



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Goose Creek to close Pumphrey, West Town complex

Citing long-term concerns, the Goose Creek Board of Trustees voted on Monday, March 30 to close Pumphrey Elementary School and the West Town complex at the end of the school year.

The Board voted to close the 39-year-old elementary school and West Town complex, which includes the School Community Guidance Center, the Alternative Learning Program and Child Care Center, the print shop, food service personnel offices, the warehouse, and special education personnel offices, following a risk-analysis study that was done for the district.

While emphasizing there is no immediate danger to students and staff, the continued use of these two sites between two pipeline corridors is not in the best interest of the district long term, the Board decided.

Board President Carl Burg said a plan to relocate Pumphrey students and staff for next year, the ALP and SCGC students and staff, the ALP Child Care Center, and West Town staff and equipment, would be announced hopefully by the end of school this spring.

Why now? Goose Creek CISD interim Superintendent Dr. Toby York said the district must start this massive undertaking by April 1 in order for the relocations to be in place for the start of the school year in August.

"The Board and Administration consider the Pumphrey and West Town sites to be safe," Dr. York said. "However, after many years of use of these sites, the Board and Administration now recommend that future long-term occupancy of these sites be reviewed and that the students and staff should be relocated to another site or sites."

Dr. York asks that Goose Creek students, parents, and staff work together in an effort to meet the challenging task of relocation.

"Although this change will be demanding on many, we are confident that in the long-term, this decision will benefit our students and staff," Dr. York said.

A risk-analysis study commissioned by the district in 2008 concluded that should an incident — such as a leak or rupture — occur to a pipeline near the school or complex, there is a high potential that an undesirable action will accompany the incident.

Earlier this month, the Board voted to move the ALP and its Child Care Center after this school year into the former REL annex at the corner of Garth and Decker.

Where to house the district's School Community Guidance Center, print shop and other West Town personnel and equipment is still in the works. The District is researching other sites in the community as well as evaluating space within the District for the students and staff at Pumphrey.

The basis for the Board's decision began when contractors uncovered pipelines too close to where the new library for Pumphrey was to be built.

The library project was halted, and a risk-analysis study was commissioned under the direction of the District's legal counsel, Rick Peebles.

The risk-analysis study at the two sites found that:

- the pipelines are more than four decades old (approaching the typical design life);
- there also are visible evidence of substantial washout around two storm drainage access points, which are part of the Baytown storm drainage system adjacent to the right-of-way. Washout occurs from water leaks in the underground drainage piping and the water could cause additional external corrosion of the pipelines carrying liquid and liquefied products in the pipeline corridor;
- and third-party incursions onto the pipeline right of ways appear to be abundant. Data indicates that the pipelines are buried approximately three feet below the surface. Incursions, meaning folks driving vehicles over the pipelines, onto the right of ways could potentially compromise the integrity of the buried lines.

After digesting this information and out of concern and caution, the Board of Trustees reached their decision to shutter the school and multi-use complex.

Pumphrey Elementary School was built in 1970 on Fairway Drive. Today, the school is home to some 474 students and 67 staff members.

The school is named for a longtime teacher and school administrator, Jessie Lee Pumphrey, who had been principal at Lorenzo De Zavala (The Mexican School) from 1928 to 1965. The original De Zavala at Cypress and Magnolia streets in old Baytown was closed in 1965.

Pumphrey Elementary School marked the first time that an elementary had been named for a local individual. Since then, five other schools have been named for local folks: Ross S. Sterling, George H. Gentry Junior School, B. P. Hopper Primary School, the John M. Stuart Career Center, and Victoria Walker Elementary School.

In 1990, the district purchased the eastern portion of the West Town shopping center to house the School Community Guidance Center and the Alternative Learning Program as well as other district support staff. Presently, there are approximately 195 students, 40 children at the child-care center, and 140 staff members at the West Town complex.

On Tuesday, March 31, Goose Creek CISD will host a Parent and Staff Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Baytown Junior School Auditorium to talk about this issue. Baytown Junior is located at 7707 Bayway Drive.

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