



To: TARS Membership
From: Michael Lee and Leigh Ann Glaze
Re: News from Michael and his travels.....

December 17, 2018

After traveling 3,831 miles my last trip, I pulled into my own garage Saturday night feeling optimistic. I have visited 7 Regional Service Centers and have seen educational leaders all over the state who want to do what is best for their students. We have much work to do as there are several issues facing us as the Governor, Lt. Governor and presumed Speaker have all committed to Public School Finance Reform. Please understand that other school reform will try and sneak into the process.

Several organizations are coming together in order to formalize a joint statement toward the findings of the Texas Commission on Public School Finance. You have seen the position of TARS on the areas of concern from the preliminary report. We still feel that there will be a strong push toward consolidation. In fact, as pointed out last week to us in our meeting with other educational organizations, the possibility of setting the small/mid-sized school adjustments into their own allotments, without going through the special program weights, would take an estimated \$600 million out of these adjustments as a possible "savings" to the State. This move alone would basically force consolidation in many instances. We will be watching closely as the

Commission meets this Wednesday (12/19) to possibly adopt a final report. It was stated last week in the preliminary report presentation that it was never the intent of the Commission to make anyone lose money. We hope this remains the sentiment written into the plan.

The Governor is still holding meetings about his school plan and property tax reform. There appears to be property tax reform from his office, but we have not seen much if any new money to go into the system. We feel it is one thing for key Legislators to espouse reducing property taxes and the reliance on Recapture. However, the fact that TEA submitted a budget that is \$2.5 Billion less than last biennium, with the expectation that property tax values will increase by 6.7% to cover the gap, plus the recommendation from the Governor's office that Chapter 41 school districts be allowed to purchase attendance credits directly from Charter Schools within their districts so that taxpayers can see that their tax dollars are being spent on public education, seems to be at odds with actually reducing the reliance on property taxes and reducing Recapture. We need to look no further than Houston and Austin. Houston is in Chapter 41 because of the loss of WADA to Charter Schools. Now if Houston ends up being required to send some of their "Recapture" to the Charters, we will know the intention of reliance on Recapture to fund the Charter Schools. Remember, the current numbers are that 16.7% of the education budget is going to the 6% of the students through Charter Schools.

We need to develop our own, accurate information about how we have become more efficient. We are in the process of finalizing a survey to talk about cooperative services between our schools, between our schools and service centers and between our schools and other companies. We absolutely must sing our song of how local superintendents fill in the gap in many areas when people are out, or positions are not filled due to budget constraints or lack of candidates. Your help in developing these numbers is essential.

But the most important thing that each of us can do is take time to enjoy the Holidays with family and friends. I hope you are finalizing plans for a restful few days.

Sincerely,
Michael Lee

Please continue to sign up.....THANKS for all the registrations to the TARS

Membership Luncheon on 1/29/2019 at Mid-Winter! It will be GREAT to see you all. If you have not registered yet, please click on the link below to do so. Have a GREAT weekend!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tars-membership-luncheon-at-tasa-mid-winter-2019-tickets-53566918094>

TARS Events and Travels

- December 19, 2018 – Texas Commission on Public School Finance Meeting
- January 29, 2019 – TARS Membership Luncheon while at TASA Mid-