



Lamar CISD

Thomas Randle, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools

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March 7, 2011

Senate Education Committee,

As Superintendent of Schools of Lamar Consolidated ISD, I support constructive changes and modifications to Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. I am also hopeful that you will do everything reasonably possible to limit the severe reduction in public education funding currently being discussed in the legislature. In anticipation of reduced state funding, reasonable changes in Chapter 21 that promote financial flexibility, managerial flexibility, and cost reduction will be important in Lamar Consolidated ISD's ability to respond to the significant challenges before us. I am supportive of the recommended changes outlined below.

1. **Revise and Restructure Chapter 21:** modify law to allow suspensions without pay without the requirement of a full due process hearing; allow suspension without pay pending discharge of a probationary contract employee; move the contract notice deadline to the last scheduled day of school instead of forty-five (45) days before the last day of instruction.

There are times when a suspension without pay without the requirement of a full due process hearing would be helpful. Fortunately, these situations do not come up frequently, but the process can take up to three months before the board takes final action.

Changing the contract notice deadline would be of benefit because we actually begin the process in January or February, so a later notice date would give the district more time to work with the teacher before making the final decision.

2. **Change the Independent Hearing Examiner Process:** modify law to prevent Independent Hearing Examiners from declaring good cause as a finding of fact and thereby severely limiting and/or preventing school boards from making final good cause termination decisions; allow all RIF employment hearings to be heard by the local Board of Trustees or designee, at the option of the local board, regardless of the timing of the RIF actions; examine other ways to improve the process and reduce costs.

Allowing RIF hearings to be heard by the local board would help reduce time and expenses if districts are forced to use a RIF.

We are hopeful that you will do everything possible to maintain public education funding for our school district.

Respectfully,

Thomas Randle, Ed.D.
Superintendent