

January Newsletter Article:

Gunter ISD and Community Members Review Current Facilities

Gunter ISD, along with 31 members of the community, spent the fall semester reviewing the current campus and extracurricular facilities. The committee known as the Gunter ISD Community Facility Group met four times during the fall. The goal and mission of the group was to look at existing facilities, gather data, and make recommendations that will aid GISD in making quality improvements to existing facilities.

In 2005, voters approved a twenty million dollar bond program that allowed GISD to start construction. Of the twenty million approved, 13 million has been used for a new elementary school and renovation to the existing high school. These renovations include new high school administration offices, a fine arts wing, a new commons and stage area, new cafeteria, kitchen and serving lines, additional science and computer labs, new library with a computer research lab and four additional classrooms. Other projects included a new softball field, lighting at the baseball and softball fields, a fire lane located at the back of the high school and a new parking lot addition located at the high school. With 7 million remaining, GISD and the school board wanted to involve a number of stakeholders in the data gathering and decision making process that would produce a plan for the future use of the remaining bond package.

The process of establishing this facility group started back in August when the school board members each submitted five names of community members they felt could bring wisdom and experience to the committee. Invitations to join the committee were sent with 32 members agreeing to join GISD on this project.

The first meeting was held on October 11th and served as the kick-off meeting where the committee was introduced to the mission and goals for the group. The committee was educated on the school district's current building bond capacity, the current and past property values, past bond and building projects, current and future enrollment projections, a demographic study and current facilities.

The second meeting, on November 2nd, consisted of a facility tour where committee members toured the facilities looking at all instructional and extracurricular facilities. Emphasis was placed on potential problems and areas of future concerns associated with the current facilities.

The third meeting, held on November 18th, allowed the committee to complete an evaluation survey. The survey listed all current GISD facilities and encouraged the members to rate the facilities based on the following rating system: 5 - Clearly Outstanding, 4 - Exceeds Expectations, 3 - Meets Expectations, 2 - Needs Improvement and 1 - Unsatisfactory. The survey form was broken down by each campus along with an extracurricular category. The final results can be seen on our website at www.gunterisd.org under other areas of interest.

The fourth and final meeting, on December 6th, allowed the group to see the compiled scores of the committee's evaluation forms. This data collection allowed the group to make a final recommendation

to the school board on what needs to be done in order to improve our facilities, ultimately having a positive impact on student learning. The final plan was developed and broken into five areas of concern:

1. Middle School
2. Parking Lots and Lighting
3. Extracurricular Facilities
4. Tiger Lane Traffic
5. Administration offices

To see the final facility plan, please visit our website at www.gunterisd.org. Results can be found under other areas of interest.

The Board and Administration stressed to the committee that there are no current timelines in place to spend the remaining seven million. Property values would have to increase to allow the capacity to sell the remaining bonds. Again, the goal of the group was to help the school board in the planning process for the future. We at GISD believe the future is bright and the opportunities to plan for the future are very important to the success of our school district.

The Gunter ISD administration and school board would like to personally thank the members of the Facility Community Group for their time and efforts into this valuable project.

Members of the Facility Community Group:

Jeff Banks, Andy Bardach, Denny Brackeen, Cynthia Bruner, Steve Chambers, Sharesa Driskill, Diana Ferguson, Steve Fletcher, Robert Franze, Stuart Freney, Laura Glass, Wayne Hall, John Hansen, Becky Jo Johnson, Jessie Latham, Betty May, Mac McDowell, Steve Meier, Rosa Mercado, Dusta Reed, Kyle Rigsby, David Seay, Charles Skeen, Marlon Stafford, Mark Taylor, John Teat, Mandy Turner, Tom Tyler, Blake Vaughan, Linda Waldsmith, and Rick Wynn.