



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS
“The Voice for Texas Rural Schools”

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TARS Report Senate Hearing Regarding Dual Credit

9/12

The past two weeks have been very busy, and many decisions are starting to formulate as we move toward the election and the next Legislative Session. We attended meetings in Austin this week that are proving to be quite interesting as you are aware if you follow the news at all.

The Senate held a joint Education and Higher Education meeting on Wednesday, September 12 to discuss Dual Credit. By all accounts, Dual Credit is mostly a success. There many partnerships across the State that are providing students opportunity to receive Dual Credit while in High School. There are some opportunities where students are graduating with an Associate’s Degree. One item of research that jumped out to me was the fact that students with Dual Credit are 300% more likely to finish college than students entering college without Dual Credit. I also noted that when someone testified with information that did not support Dual Credit, then the committee members, in particular Senator West, strongly challenged them with their research and the origin of their research. There was a great deal of concern for those students who are low-socio economic and the access these students have to Dual Credit opportunities. My opinion is that our work is cut out for us in this area. My reasoning is as follows. Several school districts provide for Dual Credit, or at least part of the Dual Credit. However, this will be a challenge with reduced income in the future, as indicated with TEA’s request for a \$3.5 billion reduction in funding.

We also attended the Expenditure Working Group of the Texas Commission on Public School Finance. This meeting was short, concise and moved quickly. Obviously, much work had been done behind the scenes. However, there were many good suggestions from this group. I found it interesting that when small and mid-sized funding formulas were mentioned there was not much discussion other than to make them more transparent. I fully expected Judge Brister to comment, but he did not. He is certainly a proponent for consolidation of Rural School Districts. Although the Legislature has made positive decisions for Rural Districts, there is going to be a push to reduce the sparsity formulas and the boost that the small- /midsized- formulas give us.



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We will be working in this area as we move into December, so we need membership in place to help us formulate areas where services are consolidated. I think many Legislators have the opinion that superintendents are only superintendents, which is not true in our small schools. I know many who have other responsibilities.

Commissioner Morath gave a radio interview last week to a radio station in Perryton, TX. Representative Ken King arranged for this interview. The interview discussed the A-F Accountability. He of course was in support of this system and said that parents could use it to help evaluate local school districts. Chris Samples, the radio owner also asked a question on districts busing students from other districts into their district. Commissioner Morath indicated the Legislature needs to address this situation and either strengthen or weaken current law. He gave no prediction on how this will change, if it does.

We are hoping to attend meetings in as many Regions as possible this fall. Please let us know your schedule and if we can get 10 minutes to introduce ourselves. We are experiencing a nice increase in schools that were not members of TARS last year.

Upcoming TARS Events

- September 20, 2018 – Mike Lee at ESC 1 RAC/TASA Meeting
Leigh Ann Glaze at Senate Hearing on Property Tax Reform
- September 25, 2018 - Texas Commission on Public School Finance – 10:00 am
Texas Capitol Extension, E1.012
- September 28 -30, 2018 - Booth at TASA/TASB School Board Convention in Austin
- October 22 – 24, 2018 Superintendent’s Retreat – ESC 15 & ESC 18 –
Fredericksburg

Dates to Remember

- Last day to register to Vote: Oct. 9, 2018
- Early voting: Oct. 22 – Nov. 2, 2018
- Election Day: Nov. 6, 2018 7am-7pm