

ROCKDALE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Greetings Members of the Texas Senate Education Committee of the 82nd Legislature.

My name is Howell Wright. I am Superintendent at Rockdale Independent School District in Rockdale, Texas. Our General Fund budget for 2010-2011 is \$ 14,170,140 and we received 4 out of 5 stars on the FAST Report. Our campus administration is a 3.7% ratio to teachers and our district administration is a 1.3% ratio to teachers. We are an Acceptable District missing Recognized status by 2% on 1 test in 1 demographic group. We have 3 Recognized campuses and 1 Acceptable campus. If cuts to the Foundation School Program will be made, I need flexibility in the law to deal with the revenue shortfall. Please consider repealing the following mandates:

Tex. Educ. Code 21.402(d). This statute states teachers cannot be paid a salary less than the salary they received the previous year. Repealing this statute will allow my district the discretion to determine compensation for personnel that is in the best interests of my district and my community.

In order for my district to make ends meet, my district needs flexibility in the class-size 22 to 1 mandate. Please consider amending the law Texas Education Code 25.112 and 42.005(c) to make it a district or campus average with a hard cap of 25 students at the K-4 grade levels. My district will be able to save \$250,000 with this change.

Please amend Texas Education Code 21.206 to move the non-renewal/termination notice to after the last day of school from the current 45 days prior to the last day of instruction (usually early April). With the financial instability we currently face this change will provide greater flexibility when determining staffing needs and changes for the next school year.

With increasing costs and the possibility of reduced funding please allow public school districts to receive the 20% utility discount that Texas colleges and universities receive. Rockdale ISD's total utility cost including electricity (\$559,851), gas (\$37,352), water (\$11,805), and sewer (\$16,365) was \$625,373. A 20% discount would be an annual cost savings of \$125,074 based on our last fiscal year.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to address your questions. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

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