

Joint Press Release

SIMMS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND SUPERINTENDENT

After 25 years of service to Simms ISD, Mr. Rex Burks has announced his retirement as Superintendent of Schools for the Simms Independent School District. An Agreement has been reached, which permits the Board to pursue hiring another Superintendent. The Board and Superintendent have entered into the Agreement believing it is in their respective interests and in the best interests of the District. Rex Burks came to the District in July of 1997 to serve as the Athletic Director and Head Football Coach. He added the responsibilities of Assistant Principal, and then became High School Principal while still serving as the Athletic Director. In July of 2003, Mr. Burks became the Superintendent of Schools and since that time, he has worked diligently with the Board of Trustees, district staff, and the community to constantly improve the District.

Student performance is a key factor in evaluating the success of a school district. From 2003 to 2011, the Texas Education Agency reported a 33% increase in student success across all TAKS tests taken by students. Student performance continues to rank high as the District report card in 2019 reflects a B rating. Learning opportunities have also been increased as the District now offers 38 hours of dual-credit classes. Furthermore, Mr. Burks and the Board recognized a need for improving the District's agriculture program. The Agriculture Building underwent a complete renovation, including the addition of new classrooms, which provided a safe and state-of-the-art workspace for students to learn many skills in Career and Technical Education. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic started, Mr. Burks and the Board prioritized student access to technology. Since 2009, Grades 9 through 12 have been 1-to-1 on devices. In 2016, Grades 6 through 12 became 1-to-1 on devices. And now Kindergarten through 12th Grade are 1-to-1 on devices. Financially, the District had a fund balance of \$400,000 when Mr. Burks took over as Superintendent in 2003. Through sound fiscal management, the fund balance grew to \$5.7 Million. Even with the cost of numerous projects over the years, the District currently has a fund balance of \$4.3 Million.

Over the past 18 years, Mr. Burks and the Board have successfully navigated several construction projects. The original Simms School building—now the Simms Middle School—was completely renovated and restored to its original esthetics with large windows and wooden floors. The Simms Elementary School was renovated as well, and the playground was upgraded. New basketball courts were constructed for student use during the school day on the High School and Middle School campuses. Throughout the campuses, parking lots have been improved, making daily access to the schools safer and more convenient. Additionally, the District's unique on-campus housing has been updated. Property and buildings donated by Mr. Marvin Poer were converted into the new Administrative Office and Alumni Center. Mr. Burks and the Board renovated both buildings to provide professional and updated administrative offices, as well as provide space for housing all the James Bowie Alumni Association memorabilia, and a place for the Board of Trustees to conduct their meetings.

Many improvements have been made throughout the years on the athletic spaces across the District. Brand new bleachers and new lighting for the athletic fields were installed; the baseball

and softball fields were upgraded to provide better access and safety for students and community members as they participate in and support the District's athletic program. Mr. Burks and the Board also made upgrades to the batting cage, weight room, and field house to meet the students' needs in the athletic program.

One of the biggest changes in the District since Mr. Burks came on board is a shift in the District's culture. The improvements to facilities, the provisions for extracurricular activities, and the access to technology and a strong curriculum have worked to create a culture and climate of excellence. While the community has always been close-knit and supportive of the District, the sense of pride in being a Simms Pirate is now stronger than ever. On behalf of the entire District, the Board of Trustees expresses its sincere appreciation to Mr. Burks for his efforts while serving as Superintendent of this school district and its students, parents, and administrators, and for the many achievements and accomplishments of the entire District team during Mr. Burks' tenure as Superintendent.

Mr. Burks thanks the present and past Board of Trustees for providing him with the opportunity to serve in the Simms Independent School District. A school district is measured by the commitment of the Board, staff, and community to its children and their achievement. This District is indeed so committed. Mr. Burks would like to express his heartfelt appreciation to the staff and community for their support of the District's programs and services during his term as Superintendent.

Success requires hard work, dedication, leadership, and vision. The Board and Mr. Burks wish to acknowledge and recognize the teachers, principals, administrators, staff, students, parents, and patrons who have all contributed to the District's success.

The Board extends its best wishes to Mr. Rex Burks in his future endeavors. On its part, the Board will soon begin its search for a new Superintendent as not to disrupt the District's operations.