

## **Parental support helped Carroll ISD weather the teacher shortage better than most**

By Jennifer Acosta Scott

This school year, many districts across Texas faced a large number of teacher vacancies in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Carroll Independent School District (CISD), however, has been more or less insulated from these issues, said Gordon Butler, CISD assistant superintendent of staff and student services.

“We are fortunate to have so many professionals who want to be part of Dragon Nation,” Butler said. “At this time, we have only two open teaching positions.”

Butler attributed CISD’s high teacher-retention rate to the “supportive community” that’s in place at all of its campuses, with hardworking students and involved parents. Administrators also recognize the difficulties that many teachers face, he added, and work to minimize them.

“I believe our campus leaders hire well, support our teachers with the materials they need to be successful and then allow our teachers to teach,” he said.

When the COVID-19 virus came to Texas in March 2020, schools across the state underwent a drastic change. Most public districts canceled in-person classes for the remainder of the year. The following year, many districts — including CISD — offered a hybrid option, allowing students to attend class either in-person, virtually or both. Virtual options were largely eliminated at Texas public schools for the 2021-22 school year. However, in June 2021, the state legislature passed House Bill 4545, which requires public districts to provide “accelerated instruction” to students who did not pass state standardized tests the previous school year.

Many recent studies have shown that public districts are having a hard time retaining staff. According to data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), [more than 81% of school districts](#) surveyed at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year reported that they had more unfilled teacher positions than they did the previous year. In February, the Texas American Federation of Teachers (AFT) also reported that [66% of Texas educators](#) surveyed in late 2021 reported that they had recently considered leaving their jobs.

Though CISD has few staffing issues, Butler said, the district anticipates that it will have fewer applicants for its open teaching positions this spring than it has in previous years. District leaders are currently working on ways to attract teachers. For example, on April 5 CISD hosted a job fair for educators. At the event, prospective teachers met with district administrators and participated in face-to-face interviews. The district is also discussing initiatives to encourage current teachers to remain with the district, Butler said.

“As with any challenge, it allows us to be more proactive, creative and strategic in how we adapt, grow and review our current recruiting, hiring and retention process,” said Butler.