

March 7, 2011

The Senate Education Committee
Texas Senate
Austin, Texas

Dear Esteemed Committee,

Consider this letter my appeal to you to consider the changes proposed in Senate Bill 3, submitted by Senator Shapiro. Although I remain hopeful that the education cuts will not be as severe as predicted, giving districts flexibility in managing the money that is eventually allocated will help us weather this financial storm with less impact on the students in our district.

Regarding modifying the 45 day requirements for notice of non-renewal to the 10th day after instruction:

If this change were to be applied to this school year, Sheldon ISD would be able to more closely ascertain whether non-renewals of specific contracts are required to allow us to balance our budget for the 2011-2012 school year. Without this change, there is a real possibility that we will non-renew all first-year probationary teachers within the 45 day requirement simply because they can be non-renewed "in the best interest of the district." For Sheldon ISD, that is at least 36 (9%) teachers who would be non-renewed despite the fact that some of them are math or science teachers, areas critical to student success.

Regarding removing the requirement to continue to pay teachers, counselors, nurses and librarians at least as much as they earned in the 2010-2011 school year:

Enabling the district to reduce salary would save jobs and save programs for students. 78% of the students in Sheldon ISD are economically disadvantaged—we provide programs for our students like dual language and fine arts that we could continue with a reduction in salary, despite the constraints of fewer dollars in our budget.

Regarding repealing the requirement for remediation to occur in a class size of 10 to 1:

This provides flexibility for group size to vary depending on the needs of the students, requiring fewer teachers for the required remediation, which reduces costs to the district.

I appreciate your consideration in these matters.

Respectfully,

Vickey M. Giles, Ed. D.
Superintendent
Sheldon ISD