

Accessibility Improvements Update (November '08)

Over the last several months, a great deal of progress has been made toward the ultimate goal of achieving universal accessibility in EISD facilities. An important initial step was analyzing data accumulated during site visits with consultants and organizing it to ensure items would be recognized and scheduled effectively. For each project, it was determined if the work could be completed in-house or would require outside resources.

Many accessibility issues also are being addressed in the current bond program. In addition to what initially was allocated to ADA improvements, last spring the Board approved a recommendation to direct \$1 million of bond fund interest earnings to accessibility upgrades.

Some items are included in current renovation large projects such as the Westlake Fine Arts Facility and Library. Other projects have been included in change orders for the bond program (such as recently approved \$128,705 for walkways at Eanes Elementary and Barton Creek Elementary). Pi Architects has come on board to begin designing solutions for projects requiring architectural expertise.

One of the most innovative approaches the district has taken to achieve universal accessibility is the creation of the Scheduled Maintenance and Repair Team (SMART). Three new employees were hired in May to devote their time to issues identified in the assessment that do not involve architectural or engineering design. A bus was reconfigured so that supplies and tools are readily available for team's use. Since its formation the SMART Team has completed more than 250 individual projects! Some items that have been tackled thus far include:

- installation of compliant hardware throughout the District
- modification of handrails
- installation of EvacuChairs
- installation of cane detectors below Defibrillator cases
- covering of pipes in student restrooms

Progress also has occurred in areas other than physical improvements. For instance, students who may need individual assistance have been identified for development of personal evacuation plans. Some program modifications have been made to better accommodate disabled students as well.

Thanks to parents who served on the ADA Task Force for providing valuable input through the planning process this past year.