
From: Spring Branch Speaks <updates@springbranchspeaks.com>
Sent: Friday, May 20, 2011 12:03 PM
To:
Subject: Spring Branch Speaks - Update on Texas Education Funding

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Spring Branch Speaks

... to make our voices heard in Austin.

This was a key negotiating week in Austin. There are 10 days left in this session, and negotiations are moving fast.

State Education Funding Update...as of last night.

The most recent news is that the Senate and the House are close to agreeing on an education funding number. There are reports that the House has moved at least \$2B closer to the Senate budget, and some reports have the final level at the Senate cut. If that holds true, it is a significant win, as the Senate cut version is the lowest on the table and the one we all worked to support!

Yet to be decided is how the education money will be allocated. There are still a couple of funding plans under consideration, including a newer version of the Hochberg plan we oppose, as well as a Senate plan with more equitable cuts district-to-district. We are watching developments closely and will let you know when **Spring Branch Speaks** needs to weigh in again.

Spring Branch Speaks Lobbies in Austin

On Wednesday, a group of 14 **Spring Branch Speaks** members spent the day at The Capitol delivering our messages. It was very productive: we visited with 7 of the 10 Budget Conference Committee members or staff ("staffers" often meet with people in place of legislators), as well as two local lawmakers, Senator Patrick and Representative Murphy. We advocated the Senate version of education funding, and also asked that the legislators support only equitable distribution of the cuts.

There were definite positive takeaways from our visit. The Senators, as we noted above, are standing firm for their education funding level. And most of the lawmakers we talked with did not think the Hochberg amendment would pass; in fact, it has become so contentious that they were not sure that it would even be allowed to be brought up with the Fiscal Matters bill. **Our voices are definitely heard.**

Press coverage of Spring Branch Speaks

Our visit to Austin attracted some special attention: an Austin based political newsletter, *The Quorum Report* (subscription only), wrote an article about our presence and position against the Hochberg funding scheme. It reported that "...some school districts, like Spring Branch Independent School District, are actively campaigning against attaching Hochberg's plan to the fiscal matters bill, calling the creation of a new formula funding vehicle an "under the radar" move." This is a good

sign that our collective voices are making an impact.

Also, our effort is outlined in this week's *Memorial Examiner*. Check out the front page story, or read it here: [Memorial Examiner Link](#)

We are so thankful to have such a fantastic group of parents working with us on behalf of our schools. We are especially appreciative of the parents and residents who took time off from their busy lives to join us for the day in Austin. Many served as designated spokesperson for our group and made their voice heard directly to our legislators.

Please keep up the great work responding when we identify other opportunities to use our collective voice.

Spring Branch Speaks

P.S. - Clarification if you received a confusing response email

If you sent emails to our local legislators about the Hochberg allocation this week, you might have received a response from one Representative that was a bit confusing. We want to clarify the two terms compared in that response.

The comparison was between the Foundation School Program cuts and the Hochberg allocation amendment, and which is more harmful to SBISD. Bottom line - they are both harmful to SBISD.

The Foundation School Program is the overall budget for public education in Texas: picture a pie that represents public education funding. We support the smallest cut possible - the Senate version - which is \$4B.

Once the public education funding, the Foundation School Program, is set, the state must decide how to allocate the money to school districts. That's where the Hochberg amendment comes in. This funding allocation - splitting up the pie - forces larger-than-average cuts on certain districts, and virtually no cuts to other districts. ***Spring Branch Speaks*** is opposed to inequitable cuts district-to-district.

So, while the email response compared the two, ***Spring Branch Speaks*** is fighting both cuts: the House overall budget cuts to education, and the Hochberg amendment.

[Spring Branch Speaks](#)

Parent-organized community outreach with SBISD in mind.

(Forward this email to your family and friends - ask them to join, too:

www.SpringBranchSpeaks.com)

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Legislative Committee:

David Davenport	Pam Goodson
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