

## Thoughts of a Superintendent . . .

*From the Desk of Vicki Adams*



Typically I write an article that is meant to be positive or motivating. Still hoping to achieve that purpose, I chose to write about public education, school finance in particular. Before you start groaning, I will continue with a somewhat positive outlook. By now, most of you have heard that Texas has a huge shortfall in funding its many state

programs including education this biennium. This has to do mainly with the downturn in our economy which resulted in a reduction of sales taxes generated and lowered the values of property. To make up the difference, legislators are looking at a variety of strategies to reduce funding to school districts. I am still optimistic that they will not take action that would purposely harm thousands of children and school employees.

Recently I organized a Region 3 Superintendent meeting in Victoria to collaborate against possible major cutbacks in state financial aid to our school districts. From the original shortfall that was announced, most of our districts are looking at projected losses of millions of dollars which will devastate the quality of education in our schools.

Generally positive discussion ranged from sharing ideas on how to cut costs to sending correspondence to legislators to hosting town hall meetings. One issue in particular discussed by the superintendents was the negative public perception about school districts and education that is escalating because of the cuts that districts will be forced to make.

Superintendents were unified in supporting the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) 2011 Legislative Priorities. These talking points developed by superintendents and other administrators across the state emphasize that the education of our Texas children is far too important to reduce funding. With more children entering Texas each year, many being non-English speakers, districts need additional dollars rather than working with less money. With accountability demands increasing, the viability of educating all students will become increasingly difficult even if funding would remain at a stagnant level let alone be reduced.

Some of the priorities that Region 3 superintendents support are:

- *Advocating against cuts to the Foundation School Program;*
- *Advocating against expansion of charters while public education will be cut;*
- *Advocating that the state fully fund enrollment growth for the next biennium;*

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is a Recognized District**

- *Giving school boards access to additional pennies without a Tax Rate Election;*
- *Advocating for the continuation of discounts that some school districts currently receive from telecommunication providers;*
- *Revising spending requirements under Chapter 42 for compensatory education to give districts greater flexibility with those funds;*
- *Advocating for the continuation of funding for dual credit courses;*
- *Utilizing all the Rainy Day Fund;*
- *Utilizing accounting measures;*
- *Restructuring the Franchise Tax;*
- *Accessing other revenue enhancements (e.g. fees, alcohol and cigarette tax, surcharge on sugary drinks, etc.)*
- *Eliminating Target Revenue and fully implementing an updated cost-based formula system;*
- *Advocating for funding levels that are efficient and adequate for the education of all children;*
- *Advocating for the 20% discount on electricity costs that higher education institutes receive;*
- *Advocating for flexibility on personnel issues;*
- *Advocating for relief from unfunded mandates such as accelerated instruction ratios, election requirements, newspaper notice requirements, class ratios, and Home Rule Charter statutes;*
- *Delaying the implementation of new exams and account ability system for one year; and*
- *Establishing a pilot program to explore alternative assessment tools and to develop a localized accountability system.*

Additionally, Region 3 superintendents discussed the possible legislative push for consolidation. Currently most school districts in Region 3 have already consolidated services in a large number of areas. The Region 3 Educational Service Center provides shared service agreements for group purchasing, live science materials, librarians, nurses, safety, food services, technology, finance, grants and many other areas. Without the services our Center provides, many school districts would not be able to function efficiently nor remain compliant with State regulations.

Region 3 superintendents are joining other superintendents across the state in enlisting the aid of parents and community members to contact legislators in support of funding for the education of our children. We are asking to write, call and email senators and representatives to fund school districts and educational service centers so that we may remain effective. The legislators for Palacios are Senator Glenn Hegar at Glenn.Hegar@senate.state.tx.us and Representative Randy Weber at Randy.Weber@house.state.tx.us.

***“Make Education  
a Priority”***

# Photo



*Jennifer Mack displays the logo she designed in her PHS Electronic Media class. The design was chosen as the official logo for all POWER SET (Powerful Opportunities for Women Eager and Ready for Science Engineering and Technology) chapters. There are currently 102 POWER SET members in 5 chapters throughout the state. Mack, who is a senior member of PHS' POWER SET*

*chapter, designed the logo to represent women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).*

*Cosmetology students competed at the Skills USA District Contest on February 11-12, and were awarded all blue ribbons and a District Best of Show Trophy. The contest was held at Dulles High School in Dulles, Texas where all of the students had to perform certain cosmetology skills and compete against 20 other schools. From March 31st through April 2nd, these students will travel to Corpus Christi, Texas where they will compete against students from around the state at the State Skills USA Contest.*

*Winning blue ribbons for their skills pictured l-r are: Myra Cambray, Carmen Ortiz, Ana Paniagua, Kimberly Betancourt, Maria Aguilera, Gabby Ledesma, and Tiffany Cruz. Tiffany Cruz also was awarded the District Best of Show trophy for her nail art.*



*On February 23, twenty-three PHS students with PHS Assistant Principal Sherri Seaman, Coach James Overton and Coach Barbara Buckley-Peoples traveled to Austin for Matagorda County Day. Students and chaperones loaded the bus in Palacios at 4:30am and then traveled to Tidehaven to pick up 13 more high school students. Arriving in Austin at the State Capitol, they were greeted by Senator Glen Hagar, Representative Randy Weber, as well as many Matagorda County officials such as County Judge Nate McDonald, Palacios Mayor Sardelich, Bay City ISD Superintendent Brown, and Palacios ISD Superintendent Adams. Group pictures were taken by the media in the rotunda of the capitol. The students were then given a tour of the capitol, had lunch on the capitol lawn and were able to tour the Bob Bulloch Museum in the afternoon.*



