happening at the center.

The new arena features a center area filled with dirt surrounded by a cement ribbon with bleachers sitting on it. The arena also houses the plaque bearing the name of the AISD administrators and trustees serving during its construction.

There are red barrier panels that can be placed around the show area in the center.

“That way the audience is away from the show itself,” Belding said. “And the arena part of it, for the show, we’re going to have a lot more room.

And when we do the sale, there will be a lot more room than what we’ve had in the past. Really going to help the program.”

There are also heaters inside the new arena.

The old arena, which was also enclosed, can still be used for livestock shows as a secondary arena.

It also features a closed-in concession stand, office, two restrooms with changing tables and the overflow pens that Belding mentioned. Several of the old pens will likely be removed to make way for covered storage in a portion of the old pen area.

Belding is excited about having the four cattle pens, complete with lighting and electrical outlet access, at the northern side of the new arena to allow for four cows or steers to be housed at the facility.

“In the winter, you want your cattle out so their hair grows in thicker,” Belding said.

The fencing was layered with an interior fence to allow the students to exercise their animals and an exterior fence with a pressure-activated gate intentionally “in case an animal gets out,” Belding said.

Ag teacher Tracy “TY” Yarbrough, who is heading into his 17th year at AISD, is pleased with the new facility, he said.

“It is going to open the doors to so many more opportunities for our students,” he said. “This is the kind of facility that would make any ag teacher proud. It is nice to teach in a community that supports the ag department in every way.”

Aubrey’s new arena offers an updated venue for the district to hold its livestock show and to let the students in the ag program practice their showmanship.
Proceeding with caution

Tioga Superintendent Charles Holloway has seen his share of oddities during his decades-long career in education.

But the unusual circumstances of the past few months related to COVID-19 is new ground for even an experienced administrator.

“The thing about educators, they’re accustomed to challenges,” Holloway said. “They face them every day. We think we’re prepared. We’re getting our virtual materials ready, and we feel pretty good right now. The kids have been up here picking up their schedules, and they’re ready to do what’s needed.”

The Tioga ISD school board made the decision last month to begin the year Aug. 13 with four weeks of virtual-only instruction. The idea is to return to in-school learning on Sept. 14, but the decision makers will monitor the situation throughout those first four weeks and adjust if needed.

Like everyone else, Holloway said he’d like to see COVID-19 infection and death rates decline in the next couple months.

“Viewing these numbers every day, it’s not encouraging, to be honest with you,” Holloway said. “You don’t want any students to get sick, but you sure don’t want anyone to pass on you. It can happen anywhere.”

Looking back at the spring semester, when all Texas school districts went to virtual learning, it was discovered that some students were completing a week’s worth of schoolwork in just a day or two. Holloway said that isn’t a situation that his district “encourages or discourages” heading into the fall.

“Looking back, we had a few seniors who had gotten behind, and we had to really get with them and help them to the finish line for graduation,” Holloway said. “So you’d probably rather have a student doing their work ahead of time instead of the alternative.”

Holloway said he is hopeful that the district’s faculty and students can return to school in September.

“Nothing takes the place of a teacher in the classroom,” Holloway said. “I’ve said that many times. There’s nothing wrong with technology. It’s a great tool. The history and tradition that education has, there’s nothing that can take the place of good teachers.

“We feel blessed to have really great teachers here. The socialization, the maturation process, the extracurriculars, those are all advantages to being on campus. The seniors especially missed out on a lot, not being on campus to finish their last year. I felt for them and hope that doesn’t happen again.”

During the period of virtual learning, Holloway said Tioga will “be here for [the families], just like we’re here for the students.” He added that in some districts, parents are planning to gather for “team teaching.”

“I have no problem with that,” he said. “Take me for example, science and math, I can help my kid. English and literature, not so much. So I thought that was a pretty neat idea. It takes a community sometimes. Par-
TISD works to have students earn associates

ents are gonna do the best they can do. I have a lot of faith in our parents and our kids. Everything is doable if you work together.”

A total of 41% of Tioga seniors graduated with associate’s degrees last year. Tioga ISD partners with Grayson County Community College to provide college curriculum free of charge to the students, beginning with their freshman year.

