

SSISD approves contracts for cooperative services

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
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Sulphur Springs Independent School District will contract with Region VIII Education Service Center and Greenville Regional Day School Program for the Deaf for shared and cooperative services again this year.

The district will spend \$64,315, about \$24,500 less this year than last year, on Region VIII services than in the past school year, opting not to utilize some services and adding others.

The district will pay \$10,000 or about \$1,250 per campus for “continuous improvement planning co-op” which involves student improvement plans required every year. That’s \$2,000 more than in the previous year.

The district will once again pay \$11,250 for TxEIS software and support. The district no longer uses this for student average daily attendance data but it is used for ADA reporting in the business office. This includes a \$750 district business license and \$10,500 support software.

The district will no longer be participating in the core curriculum co-op package which includes CSCOPE. Last year, the district spent more than \$26,700 for this service and \$4,500 for TEKS Resource Online Manage System.

“We did have the CSCOPE in the past. We will not renew it this year. We are using in-house curriculum. We feel we are at the point to go with that to do tallies,” SSISD Assistant Superintendent Betty Lawson told school trustees during their regular June board meeting.

The district will, however, be participating in Tier 2 of the Early Childhood Cooperative. Fees are \$2,000 for a maximum of two teachers, \$3,500 for a maximum of four teachers and \$5,000 for a maximum of five or more teachers. The district will pay \$3,500. This will include a lot of training, support, activities and strategies for the four teachers involved.

Another \$19,765 will go toward Literacy Instruction Technology Education Cooperative. This aids not just librarians but also new teachers as it relates to the library and includes gifted and

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talented training through Region VIII. In fact, \$5,000 of the amount will go toward the latter, Lawson noted.

SSISD will again pay \$13,000 for Elementary and Secondary Act, formerly No Child Left Behind, services. This supports Title I. This includes a lot of training for teachers. This year, the district took advantage of 80 days worth of training.

The district will once again pay \$3,500 for bilingual/English as a second language cooperative services.

Last year, the district paid \$3,500 to Safe Schools and Healthy Students Initiative. This year, the fee will be \$4,300. Previously, some of these services were funded through the Safe and Drug Free Schools grant, then Title IV funding. Title IV funding loss resulted in a shortage in school district leadership training funding. These funds can go toward the school safety audits and emergency management planning, anti-bullying prevention, suicide prevention, sexting, substance abuse prevention, violence prevention, self injury prevention, discipline updates, conflict resolution, anger management, student leadership, other services for at-risk students and include college and career readiness components.

“So we’ll be saving about \$24,000 and are still getting the same services as last year?” SSISD Board President Don Sapaugh asked Lawson during the June 9 meeting.

“Yes, and probably better because we have the in-house curriculum,” Lawson said.

The board approved the \$65,314.50 for Region VIII services, an amount divided into two semi-annual payments, one due in October and the other in February.

Trustees also approved entering into a shared services agreement with Greenville Regional Day School Program for the Deaf. More than 20 school districts contract with the Greenville program to provide required special services for deaf students. Because student needs vary from year to year as do the number of students requiring the services, the overall rate spent for these services per year generally varies as well. What’s needed and for how long depends on

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the progress of each individual student. If the services aren't needed, there is no fee.

"We don't provide funds to keep the program alive, we just provide money when we have a student participate?" SSISD board member Robert Cody queried.

"Exactly. I think it was \$18,000 this year. We had one student attend most of the year," Lawson said.

"The likelihood of one student every year is unlikely. But, if we do have a student, we have to provide services," said board member Leesa Toliver, who served as director of special education for SSISD from 2006 until her retirement in 2009. "I do know they do a very good job over there."