



Area schools to benefit from stimulus bill

By ART LAWLER

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— Just under \$10 million in federal funding may soon be heading this way, according to a press release from Mary Scott Nabers, president and CEO of Strategic Partnerships, Inc.

This is an Austin-based research and procurement consulting firm that is tracking the funding flows into Texas on the recently signed bill.

Area school administrators aren't counting the loot from the feds just yet.

"Our attitude is that we'll believe it when we see it," said Mabank ISD Assistant Superintendent of Finances, Scott Adams.

"We're going to plan at this point as if we're getting nothing," said Eustace ISD Superintendent, Dr. Coy Holcombe. "We're going to wait and see exactly how much we get, and what we can use it for. Then we'll proceed from there."

He is more optimistic than Adams at this point, though.

"I really am optimistic these are going to make an impact, but we're planning as if it's not there.," he said. "Everybody understands this money is to be on top of everything else we receive."

He said he would be surprised if the Texas legislature cut back on other education funding because of the stimulus funding.

"I know better than to say it's not possible, but I'd really be surprised if they did that," he said.

Holcombe said Eustace has a lot of students who could benefit from these funds.

Kemp Superintendent Dr. Peter Running expressed similar caution about the money.

"We're going to plan at this point as if we're getting nothing," said Kemp Superintendent Dr. Peter Running. "We're gong to wait and see exactly how much we get, and what we can use it for. Then we'll proceed from there."

School districts in Henderson and Kaufman counties are expected to get \$9,638,000 in funding as part of the new stimulus bill coming out of Washington, the report says.

Of that, Henderson County schools will receive an estimated \$3,937,000 and Kaufman County Schools will get an estimated \$5,701,000 dollars, according to the report.

There will be caveats on how this money is spent. It must go entirely into two areas; compensatory spending for students "at risk" for not finishing high school, and for special education programs.

Lake area schools are broken down like this, according to the consulting firm:

Mabank is to receive \$302,000 for compensatory education (at risk students), and \$743,000 for special education.

Kemp ISD should get \$207,000 in compensatory funds for children at risk of not graduating from high school, and \$405,000 for special education.

Eustace should get about \$165,000 for compensatory education and another \$317,000 for special education.

Eustace ISD is part of a co-op with Athens ISD and all of its special educations funds are funneled through its district to the program in Athens.

The money is all earmarked for two areas, special education and as compensation for programs designed to assure that "at risk" children graduate from high school.

In other words, the schools cannot spend the money on any other needs their districts might have.

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Eustace is to receive \$481,000.

“Our job is to open the school up, provide education for our kids, play (the legislature) set and do the best job we can,” said Running.

The funds for lake area schools are expected to break down like this:

Kaufman County:

- Mabank ISD, \$1,107,000;
- Kemp ISD, \$612,000;
- Kaufman ISD, \$1,045,000.

Henderson County:

- Eustace ISD, \$481,000;
- Malakoff ISD, \$585,000;
- Trinidad ISD, \$104,000;
- Athens ISD, \$1,433,000;
- Brownsboro ISD, \$885,000;
- Cross Roads ISD, \$205,000;
- LaPoynor ISD, \$154,000.

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