Holloway said that program will continue this year, regardless of a virtual or in-school plan. He said one particular family has had three of their children graduate from Tioga with associate degrees.

“We’ll follow the lead of Grayson County on that, but a lot of those things are done online anyway,” Holloway said. “Our district pays for the tuition and books for all our students who choose to take part in the program. Continuity and consistency is a key.”

THS Principal Erica Waller assists a Tioga freshman with registration. While the district will begin the semester with virtual-only instruction, TISD hopes for a return to on-campus learning by Sept. 14.

JT Strasner/The Post-Signal
The Post-Signal/School Days Friday, August 7, 2020

TOIOGA ISD AT A GLANCE

www.tiogaisd.net
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• 855 McKnight Road, Tioga, TX 76271
• Phone: 940-437-2366
• Fax: 940-437-9986

Administration
• Superintendent: Dr. Charles Holloway, charles.holloway@tiogaisd.net
• Assistant Superintendent: Josh Ballinger, josh.ballinger@tiogaisd.net
• Principal (High School): Erica Waller, erica.waller@tiogaisd.net
• Athletic Director: Cody Patton, cody.patton@tiogaisd.net
• Principal (Elementary and MS): Jana Smith, jana.smith@tiogaisd.net
• Asst. Principal (Elem. and MS): Amy Hough, amy.hough@tiogaisd.net

School Board
• President: Paul Rodarmer
• Vice President: Rickey Kemp
• Secretary: Kelly Lintner
• Trustee: Larry Hughes
• Trustee: Shawn Nesmith
• Trustee: Matt Roberts
• Trustee: Justin Lewter

School Board Meetings
• Date: Third Monday of Each Month
• Time: 7 p.m.
• Place: High School Library, 855 McKnight Road, Tioga, TX 76271

School Meal Prices
• Breakfast – Free; Lunch - $3

BACK TO SCHOOL CALENDAR

Aug. 13
• First day of school (online only).

Aug. 3-12: Staff Development
Aug. 13: First Day of School for All Students
Aug. 13: Begin First Nine Weeks
Sept. 7: Labor Day Holiday
Oct. 12: School Holiday
Sept. 7: Labor Day Holiday
Oct. 19: Begin Second Nine Weeks
Nov. 23-27: Thanksgiving Holidays
Dec. 17: Early Release at 1:01 p.m.
Dec. 17: End Second Nine Weeks
Dec. 18-Jan. 1: Student/Teacher Holiday
Jan. 4: Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
Jan. 5: Begin Third Nine Weeks
Jan. 18: School Holiday
Feb. 15: School Holiday
March 8-12: Spring Break Holiday
March 19: End Third Nine Weeks
March 22: Begin Fourth Nine Weeks
April 2: School Holiday
April 12: Bad Weather Day
April 23: Bad Weather Day
May 20: Early Release at 1:01 p.m. and Last Day of School for Students
May 20: End Fourth Nine Weeks
May 21: Teacher Workday
May 22: Graduation for Seniors

NEW STAFF

• Annie Thompson: Middle School 504, Coach
• Callie Wells: Coach, Elementary P.E.
• Devon English: High School 504, Coach
• Darren Hunkapillar: Middle School History, Coach
• Summer Love: High School Spanish
• Amy Mann: Fourth Grade
• Kate Thompson: High School

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Challenging times require creative solutions

Jana Smith, Josh Ballinger and Erica Waller enjoy a break in the recent high temperatures for a meeting outside Tioga High School. The three Tioga administrators’ gathering could be a future glimpse of how faculty and staff will hold some of their planning and discussions, as COVID-19 concerns continue to affect schools across the country. Ballinger said Tioga faculty will “absolutely be gathering outdoors for meetings. The open-air, mask-free environment in the cooler mornings will be utilized not only for our administrative meetings, but also for grade level and department meetings in the coming weeks. We have a couple of nice spaces on each campus that welcome this type of meeting. Our front porch of the elementary and then the courtyard of the high school are both areas that staff and students enjoy often.”

Ballinger added that meeting pictured was ironing out final plans for the entire TISD staff to return in-person on campuses this week. Topics also included the return to virtual learning for students on Aug. 13 and the structure of rolling out that plan.

 JT Strasner/The Post-Signal

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