



Legislative Message from Dr. Doug Otto & Lloyd Jenkins

Dear Colleagues,

As the Texas Legislature embarks upon its 2009 session, we in the Plano Independent School District are prepared with a list of priorities for legislators to consider. We believe that supporting, encouraging and promoting quality public education should be the priority of the state legislature. The vast majority of community leaders, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, astronauts, business people and homemakers in Texas have graduated from our public schools and are contributing significantly to their communities. The laws made by state government have a tremendous impact on the lives of the staff and students in our district. They can be used to improve education, or they can be used to restrain and restrict the ability to progress. We encourage our legislators to continue to seek ways to encourage local improvement and to reward those districts and schools which demonstrate outstanding practices. We look forward to working with the legislature to make public schools in Texas the best in the nation.

Sincerely yours,

Doug Otto
Superintendent of Schools

Lloyd "Skip" Jenkins
President, Board of Trustees

2009 Legislative Priorities

Plano ISD Officials Encourage State Lawmakers to Strengthen Framework Supporting Public Schools

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Doug Otto and the Plano ISD Board of Trustees have formulated a list of priorities for the 2009 Texas Legislature which is scheduled to begin its 81st regular session on January 13, 2009, in Austin. Plano ISD officials, including the superintendent, school trustees and community leaders, will share these priorities with elected leaders, encouraging them to reward schools and school districts which demonstrate outstanding practices. Priorities are outlined in this newsletter and on the district Web site at: www.pisd.edu. Links included on the site feature prior-year legislative priorities/results, a history of the state's "Robin Hood" system of school finance, contacts in Texas government and legislative news sources.

Recommended 4X4 Graduation Plan

Plano ISD supports additional mathematics and science course requirements for students to graduate under the Recommended Plan if multiple paths for acquiring those course credits are available to students.

- Provide additional, rigorous high school diploma plan choices that recognize individual student's natural talents, interests and abilities.
- Prepare all students for a variety of career and continuing education aspirations.
- Allow full participation in fine arts, career and technical education and extracurricular courses and activities.
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills focus should be on deepening understanding of crucial concepts vs. superficial awareness of a multitude of concepts.



Accountability

Plano ISD supports a state accountability system that upholds a consistent system of school ratings over time, focusing on measuring student academic growth and allowing for success of all schools without regard to location, size and demographics.

The district also is opposed to single event, high-stakes testing. Finally, Plano is in agreement with the Public



Education Visioning Institute's "supporting premises" undergirding accountability.

- School districts should have the option of providing a locally-designed growth model, subject to TEA approval.
- Academic growth should be ascertained using multiple measures.
- Academic growth should be formally measured at multiple times during each school year.
- All students, including English language learners and special education students, should have expected growth targets identified.
- Utilize more incentives and rewards.
- State accountability measures should provide actionable information for classroom teacher use throughout the school year.
- The state accountability system should include achievement growth measures for students that include all years of school attendance.

Adequacy

Plano ISD supports legislation which addresses the spiraling operating cost by indexing state funding to an inflationary factor.

- The state funding formula for transportation has not increased since 1985, and Chapter 41 districts do not benefit from a transportation allotment.
- The state funding formula for the cost of education index has not been adjusted since 1991.
- The combination of property tax and state funding known as the district's target revenue has not been adjusted since 2006.

Plano ISD opposes legislation that redirects tax dollars from public schools to non-public school programs. Plano ISD supports the provision of financial resources to school districts, including known cost factors. Funding must be related appropriately to the highest performance expectations established by the state rather than as unfunded mandates.

- Do not legislate any additional unfunded mandates.
- Continue to fund Rider 86.
- Provide funding to offset legislated requirements for: 4x4 graduation plan, fitnessgrams, bus evacuation drills, payroll benefits tied to mandated pay raises, fingerprinting.
- Target revenue needs to reflect an inflationary index.

Capacity for Growth

Plano ISD supports a school finance system that provides increasing resources to school districts over time to accommodate enrollment growth, changes in the composition of the student population, raised performance expectations, inflation and other cost drivers.

- Remove the Available School Fund as part of the target revenue evaluations.
- Increase the High School Allotment.
- Allow local school boards more discretion to levy taxes, allowing access to fifth/sixth pennies without an election.
- The only way to raise revenue is through an M&O tax election. Current tax rate election law penalizes "Robin Hood" districts like Plano ISD.
- The current tax rate requires additional materials and resources to support learning.
- Special education programs continue to grow and require more resources than the state provides.
- Provide resources for ability to pay teachers a salary competitive to other states.
- Return to districts, in an equitable manner, the tax dollars that are generated annually by state property value growth.

(Continued on back)



Board Briefs...

School trustees took the following action at their November regular meeting.

Resolutions

Trustees adopted resolutions in honor of National Inclusive Schools Week and American Education Week.

TAGT Award Winner

The board honored Mark Wellborn, director of professional learning and advanced academics - recipient of the Texas Association of Gifted and Talented's 2007-08 "Regional Advocate of the Gifted Award." Mr. Wellborn was introduced by TAGT President Ann Studdard.

Bond Series 2008A:

First Issuance Strategies

School trustees adopted strategies for the issuance of Bond Series 2008A, considering interest rates and terms, as recommended by Richard Matkin, associate superintendent for business services.

