

From the Office of Superintendent G. Wayne Rotan

July 8, 2011



Legislative Update

Dear Glen Rose ISD Parents, Staff and Community,

In the final days of the Special Called Texas Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature approved legislation to reduce funding to Texas public schools by \$4 billion over the next two years. The Glen Rose ISD portion of the approved reductions will be approximately \$1,225,000 (6%) in 2011-2012 and \$1,527,873 (8.5%) in 2012-2013. The total impact for the biennium results in a net loss of approximately \$2.8 million in revenue. It is extremely difficult to be excited about a \$2.8 million loss of revenue over the next two years, but it is far more palatable than other proposed legislation that would have resulted in a net loss of \$11.5 million (62%) of revenue in Glen Rose ISD each year.

Along with every school district in Texas, Glen Rose ISD will be "tightening its belt" and become more efficient over the next two years. The plan for increased efficiencies was detailed in [previous legislative updates](#). Glen Rose ISD is classified as a "property wealthy" school district. This means that property values exceed the limit that we are allowed to retain based on student enrollment and "excess" must be sent to the state in the form of "Robin Hood" to equalize funding for other Texas school districts. Glen Rose ISD has sent over \$520 million dollars to the state through "Robin Hood" including a payment of \$14.7 million required in 2010-2011.

While the reductions for the next biennium are manageable, my greatest concern is the future funding of public schools in Texas. There seems to be mounting support to increase the amount of "Robin Hood" payments of "property wealthy" districts to equalize other districts. The \$525 million of local tax dollars sent to the state by GRISD would have sufficiently funded GRISD for the next 30 years. Currently, Glen Rose ISD has the 8th lowest tax rate of the 1,000 plus school districts and gives an optional 20% homestead exemption not available in other districts. Each time school finance laws are changed, "Robin Hood" districts seem to shoulder the most burden. Attached is a question and answer page on the state budget shortfalls and explanations for reductions to public schools. What it fails to mention is the \$10 billion dollar structural tax deficit that was created by the property tax compression. This will be a recurring shortfall until the structure is fixed.

Beginning next year, the state of Texas will replace the current Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test with the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test. The STAAR test will raise the bar for student expectations for the state testing requirements and we must continue to move forward with student progress in academic achievement. The students that fill our desks today are the future leaders of our community, state and nation and we must keep moving forward with academic expectations and gains despite revenue losses.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 254-898-3905 or email me at wrotan@grisd.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Wayne Rotan".

G. Wayne Rotan
Superintendent
Glen Rose ISD

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

John F. Kennedy