

# Texas Rural Education News

## THE TEXAS RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

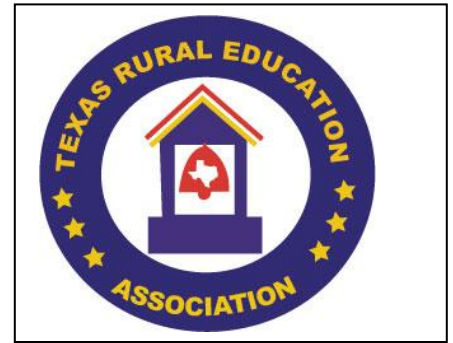
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### **Title I Formulas Do Not Treat Small Schools Fairly**

You all know that Title I is the main federal program that provides funding to school districts to improve educational opportunities to disadvantaged children. In 2002 the formulas which were used to distribute money to schools were changed to provide more money for each poor student in larger school districts than in smaller districts. As a result of this number weighting provision, high-poverty smaller school districts are losing funding to low-poverty larger districts.

This is an inequity that we need to ask our congressmen to fix.

You can get more information about this issue at this web site:

[www.formulafairness.com](http://www.formulafairness.com)

You can also find contact information for your Congressmen at this site.

### **Textbook Problems?**

We have heard from several superintendents who are concerned with textbook publishers who provide free supplementary instructional materials based on the number of textbooks ordered by the local school districts.

It seems that schools must order a minimum of 20 textbooks in order to receive those supplementary materials from the publisher.

Many of our small schools have classes far below 20 in size and they have had to purchase many more text books than they need.

It seems to us that publishers should make no distinction in school size and make those materials available to every Texas student at no extra cost.

Let us hear from you if you have encountered this problem with your textbook adoptions.

### **As Financial Woes Face Texas-What Will Happen to School Funding ?**

Knowledgeable legislators continue to predict a shortfall of \$18 billion or more as they prepare to write a budget for the next biennium.

State agencies have all been asked to make a 10% cut in their budgets and if school districts must do the same then we are looking at cuts in excess of \$5.5 billion.

In the 90's when faced with similar circumstances schools had their funds prorated. State funds were cut and schools used their fund balances to make up the difference.

Subsequent changes in laws do require the state to pay schools back for those expenditures if proration occurs.

This could simply mean that the state just cuts district funding by 10 percent and avoids the proration route, however with our current target revenue system those school districts who can stand cuts the least would be the hardest hit .

TEA has submitted its budget which includes a cut of \$260 million, but no one expects that to be the limit of cuts on public education spending.

The rainy day fund of \$8 to \$9 billion really looks attractive now, but we are told that getting the 100 legislative votes to use all of it will be challenging .

We do hope that state officials will go forward and accept the \$800 million being offered by the US Department of Education for our local school districts.

### **TREA Officers and Directors to Meet in Fort Worth**

TREA officers and Directors will meet at the DFW Marriott Hotel in Fort Worth in the San Marcos Room on Wednesday, September 15, 2010 at 10:30 a.m.

In addition to their regular order of business planning will begin for the 2011 Summer Conference.

Officers and Directors meetings are always open to all TREA members.

### **NREA Conference in Branson, Missouri October 15-17, 2010**

- ***Turning around a failing rural school district***
- ***Creating a Relevant Rural Teacher Preparation Program***
- ***Challenges and Solutions in Rural English Language Learners Programs***
- ***Implementing Research and Best Practices into Rural Schools***
- ***Rural and Small Schools: Critical Research to Support their Efficacy***
- ***How Change Agents Transformed Three Low Performing ,Low SES Schools in Texas***

These are just a few of the sessions on the program at the NREA Conference.

It is a conference strictly for and about rural educators and rural education.

There is still time to register: Just go to the NREA web site: [www.nrea.net](http://www.nrea.net)

### **Teachers: Check Out Our Web Site**

We have a spot on our web site specifically for our teachers. It is "Teachers Corner"

You will find helpful information on:

Lesson Planning, Learning Trends, Testing Resources, Classroom Management, