

# School’s bottom line up

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Dallas School District received good financial news Monday, at least for the short-term outlook.

The future still is clouded with the prospect of increasing Oregon Public Employees Retirement System rates and possible declining enrollment. But on Monday, Business Manager Tami Montague reported an unanticipated increase in the amount of money left over from the 2015-16 school year, called an “ending fund balance.”

“A couple things happened near the end of the

year that’s now making my ending fund balance projection go up bit,” Montague said.

The 2015-16 fiscal year hasn’t been completely closed out, but the estimate is that the district will end the year with \$1.4 million, instead of \$1 million previously predicted.

The boost is due to the State Land Board approving an increase in funding going to K-12 schools from the Common School Fund. For Dallas, that meant an additional \$130,000.

Montague also credits disciplined spending at the district’s schools for ending the year on a higher note than expected.

“We were doing a really good job of closing down purchase orders without doing some unnecessary spending at the end of the year,” Montague said. “The building (administrators\_ did an amazing job.”

Montague said not all the staff has been hired for the upcoming school year and some expenses are not calculated yet, but she estimated the district will end the 2016-17 in a similar position with about \$1.5 million in ending fund balance.

“A lot of will depend on what our enrollment turns up in September, how many kids show up for school,” Montague said.

The district is preparing for a significant PERS increase in July 2017. Final projections should be known soon, but, for now, the district is anticipating a cost of

\$700,000 due to PERS.

“We are hearing there is no movement legislatively for PERS reform, so what we are seeing now, we are pretty sure we are going to get,” Montague said.

She said while expenditures are guaranteed to go up, there may be changes to the amount of money going to schools. November’s general election will have voters decide on Measure 97, a tax on sales of corporations in the state earning more than \$25 million annually, with the revenue going to schools, health care and senior services.

“If there is revenue reform, that will help the picture for 2017-19, but without some kind of revenue reform, we are not anticipating we will receive enough to roll current services forward,” Montague said.

## Track to be tested

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DALLAS — Dallas High School’s track will undergo an official test for surface hardness next week to answer questions about its condition.

The district has performed a rudimentary “golf ball test,” which measures the hardness of a surface by how high the ball bounces when it is dropped on the track. The higher the bounce, the harder the surface.

Based on those tests, the surface is holding up well, despite being installed in 2004, district officials said. However, coaches and athletes have expressed concerns about the potential for injuries such as shin splints and have altered training schedules to avoid the risk.

“The current surface appears to absorb more impact than the top-of-the-line material used to patch the surface three years ago,” Facilities Manager Kevin Montague said. “We will, however, have more data once the consultant performs the testing next week.”

Montague said the consultant who examined the track’s condition in July determined the track is in good condition, but suggested testing with the machine.

“He also offered to locate a testing machine that his company has to test the hardness at no cost to the district,” he said.

He added tracks, unlike turf fields, don’t have established parameters for determining what is too hard.

Superintendent Michelle Johnstone said the district needs to begin planning for replacing the track when it is needed, whether that be immediately or down the line.

“We need to figure out how to get that into the budget somehow and set that money aside, so if we don’t repair the track this year, we start making movement toward getting it repaired,” she said.

## SCHOOL NOTES

### Dallas Family Night Out ready for school

DALLAS — Summer still is going strong, but it’s time to start thinking about getting ready for back to school.

Dallas Family Night Out on Aug. 17 at Dallas Methodist Church, 565 LaCreole Drive, has all the bases covered for getting students back into class, from school supplies to haircuts. The event runs from 3 to 7 p.m.

This year, Dallas Family Night Out has joined forces with Salvation Army’s Tools for Schools Program and the Apple Tree School Drive in an effort to help more families.

“Our committee is working on reaching even more families to distribute more backpacks and school supplies to Dallas-area residents,” said Sheri Beehner, the event’s coordinator.

Dallas Family Night Out will offer backpacks with school supplies, haircuts, immunizations, well-child checkups, a clothing giveaway for the whole family, a free meal, games and prizes and entertainment.

All services are offered for free and day-of sign up for a backpack and supplies is available. Parents should bring proof of Dallas residency to pick up a backpack, including a driver’s license, state ID, utility bill, or lease agreement.

For more information: sbeehner@wvpha.org.

### ‘Tools for School’ set for Aug. 18 in FC

FALLS CITY — The Salvation Army and Falls City Christian Church is gearing up to give away 175 backpacks packed with school supplies on Aug. 18.

The event will be at George Kitchen Park or Upper Park in Falls City from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

More than just school supplies, the giveaway offers dinner, haircuts, a resource fair, bouncy house, face painting and more.

Those who attend the Falls City School District will be eligible to receive a free backpack stuffed with supplies with photo identification or proof of Falls City residence.

For more information, contact Nicole Bats at The Salvation Army Polk County office, 503-623-9664 ext. 2481.

If you would like to donate to this event, contact Lacey Carlson at 503-798-4843.

### Whitworth seismic upgrade set for 2017

DALLAS — The Dallas School District and the state have finalized a contract allowing the district to use a \$1.493 million grant for seismic upgrades at Whitworth Elementary School.

By the terms of the contract, the work needs to take place within two years of the grant being awarded. In order to meet that timeline, the upgrades are scheduled for the summer of 2017.

“It’s going to make for a busy summer next year,” said Facilities Manager Kevin Montague.

### Central faucets show little, no lead

INDEPENDENCE — Central School District officials began testing faucets and sinks in school buildings in June. Results were recently returned, showing no detection of lead in nine of the 14 samples pulled.

The highest sample showed 5.9 parts per billion. It was taken from the upper building water fountain at Talmadge Middle School.

Stating that no level of lead is considered safe, facilities manager Cec Koontz said that further testing will be done on those faucets that showed any lead at all.

“We’ve been waiting on those results just to confirm we aren’t facing an actionable problem,” Koontz said.

**For registration information, as well as other school news, see Page 2A**

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Group for Adults and Children

DivorceCare for Kids is available for children ages 5 - 12 to heal from the hurt caused by the separation or divorce of their parents. We combine games, crafts, activities, music and DVD dramas to create a fun atmosphere where children feel comfortable and accepted.

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Weekday Bible Building

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Dallas

DC4K

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\$20 Registration includes workbook for children.

For more information or to register please call Kate or visit our website.

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