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Superintendent Gets Contract Extension

By Brett Bennett

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SPRINGDALE — The year 2012 took on added significance for Springdale Superintendent Jim Rollins.

The Springdale School Board extended his contract through the end of that year at its meeting this week.

The board approved the extension following a closed session to review his job performance. Rollins' contract follows the calendar year.

"The six of us that were there gave him nothing but glowing feedback. He does an excellent job," board member Randy Hutchinson said. "The only concern we ever have is we think he might work too hard, actually."

"I think most people would say his performance meets and exceeds expectations," board president Danny Dotson said.

The district pays Rollins a base salary of \$193,198 and a stipend of \$13,500, for a total of \$206,698 annually.

Rollins' salary did not increase from 2008-09, according to Dotson. However, if the district approves a salary increase for teachers this spring, Rollins will receive a percentage raise based on the teachers' increases.

He also receives health insurance, life insurance and long-term disability.

"It's where he should be leading the second-largest district in the state," Hutchinson said.

Fayetteville Superintendent Vicki Thomas, by comparison, makes \$200,000 a year. Rogers Superintendent Janie Darr makes \$179,316.

The contract also includes "an extended service incentive bonus" of \$30,000 following three consecutive years of service. The last time Rollins received the bonus was January 2008, so the next one will be paid in 2011.

Other benefits and terms in the contract include that the district provides Rollins with an automobile and pays for fuel, insurance and maintenance. He also receives 20 vacation days per year.

Rollins drives a Chevrolet Tahoe. The board requested he acquire a replacement vehicle because the Tahoe has more than 150,000 miles, Dotson said.

"We told him we'd like him to purchase (the new car) in Springdale to keep the dollars in Springdale," Hutchinson added.

Rollins has been employed as the district's superintendent since 1982. He served as a principal for two years before that.

Since he was hired, district enrollment has increased from the 6,837 students to more than 18,100. The district added its second high school in 2005.

District demographics have also changed, with the number of Hispanic students greatly increasing. The district's free and reduced lunch rate has also tripled over the past 20 years.

"I think the thing that makes him so successful is he's willing to change and adapt," Hutchinson said. "That's

one thing that's tough for a lot of adults to do.”

Two Arkansas superintendents who have held the positions longer at their respective districts are Charles Dyer of Alma, 40-plus years, and Bill Kessenger of West Memphis, 30-plus years, said Mike Mertens, interim executive director of the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators.