



GLEN ROSE

Independent School District

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Honorable Florence Shapiro
Chairman, Senate Committee on Education
Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711-2068

Dear Madam Chairman,

Glen Rose ISD was at one time one of the poorest school districts in Texas regarding property value per student. The leaders of Somervell County had the foresight to improve the local economy by supporting the construction of the Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant within Somervell County. Somervell County was not the first choice for the nuclear facility, but rather the **only** county willing to accept it at the time. The proposal for the construction of the nuclear plant was turned down by many cities and counties. Leaders of Somervell County supported the facility believing the potential economic benefit to Glen Rose ISD and Somervell County outweighed the potential risks. Since the construction of Comanche Peak, all governmental entities have formed a great partnership with Texas Electric Utilities and now Luminant. The Glen Rose ISD passed a resolution supporting the application to expand Comanche Peak as did all the local entities.

Since the construction of Comanche Peak, Glen Rose ISD has sent the state of Texas over \$500 million of local tax dollars to support equity among Texas School Districts. This amount would have provided enough revenue to run Glen Rose ISD for the next 30 years. While Glen Rose ISD supports equity, it also believes equity among school districts should come from the bottom up rather than the top down. Glen Rose ISD and Somervell County did not have the benefit of equity payments at the time they desperately needed them so they supported a vision that would help themselves with a great economic impact. The current system of school finance in Texas is designed to bring all districts down to an inadequate level of funding.

Very often, I hear from local taxpayers on their resentment of having to equalize districts that turned down the opportunity to have the nuclear facility in their school district. Trying to explain to local taxpayers why 50% of the taxes they pay to Glen Rose ISD is sent to the state is a very difficult task. Any future M & O (Tier III) pennies would be recaptured at 81%. It is often said that everyone enjoys sharing the revenue from a nuclear facility, but they just do not want to live with the facility in their own backyard. No one wanted the power plant; now everyone wants the money. If there is no economic benefit to having a nuclear power plant, coal plant, refinery or any other potential hazardous industry in your district then it will be very difficult to find a district that would support any new construction. This would create a negative impact on the future energy needs of the state of Texas.

A nuclear power facility in a district does produce additional cost to the school district. The district must have additional buses in preparation to bus 100% of students and staff out of the district within twenty minutes notice of mandatory evacuation. Most school districts have enough buses to transport 50% of students much less staff. This is a drill practiced two times

per year by students in Glen Rose ISD and graded by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission every two years. One staff position is on call 24 hours per day seven days a week for the Emergency Operations Commission planning. The district is issued pagers that must be worn at all times in the event of a drill or disaster.

Often, it is misunderstood that property value wealth per student means that individual students are wealthy. That is far from the case in Glen Rose ISD. Fifty percent of students in Glen Rose ISD live at or below the federal guidelines for poverty. Currently more than ten percent of students enrolled in Glen Rose ISD are English Language Learners. These two percentages continue to increase on a yearly basis.

There is a daunting task facing the 82nd Texas Legislature with the projected budget deficit, but this problem cannot be solved by increasing recapture on property wealthy districts. Cuts in educational funding must not be disproportionate to property wealth districts. It is understood that cuts will be made to public education, but please consider the local needs and conditions of each Texas School district is very unique. With the current deficit budget, now is not appropriate time to write a new school finance plan with permanent reductions, but rather make the temporary cuts needed until conditions improve. Again, we are supportive that cuts have to be made, but they should not be disproportionate to property wealthy districts.

Your leadership for the state of Texas is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



G. Wayne Rotan
Superintendent
GLEN ROSE ISD

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“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education.”

John F. Kennedy