

NBISD gets raise, mental health benefits in place

By Sara Samora | The Herald-Zeitung Jun 28, 2019

New Braunfels ISD will have a \$97 million budget next year — a 7.1% increase over last year's — after the district's board of trustees approved the plan Monday night.

Some of the new funds will come courtesy of the state's House Bill 3 which allocated more funding for education. The state contributed 19% last year while they'll add 24% for the next year.

Taxpayers in the district are looking at a proposed tax rate of \$1.30580 to help fund the district. That includes \$0.97 for maintenance and operation, and toward \$0.3358 the fund that goes toward paying bond debt.

District officials say the result will be an increase to the average homeowner of less than \$100 a year.

"An NBISD homeowner will pay an average of \$3,069.50 in annual taxes on a home valued at \$264,301 — the average market value of residences in NBISD," said Rebecca Villarreal, NBISD's director of communications. "This equates to an average increase of \$85.94 a year."

Hiring and salaries

The board also approved the hiring schedule for the new year with a starting salary for teachers with a bachelor's degree at \$51,000. A teacher with a master's will start with \$52,500.

All of NBISD's employees will receive a pay raise. Teachers, librarians, nurses and counselors will have a 3.5% pay raise on the midpoint salary, while the rest of the district will receive a 3% increase on the midpoint.

According to the Texas Education Agency, the average starting salary for teachers during the 2018-19 school year was \$28,080. For the 2019-20 school year, TEA reported that the average starting salary is \$33,660.

The state's change in the funding system created complications for districts across Texas, but NBISD officials said they wanted to find a way to do right by their employees.

"Every school district received differing amounts of money through this new funding formula. The new funding formula is very complex and has had different results for every district across the state," said NBISD Superintendent Randy Moczygamba. "Regardless, the decision was made locally to provide all of our employees with an increase that is comparable to what we have budgeted in the past and in line with what area school districts are providing."

Mental health help

The board also unanimously approved an employee assistance program which was a last-minute addition to the budget.

The program would give NBISD employees access to counseling of six sessions in addition to six phone calls. The program will cost the district \$4,000 and the coverage includes dependents.

“This is a wonderful program and I hope we can do more down the road,” said David Heefner, secretary of NBISD’s board of trustees. “Our staff’s mental health is just as important as the kids. This is the right step.”