

# District Takes Proactive Stance on Safety and Security

**S**afety and security have long been a high priority in Spring ISD. "Providing a safe, secure and respectful learning environment for students and staff" is second only to student achievement on the district's list of priorities in the Five-Year Education Plan.

As the nation turns a concerned eye on school safety and security due to recent tragic events at schools nationwide, Spring ISD has received numerous local, national and international requests from people wanting to see how the District's safety measures work. Those measures include a visitor tracking system, secure vestibules, Radio Frequency Identification on elementary school buses, metal detectors, security cameras, a 45-man police department and Automatic External Defibrillators.

**Visitor Tracking System** – Spring ISD piloted the visitor tracking system developed by Raptor Technologies in 2002 and was the first school district to install the system in schools in August 2003. Visitors who enter a Spring ISD campus and the Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, are required to submit their driver's license for scanning. As soon as a license is scanned through the V-Soft program, the school and the Spring ISD police department are notified if the visitor is a registered sex offender. If the visitor is approved for entry, a name tag is printed for the visitor to wear while on campus.

**Secure Vestibules** – Spring ISD currently has 11 new and renovated schools with secure, locking vestibules. They are Burchett, Cooper, Hirsch, Lewis, McNabb, Meyer, Salyers, and Winship elementary schools; Clark Intermediate; Bailey Middle School; and Carl Wunsche Sr. High School. Dekaney High School will open in August 2007 with a secure vestibule also. This safety feature has been paid for with money approved by Spring ISD tax payers through bond referendums passed in 2001 and 2003.

**RFID on Buses** – Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) readers on elementary school buses scan student ID badges as students get on and off their buses. This allows school principals, transportation supervisors and the Spring ISD police to identify when and where elementary students board and exit their school buses.

**Metal Detectors** – Spring ISD has two walk-through metal detectors at each secondary school that are used to perform random searches two to three times each week at each campus. Metal detectors are also used randomly to search school buses.



*Jenny Millington and Susan Picard demonstrate how the visitor tracking system works at Salyers Elementary School.*

**Spring ISD Police Department** – With 45 licensed officers assigned throughout the district, the Spring ISD Police Department combines state-of-the-art technology with good, old-fashioned people power to enhance security throughout the district, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

**Detective Emmy** – A Labrador named Emmy has joined the Spring ISD Police Department. Emmy is trained to detect marijuana, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines, many prescription drugs, alcohol and gunpowder. She replaces Detective Barkley, who retired this fall.

**Security Cameras** – The Spring ISD Police Department's high-tech communications center has the capability of hearing and seeing inside each Spring ISD campus. Over 1,000 cameras monitor activity 24 hours a day.

**Defibrillators** – Spring ISD has 50 Automatic External Defibrillators districtwide: one at each elementary, two at each middle school, two at the Westfield Ninth Grade Center, four at Westfield High School, four at Spring High School, two at Carl Wunsche Sr. High School, three at the Spring ISD Police Department, and four at additional Spring ISD facilities. Dekaney High School will open with four AEDs.

## Spring ISD Rated Superior in Financial Accountability

**S**pring ISD has earned a Superior Achievement rating for the fourth consecutive year in the state's financial accountability rating system, which is called Schools FIRST for Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas. The rating is based upon the District's receiving a perfect score on 21 financial indicators for its 2004-05 report.

## Position 3 Selection in Progress

**T**he Spring ISD Board of Trustees accepted applications through Oct. 9 for Position 3, which came open when Timothy Perdue retired from the Board on Aug. 31 after 11 years of service. Eight individuals applied for the position. At the time this issue of *Spring Schools* went to print, the board was reviewing applicants for the interview process. Once the interview process is complete the Board will choose one of the applicants to serve in Position 3 until the next Board of Trustees election in November 2007. For more information, call 281-586-1140.

## Board Approves Largest School Tax Reduction in Harris County

**T**he Board of Trustees approved a 2006-07 tax rate for Spring ISD that is the largest reduction taken by any of the 20 school districts located in Harris County. The \$1.71 tax rate is 24 cents less than Spring ISD's tax rate last year.

The District's total tax rate equals the combined tax rates of Maintenance and Operations (M&O), which is \$1.31 per \$100 valuation, and Interest and Sinking (I&S), which is 40 cents per \$100 valuation.

The District's 2006-07 M&O tax rate was reduced by 19 cents. New school finance legislation, which became law in May, reduced the tax rate by 17 cents, of which 13 cents is guaranteed.

The new law allowed school districts to increase their M&O tax rate by up to 4 cents without voter approval. Spring ISD chose not to use that option, but instead, chose to further reduce the M&O tax rate by 2 cents beyond the amount required by legislation.

In addition, the District's Interest and Sinking (I&S) tax rate decreased by 5 cents to 40 cents for the 2006-07 school year.