

Texas Senate
Public Education Committee Hearing

April 21, 2009

Paris ISD financial problems did not start with Target Revenue and 2006 Legislation. In 2001, Paris experienced a deficit budget when it had to reduce budgets, reduce personnel, reduce fund balance, and raise taxes 4 cents to the maximum \$1.50 tax cap in order to balance the budget. After five long years at the tax cap, Paris target revenue (TR) was set at \$4486, \$524 below state average and in the bottom 10% of over 1000 target revenues in Texas.

Financial problems roared back with TR. This year Paris cut budgets and personnel. We cut personnel, gave no pay raises and purchased used buses from our neighbors. We used 54% of our fund balance in approving a deficit budget.

We now face more of the same for the upcoming school year - another deficit budget but this time with a fund balance reduced to zero. This is why I am here today, to support SB 982 and to ask you to take action now before it is too late for schools like Paris. Huge inequities exist in school funding and I have a few examples to share with you today.

You have handouts - one is an alpha listing of 1025 Texas school districts along with the target revenue and student count (WADA) of each. In the column on the right side you will find the difference in revenue if Paris was funded at the other school's target revenue. As a quick reference, you will find Paris at the very top of the first page with rank of #930, target-revenue of \$4486 and a student WADA count of 5044. When your school district is in the bottom 10%, you can clearly see the gaps which exist in funding.

For those who believe the size of a district skews the data, I can assure you, this is not the case. There are 69 schools that have a student

population within 1000 students of Paris. Of these 69 schools, Paris ranks #67 in TR - the bottom 3%.

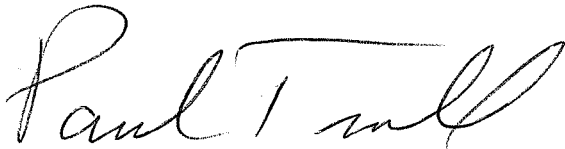
When you group by academics, Paris ranks last in TR. Paris qualified several students to compete in the Texas Future Problem Solving Bowl this past weekend in Austin. Fact – Paris competes academically with schools funded vastly higher – as much as \$10 million more every year. Paris ranks dead last in TR of the 28 schools who qualified for the FPS Bowl.

In girls' athletics, our play-off opponent Prosper - if Paris had Prosper's TR, Paris would generate additional revenue of \$13,600,000 per year. In the boys' play-off game, if Paris had Argyle's TR, Paris would generate an additional \$7,300,000 per year.

When grouped by area, Paris ranks last in TR of 5 Lamar County schools.

I ask that you take action this session and approve SB 982, a dynamic, sustainable, formula-driven system, so Paris students can be afforded similar opportunities granted to other students of this great state.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Trull". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Paul Trull

Superintendent

Paris ISD