

Slide Notes from Julie Cowan

Slide 2 -

As many of you are aware, Austin ISD passed last November a \$1 B 50 M bond that will progressively begin to change the face of AISD schools over the next 15-20 years, and more specifically a few schools in our neighborhood. Doss Elementary will be entirely modernized with an expected move in date of August 2020. Murchison MS will begin phase one of work that will lead to its expansion and modernization with an intended phase 1 completion date of January 2021. Hill Elementary is also scheduled for an expansion project to meet its needs that will have kids using new spaces in August 2022. To learn about the bond work taking place at these schools and across the district, visit www.austinisd2017bond.org/ and aisdfuture.com. If you have detailed questions, stop by to visit with the appropriate principal. Currently, both Doss and Murchison's campus architectural teams are working with architects to draw plans.

Slide 3-

Integral to seeing our work come to fruition is asking taxpayers to share their hard-earned dollars for the good of our students, and providing transparency on how that money is being spent. A lot of financial and academic accountability is required of school districts by the state. But who holds the state accountable for the money they capture from local ISDs under the guise of Chapter 41/Robin Hood?

This is a slide that shows the impact of recapture on Austin's tax collections and how that money is apportioned. As you can see, in the school year that we're currently ending June 1, FY2018, 46% of what AISD collects goes to the state of Texas. Next year, it is estimated almost 52% of our will go to the state of Texas. The out years are even less promising.

Slide 4 -

This illustrates the break-down of where your property tax payments go: the blue is to the city; the green is to other entities; the gray is AISD; and the red is captured by the State of Texas. As you can see what AISD is keeping to spend on our students and teachers is declining, even as we collect more from the property owner.

Slide 5 –

This shows the declining percentage that the state is putting into its Constitutionally mandated responsibility of public education. The saddest part of this graph is that while the state collects more from AISD, it is also collecting more from other school districts, including many in central

Texas, just so legislative budget writers can reduce the amount of money collected through other means. It isn't very transparent, or should I say taxparent.

Slide 6-

If you have the opportunity, I encourage you to visit Taxparencytexas.org. It will further explain the concept of Texas supplanting statewide dollars with local property collections.

The real shame for AISD is that over 50% of our students are low income and could really benefit from some of the dollars we are required to pay the state of Texas. And, as our property values rise, making our recapture payment higher, making AISD look wealthier, families with children are slowly being pushed out of the city because property taxes are unaffordable.... It is a cycle that punishes AISD and our community at large.

Slide 7-

Please communicate with the state's leaders, Governor Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, and Speaker Joe Straus, along with members of the School Finance Commission. Share with them the need to create a sustainable funding system that has multiple sources of revenue, none of which unduly burden one group of tax payers, like home owners. Share with them the need to update the school finance formula to restore Austin's funding to where it was in 2011 and to take into account the rising cost of doing business in our thriving city.

Slide 8-

I'll close tonight's comments with some data from a recent statewide survey conducted by the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium, also known as TEGAC.

The survey results show broad, bipartisan support for increasing state funding of Texas public schools. Basically, 90 % of respondents believe that "money matters in public education, and that money should be well spent." With leadership from Todd Williams of The COMMIT Partnership, a nonprofit focused on improving education, himself a member of the school finance commission, an effort is being made to engage business and the public around public education and school finance.

I cannot predict what the Texas Legislature will do in the 2019 session, but I can say that school districts like Austin ISD welcome your interest and your advocacy on behalf of our 81,000 students and the state's 5 M students. Please engage.