*Juan Mancera, Sergio Sifuentes, Ricardo Yanez, David Salinas, Juan Lopez, Ramiro Sanchez, Jesus Paz, Salvador Arteaga and Felipe Vega. (Not pictured is Lupe Hurtado)*

*On February 11-12, PISD's Vocational and Building Trades students competed at the Skills USA District Contest held at Dulles High School in Dulles, Texas. Several students were awarded blue ribbons and many received 1st place and 2nd place trophies. Because of their skills and performance, several students will progress to the State Skills USA Contest during March 31st – April 2nd in Corpus Christi Texas. Listed below are the students and their awards.*

*1st Place Team Works (State Qualifiers): Ramiro Sanchez, Ricardo Yanes, David Salinas, Felipe Vega; 1st Place Masonry (State Qualifier): Juan Lopez; 2nd Place Carpentry: Ramiro Sanchez; Best of Show for Large Wood Project (State Qualifiers): Jesus Paz and Sergio Sifuentes; Blue Ribbon Wood Project: David Salinas*

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*Pictured: Adriana Cruz, Ismael Lara, Tess Bates, Laura Martinez, Truong Vu, Theresa Nguyen, Katherine Cantu, Marie Muniz, Annie Nguyen, Alicia Torres, Jessica Ramon, Jennifer Mack, Mary Watson, Liem Tran, Ana Paniagua, Amanda McKenzie, Ashlan Kacer, Lauren Mills, Jacob Frausto, Vincent Martinez, Juan Carlos DeLaFuente*

# Gallery

On February 18th-20th, the Palacios FFA Ag Mechanics Show Team presented their Ag Mechanics projects at the San Antonio Livestock Show & Rodeo. These students have been building and preparing these projects during and after school since the start of the school year. The team presented 5 projects: 5 X 8 ft Tilt Trailer, built by Garret Shimek, Hunter Shimek, and Matthew White; 1 round bale hay buggy, built by Ernie Aparicio, Justice Hart, and Vincent Martinez; chop saw table, built by Nathan Biffle & Jeremy Hunt; 4X 6 ft workbench, built by Tess Bates & Taylor Machacek; and a poultry crate with wheels (AKA a chicken wagon), built by Paige Stuhrenberg. Blue ribbons were given to the 5 X 8 ft. tilt trailer, chop saw table, 4 X 6 ft workbench, and the poultry crate. The 1 round bale hay trailer was presented a red ribbon. Congratulations to all of these students and their instructors, Bradley Steffek and James Janacek.



Left: Matthew White, Hunter Shimek and Garret Shimek



Right: Tess Bates and Taylor Machacek



Left: Vincent Martinez and Ernie Aparicio



Right: Jeremy Hunt and Nathan Biffle



Left: Paige Stuhrenberg



Right: Artwork by Elizabeth Vargas

**Early release  
Thursday, April 21st  
for Easter Holiday**

## Matagorda County Fair Academic Rodeo . . .

**E**ast Side Intermediate Academic Team competed at the 2011 Matagorda County Fair and Rodeo Academic Rodeo Contest which was held on Sunday, February 27 at the Bay City Service Center. The team competed against other schools from around the county in the Junior Division and placed 3rd overall. The team members were Vy Le, An Nguyen, Audrey Kessler, Jake Carr and alternates Kaitlyn Marroquin and Jackson Engel and team coach was coached Sally Kurtz.



## Lacey Ledford Wins Color Scheme Design Contest . . .

**M**iss Lacey Ledford who is a PISD JHS 8th grade student, was presented an award on Wednesday, March 2nd, from the Palacios Community Medical Center (PCMC). She received a plaque and a \$50.00 check for contributions to the Center. The purpose of the contest was to combine the ideas of unifying the school district's colors into the Palacios community hospital, educate the students of the presence of a hospital and healthcare services within the community, and to provide the PCMC with a long needed facelift.

With over 82 submissions, the color scheme submitted by Lacey Ledford entailed a detailed concept of the school's primary colors as well as colors to be used for support columns, eaves, and borders. "Her design was professional, clean, uniformed, and captured the 'Shark' spirit" said Don Bates, CEO of PCMC. Upon the successful completion of the exterior painting project in mid April, the hospital will host a community event with hot dogs, popcorn, music, face painting and a mini-health fair.



*Pictured: Cherri Waites, Robert Ledford, Lacey Ledford, Maggie Hearn, Joe Adams, Don Bates, and Vicki Adams*

## Dr. Josie Riviera visits campus . . .

**D**r. Josie Riviera from the University of Houston-Victoria LEAD program visited the 8th grade students on Wednesday, February 9. She spoke about the importance of attending college and pursuing a higher education. She pointed out that income is based on the level of education that a person possesses. To emphasize this point, Dr. Riviera had the students participate in "The Money Game". Each student was given a worksheet with a different level of education listed. According to that level of education, the students were given an estimated monthly salary they could expect to bring home. Based on that information, Dr. Riviera had each student complete a monthly budget with house, car, insurance, groceries, and other necessary expenses. The students commented that this exercise was very eye-opening, and they all understood why attending college and furthering their education was so important. Dr. Riviera summed up her discussion by saying, "Familiarize yourself with the FAFSA, and start planning now!" She also informed students of the different scholarships and grants which are available to them.



*Superintendent Vicki Adams throws out the first pitch before the season opener with Tidehaven.*

**Palacios Independent School District**  
361-972-5491 [www.palaciosisd.org](http://www.palaciosisd.org)

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