

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



June 6, 2016

Friends,

Summer is here! As the weather warms and schools let out, please be alert for children playing when driving around our community.

School Finance

Texas House Speaker Joe Straus recently asked the House Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Public Education to join forces to further study key aspects of the state's school finance system and make recommendations before the next legislative session.

Last fall, the Public Education Committee was charged with studying the Cost of Education Index, which is another key component of the state's school funding formulas. He also called on the Committee to study schools' facility needs and debt, particularly in fast-growing areas.

The new charges follow a recent Texas Supreme Court opinion that the state's education finance system, while constitutional, is "undeniably imperfect, with immense room for improvement."

The first new charge to the two committees reads as follows: *"Current law requires the elimination on September 1, 2017, of Additional State Aid for Tax Relief (ASATR), which was intended to offset the cost of tax-rate compressions enacted in 2006. Review how this loss of funding would impact school districts."*

ASATR is funding that the state began providing to school districts in 2006 in order to encourage them to reduce their tax rates to \$1.00 per \$100. State law calls for the funding to end in 2017. In the current school year, ASATR funding provides an estimated \$350 million to the state's public education system.

The second charge reads as follows: *"Study the use of local property taxes to fund public education and its effects on educational quality and on Texas taxpayers. Specifically, recommend*

ways to reverse the increasing reliance on recapture payments to fund public education statewide.”

As property values have increased, more school districts have become subject to recapture, meaning that some of their local property tax dollars are sent back to the state and distributed to school districts with less property wealth.

The newly issued charges will allow the House to take a thorough look at school finance to prepare for the upcoming Legislative session which convenes in January 2017.

Around the District

Last month, the new Raytheon facility up at Richardson's City Line opened and I was pleased to join Gov. Greg Abbott and other colleagues of mine for the ribbon cutting ceremony. I attended the DFW Dragon Boat Festival along with my colleague Sen. Don Huffines that took place in Irving last month. The Texas Public Policy Foundation hosted a breakfast with their executive director, Arlene Wohlgemuth, where I was happy to discuss policies and issues that may appear next legislative session. I attended the Richardson Chamber's special May luncheon which had Comptroller Glenn Hegar as the featured speaker. It is always very insightful when our state elected officials travel up to our area to speak about the status of our state and where we need to move forward. Lastly, I had a wonderful time at the annual Rowlett Stampede night that is hosted by the Rowlett Chamber of Commerce.



Pictured with Councilwoman Marta Gomez Frey, Councilman Scott Dunn, Councilman Bob Townsend, Mayor Paul Voelker, Gov. Greg Abbott, Sen. Van Taylor, Rep. Jeff Leach, Rep. Cindy Burkett, Rep. Jodie Laubenberg and Rep. Matt Shaheen at the Raytheon ribbon cutting



Pictured with Rep. Linda Koop, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Solomon, Richardson Chamber Chairman Kenneth Hutchenrider, Brint Ryan, Comptroller Glenn Hegar, Councilwoman Mabel Simpson, Mayor Paul Voelker, Richardson Chamber CEO Bill Sproull at the Richardson Chamber luncheon

It is an honor to serve as your State Representative. Please contact me on issues that are important to you.

Sincerely,

Angie Chen Button

If you would like to be added or removed from this mailing, please e-mail Angie.Button@house.texas.gov