District Reports

Fall Meeting, Western States Benchmarking Consortium

Jim Hirsch, associate superintendent for academic and technology services, updated trustees on the fall, 2008, meeting of the Western States Benchmarking Consortium held October 21-23 in Peoria, Arizona. The meeting was facilitated by Dr. David Conley, "College Knowledge" author, and focused on preparing more students for postsecondary success. Plano ISD administrators attending the meeting were Doug Otto, Jim Hirsch, Mary Hewett, Jim Wussow and Jayne Cantwell.

Engineering Your Future Through Math & Science

Presented by Dr. Jim Wussow, executive director for secondary curriculum and instruction, this report detailed the success of Plano ISD's October 20 HiTECCC events for students attending Armstrong and Bowman middle schools and Williams High School and their families. Read the full story online at: www.pisd.edu.

2009-10 Budget Calendar

Richard Matkin presented a comprehensive 2009-10 budget planning calendar, outlining events for months leading up to the board's scheduled adoption of the budget in June, 2009, and tax rate in August, 2009.

District Digest

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eNews listserv:

www.pisd.edu/eNews.htm

Plano ISD Education Foundation Offers Donors Lovely Holiday Greeting Cards to Send to Friends & Family

The Plano ISD Education Foundation is proud to partner with Plano ISD's "Let's Celebrate!" holiday art contest by providing greeting cards to Foundation donors. The 5"x7" cards, which feature artwork by the school district's contest winner, will make great gifts for co-workers, friends and family. Each card will include a special acknowledgment that a gift has been made in their honor to support Plano ISD. To place an order, please visit this Web site: foundation.pisd.edu and select the "Holiday Donation Card" link.



2009 Legislative Priorities (Continued from front)

Virtual Schools

Plano ISD supports a state-funded virtual school system that provides equal access for all students to participate in an excellent online learning experience that can serve as an alternative or supplement to a traditional K-12 model. This experience would allow students to take online courses both within the normal school day as well as outside of the regular campus schedule.

- The district supports legislation that establishes a statewide average daily attendance model for funding online learning in which each successful course completion equates to a percentage of average daily attendance.
- School districts should be allowed to continue to provide locally-developed virtual school programs.
- Provisions should be made for the training of teachers locally to excel in online teaching.
- Districts should be allowed to develop online teaching courses to be approved by Texas Virtual Schools and offered to their local teachers before being required to provide the course state wide.

- Districts should maintain local control in counseling services to work with parents and students to approve course recommendations.

Local Control

Plano ISD supports legislation providing local control over issues that should be decided with community preferences. Plano ISD supports the position that a student's grade point average (GPA) should be determined by the local school districts.

- Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses should be weighted more than dual-credit courses.
- Pre-Advanced Placement, International Honors and Honors courses should be weighted more than on-level courses.
- All courses that receive credit on the graduation plans should receive grade points.

For more information and legislative updates, visit the district Web site at: www.pisd.edu.

Early Childhood School Namesake Sara Isaacs Led First Programs for Young Learners in Plano ISD

School trustees at their November regular meeting recognized Sara Jane Isaacs as the namesake of the school district's newest early childhood school, which is scheduled to open August, 2009, at the southeast corner of Parker Road and San Gabriel Drive. The school will replace the program currently housed at Barron, and Barron will be converted back into an elementary campus to serve grades k-5. Ms. Isaacs and her family members attended the meeting, where President Lloyd "Skip" Jenkins introduced her and shared highlights of her service to Plano schools, including the following facts.

Sara Isaacs Career Highlights

1963 - Third Grade Teacher - Ms. Isaacs joined Plano ISD in 1963 as a third grade teacher at Mendenhall Elementary School (the district's only elementary school at the time).



Trustees issued Ms. Isaacs a signed hard hat to wear on visits to the construction site.

1967 - Title I & Head Start Coordinator - In approximately 1967, Ms. Isaacs was appointed by then Superintendent of Schools Dr. H. Wayne Hendrick as the district's first Title I director. That same year, she successfully applied for the district's first Head Start federal grant. She initiated the first Head Start program during the regular summer school session with 20 students.

1970 - Elementary Curriculum Coordinator - Ms. Isaacs was again promoted by Superintendent Hendrick, this time as the first elementary curriculum coordinator. As the district's first female administrator, she continued to work with educationally-disadvantaged early childhood students. **1973 - Elementary School Principal** - Appointed as the first female elementary school principal, Ms. Isaacs opened Christie Elementary School where she served until her retirement. **1986 - Retirement** - Ms. Isaacs retired following a 23-year career with Plano schools. She said, "The first love that I had was for the early childhood children and working with teachers of young learners."



Notable Notes...

Congratulations, parents and grandparents:

□ Mitchell Elementary School's **Sarah Bednar**, literacy specialist, and her husband **Jay** welcomed daughter **Trinity Jane** (7 lbs. 2 ozs.) on August 14, and **Leigh Kennon**, fifth grade team leader, and her husband **Kevin** announced the birth of daughter **Abigail** (6 lbs. 14 ozs.) on October 7; **Sara Prascher**, Daffron Elementary School third grade teacher, and her husband **Chris** welcomed daughter **Carys Ava** (7 lbs. 8 ozs.) on September 12; and **Donald Bassham**, Schimelpfenig Middle School athletic director, and his wife **Rebecca** celebrated the birth of their first child **Rhett** on October 22.

Sympathy is extended to these current and former employees:

□ **Aimee Ratliff**, Plano Senior High School English instructor and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) coordinator, whose father **Dr. Hugh Ratliff** died on October 10; and **Tana Holderman**, Jackson Elementary School art specialist, whose father **Bart Holderman** of Florida died recently.

Thought for the Week:

"Optimists are nostalgic about the future."

~Chicago Tribune

