



Texas Association of School Boards  
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*Serving Texas Schools Since 1949*

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September 14, 2010

### **The “Make Education a Priority” Initiative**

Dear Superintendents & School Board Presidents of Region XV:

I am sending this as your Region XV Director to the TASB Board, urging you to support the “Make Education a Priority” Initiative. This initiative, begun by the Aledo ISD Board of Trustees, has as its goal to stay focused on the public school finance issue and to ensure that public education is among the highest priorities for the upcoming 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature Session.

Since 2006, the implementation of HB1 has led to an increasing number of school districts that face financial crisis. The number of districts forced to adopt a deficit budget grows from year to year. Many more face difficult decisions to reduce teaching positions and staff, cut salaries and benefits, and/or curtail educational or extracurricular programs in order to close budget gaps.

Neither the 2007 nor the 2009 session did much to address the twin issues of adequacy and equity; any improvements in public school finance were incremental. Meanwhile, the need for significant and wholesale change has yet to be addressed and the current economic crisis is compounding fear and concern. Unless school boards across the state join together in conveying a sense of urgency in Austin, school finance will meet the same fate in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Session.

Quite often, legislative priorities are established in the months and weeks leading up to a session, meaning now is the time to act with a collective and effective voice. With that in mind, our board at Grape Creek ISD joined hands with Aledo ISD in adopting a modified version of the priority resolution. This has been attached for your convenience.

Likewise, our board is asking you to join us in becoming like-minded districts across the region. Let's transform the "Make Education a Priority" initiative into a grassroots movement here in West Texas and then across the State of Texas.

Though we believe that the coming years will be make-or-break for many districts, we have hope that with a unified voice we can effect a sense of urgency and commitment. As you join us this movement, we suggest that you forward your adopted resolution to your respective legislators, as well as the individual chairs of the House and Senate Public Education Committees, the Lieutenant Governor, and the House Speaker.

Feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail if you have any questions, comments or suggestions. More information on the Aledo initiative can be found at the website [www.schoolpriority.com](http://www.schoolpriority.com).

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Contreras". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Fred" and last name "Contreras" clearly distinguishable.

Fred Contreras  
Trustee, Grape Creek ISD  
Region XV Director, TASB Board

cc: Jackie Lain, Assoc. Executive Dir., TASB Governmental Relations  
Sarah Winkler, Trustee Alief ISD, TASB Board President  
Karen Ellis, Trustee Richardson ISD, TASB Board Legislative Committee Chair  
Bobby Rigues, Trustee, Aledo ISD  
Monte Barnes, Superintendent, Grape Creek ISD  
Glenda Bacon, Board President, Grape Creek ISD  
Scot Goen, Executive Director, Region XV ESC

**Resolution of Acknowledgment  
Make Education a Priority**

**Whereas**, the Texas public school system represents an essential economic driver impacting the state's economic future; and

**Whereas**, the success of Texas public school districts directly impact the quality of the state's future workforce; and

**Whereas**, the current Texas public school finance system is negatively affecting an increasing number of public school districts; and

**Whereas**, past diligent legislative efforts to address the state's method of adequately and equitably funding Texas schools has fallen short of broad measured success; and

**Whereas**, the legislative year of 2011 bears the attributes of repeating the 2009 legislative session's lack of reliable funding improvements; it is therefore

**Resolved**, that a responsible community of educational leaders with a united awareness respectfully empower and support our respected legislative representatives to act; and be it

**Resolved**, that in light of our current Texas economic challenges and the complexity of financing public education; improvements in school funding be established with an attitude where education is found as the highest priority; and be it

**Resolved**, this attitude begins within the leadership of Texas school districts and together, we respectfully share one unified message to all involved: Make Education a Priority.

The Grape Creek Independent School District Board of Trustees respectfully acknowledges, joins and applauds the priority efforts to protect the pursuit of quality education for all children.

Grape Creek Independent School District Board of Trustees

Glenda Bacon, board president

Rick Doss, board vice-president

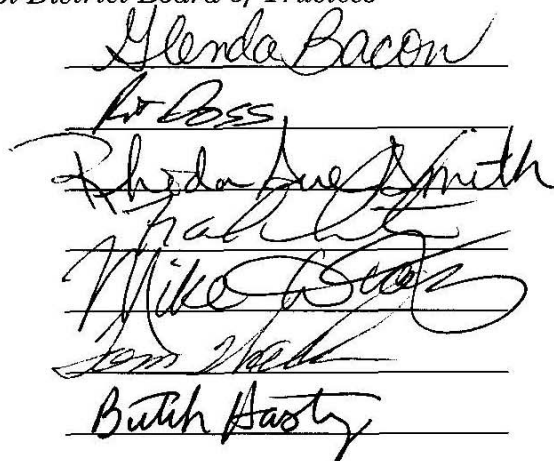
Rhoda Sue Smith, board secretary

Fred Contreras, trustee

Mike Diaz, trustee

Tom Walker, trustee

Butch Hasty, trustee

The block contains seven handwritten signatures, each written over a horizontal line. From top to bottom, the signatures are: Glenda Bacon, Rick Doss, Rhoda Sue Smith, Fred Contreras, Mike Diaz, Tom Walker, and Butch Hasty. The signatures are written in dark ink and are clearly legible.

Adopted September 13, 2010