

My name is Linda Kay Barnhart. I serve as superintendent of Anahuac ISD and president elect of Texas Association of Community Schools. Anahuac is located equidistant between Beaumont and Houston on I10. We are a district of 1250 students. Since over 50% of the districts in Texas are my size or smaller, many of the mandates that affect my district also affect these districts and many others as well.

First, let me say thank you to the committee for allowing superintendents to testify. We know that school finance is a problem that can most effectively be solved by school leaders and legislative leaders working together. When I implement a program that I think will help students in my district, I always go to the teachers who are actually in the educational trenches to ask their advice. Your committee is appreciated for asking for input from the superintendents who are in the trenches running our districts.

There are so many unfunded mandates that affect our district that when I began to decide which two or three I would bring before you today, it was very difficult. So, my first point would be to ask you to look at all unfunded mandates and please give us as much flexibility in these drastic financial times as possible.

I do want to bring three to your attention. To give you some prospective on these three, let me first tell you that I have an operating budget of around 10 million dollars.

- Please release restrictions on the expenditure of comp ed funds. We receive approximately \$930 thousand dollars in comp ed funding. As you can see, in a 10 million dollar budget, the ability to spend almost 10% in the broadest manner possible would be a large help.
- Please repeal TEC 21.402 (d). This provision refers to a professional educator receiving at least the same salary as last year. We never want to reduce anyone's salary, in fact for the past 8 ½ years, I have been working to increase salaries in my district; however, as I search for ways to reduce my overall budget by 10%, one of my considerations is to move some of my administrators back into the classroom. This move would help our budget except for the fact that they would make the same salary that they are making in their present position. Under this same provision, even though I might have staff that would agree to a small cut for all so that they could save some positions, this is not allowed.
- Finally, we are a full social security district. Currently 5% of our 10 million dollar budget goes to pay social security. This is a federal program over which I realize you have no control, but as you look at abolishing unfunded mandates, Please remember that there are those of us who are living with a federal mandate that we cannot escape. If there is any way to take this into consideration as you look at school funding, please do so.

Again, I think you for giving us the opportunity to testify before you today and your attention to unfunded mandates.

Sincerely,

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Additional Mandates to Consider Reducing:

TEC 21.251,21.255 – Hearing examiners  
TEC 21.158, 21.206 – Nonrenewal  
TEC 21.210 – Designation Deadline  
TEC 21.002 (b) – Retire/Rehire  
Repeal newspaper posting requirements  
TEC 25.112, 42.005 (c) – Class Size Average  
Reduce requirements on Bilingual funding  
Utility Discounts – I will testify at another hearing that addresses this issue