

MYERS, CHERIE

From: LARGENT, JAMES
Sent: Friday, May 12, 2017 9:18 AM
To: GISD-Staff
Subject: Supt Weekly 5/12/17
Attachments: The Contrast of Two Chambers May 2017.docx

Good Morning GISD, I hope you are all enjoying the nice weather and are having a great week.

- I know this was another **testing week** for a lot of you. Thanks for your **great supervision and attention to detail** as we administer these tests.
- **Nurse Appreciation Day** was Wednesday of this week. I hope all of you had a chance to go by and tell your nurse thanks for all they do for our kids. If not, today would be a good day.
- I had lunch with our **aviation mentors** this week. These folks have given of their time this entire school year working with our students in the aviation lab. The finished product will be a **fully functional RV 12 airplane!** I am sure you will see more information on this project in the coming weeks and months.
- I attended **GHS Biology classes** this week as the students were learning about **beekeeping and honey production** from our very own **Brian Caruthers**. Brian has gotten into this hobby and is very knowledgeable about the topic, the types of bees, the honey-making process, etc. Our students had lots of questions and it was a great class.
- On Thursday, I ate lunch at **"The Galley"** as our **culinary students** have begun the process of opening a diner that we hope will expand into a full-fledged restaurant run by our students. The service was great, food was delicious and everyone really enjoyed the experience. **Great job!**

Legislative Update: This is a bit of a lengthy update this week, but for those of you following this, it gives a good illustration of how legislation works and how amendments can disrupt what otherwise was considered a good bill.

CSHB 21: School Finance (We support HB 21 without the amendment)

Public education advocates were relieved to see that public education funding reform still had a chance! A **big surprise was revealed** when Chairman Taylor explained his committee

substitute for HB 21. He listed a couple of changes, but it was **the third change that woke up anyone who was dozing** or otherwise distracted. He announced that the **senate version of HB 21 would create an education savings account program (ESAs) for kids with disabilities**, who were in public school the year before in either Special Ed or had a 504 plan. Each student would receive 90% of the state M&O, 5% would go back to the school district, and the last 5% would fund a dyslexia allotment.

The **senate's voucher virus**, that some had pronounced dead, found a possible host in the school finance bill that public education advocates had embraced in its original form. **Knowing how desperate public schools are for a few more dollars, the senate figured maybe we could accept some vouchers if funding was dependent on it.** A long line of people quickly formed in the hearing room as **witnesses changed their position on the bill from "for" to "against."** **Prepared testimony in support of the house school finance fix quickly changed to condemnation of vouchers in any form.** Public education advocates were consistent in their opposition to this new provision, however some senators who have strongly opposed vouchers, seemed to show a softening for special ed vouchers in response to the horror stories that have been shared since the revelation of TEA's 8.5% special ed cap. These senators asked for promises from Chairman Taylor that the program wouldn't grow and he said that he intended for it to stay focused. Of course, **this is how vouchers have started in almost every voucher state and within a few years the programs always grow, whether or not they are successful for students.**

SB 2052 (Larry Taylor): Districts of Innovation and School Start Date (Even though GISD will be grandfathered for 5 years, we do not like this bill as it limits local control)
Senator Taylor introduced SB 2052, which would **change the law governing when school districts can begin instruction for students.** The bill would move the date from "not before the fourth Monday in August" to "not before the third Monday in August." The other major change this bill would make is to state that a **District of Innovation (DOI) cannot exempt itself from the uniform first day of instruction going forward. Existing DOIs would be grandfathered for the 5 years of their previously adopted DOI.** However, DOIs created after the implementation of the bill (if passed) and renewals of DOIs would be subject to this rule. So, if you have a DOI that exempts your district from the uniform start date, you can keep that exemption until you need to renew. If you haven't already created a DOI and don't complete that process before this bill becomes law, then you will not be able to exempt your district from the uniform start date. The bill is still pending in committee, and we will let you know when and if it moves forward.

SB 7 (Bettencourt/ Ken King): Inappropriate Student Teacher Relationships (This is a bill we support, but some of the wording in the actual bill is vague, which is concerning)
Earlier this week, SB 7, the bill **expanding and strengthening penalties on superintendents and principals who don't report allegations of inappropriate teacher-student relationships,**

passed unanimously on third reading in the Texas House of Representatives. This bill had already passed unanimously in the Texas Senate and **will almost certainly be signed into law by the governor**. The version of the bill passed into law expands reporting requirements and penalties to include principals (in addition to superintendents), private schools, and covers relationships between teachers and students in their own or any other district. A purposeful lack of reporting to SBEC would result in a state jail felony, and unintentional lack of reporting within 7 business days would result in a fine up to \$10,000. **Several amendments were adopted** into the final version of the bill including:

- a. Requiring the **school board to notify the parent** or guardian of a student with whom educator misconduct was alleged.
- b. Requiring a **pre-employment affidavit** for an applicant to work at an ISD, DOI, open-enrollment charter, ESC, or shared service arrangement disclosing whether the applicant has ever been charged with, adjudicated for, or been convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a minor.
- c. **Disallowing the collection of a pension for a teacher convicted** of an improper relationship. An amendment to that amendment gives a judge the discretion to award the pension to the family of the convicted party.

We will start seeing bills actually go the Governor's desk in the coming weeks. That is when we will know for sure which of these bills actually becomes law.

Emails this week:

From a community member: I wanted to send a shout out to our **GHS culinary arts dept.** for an **incredible luncheon** for the aerospace mentors today. Very impressive presentation, service and food!

From GMS: Everyone that I have talked to said they had a great time at **Dinosaur Valley!** Some of the *students said they have never seen a river, been hiking or been to this kind of park! They were asking when we were coming back next year!!* It was like *elementary excitement for our Middle Schoolers!* I want to give a **HUGE** shout out to all who helped pull it off! **The 6th grade team at GMS is AMAZING!!!!!!** Hughes, Ghiglieri, Futch, Logsdon, Hibbs, Mabery, Taylor, Moody, Broadus, Pina, and Robertson! You guys all stepped up and did whatever it took to make it great! Trudging through mud and water in the river, through bugs and heat... *I, Ditto, thank you so very much! I could not have done it without each and every one of you!!!* Thank you to Sheila McCarthy, Coach Greg McCarthy, Coach Gary Childs, Coach Bruce Stafford, Coach Jeremy Blowhowiak, Coach Jason Logsdon for driving our buses and volunteering their time for our students! Thank you **Jimmy Dawson** for allowing us to

borrow Greg! He was a hit! **Pat Yelverton, Kathy Currie, and Veronica Rios**, thank you all for everything you guys did to make this happen for our students!

We couldn't have done it without your help! Lastly, to **Ranger Jen and Ranger Reuben** for taking the time to teach our students about the park, safety, Indians, spears, alt-alt, dinosaurs, outdoors, and having lunch with them!! Ranger Jen said, *"These kids are great! They listen and participate better than the other schools we have had! You guys are welcome back anytime!"*

I am releasing an **article today** related to the **contrast between the House and Senate** this session. You can find it attached to this email. Also, I would encourage you to read an article from the **Houston Chronicle** regarding legislation and the "voucher" debate. It was written by a **school board trustee** who is also the **parent of a disabled child**. You can find it here: <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/Tassin-Public-education-is-in-the-ring-again-11140226.php>

I hope you all have a great weekend. On a personal note, I will be going tomorrow to watch my **son graduate from Tarleton State University** with a **Business Management** degree. It seems like just yesterday he was walking across the stage at the FW Convention Center wearing the purple and **gold**. Time flies...

JL

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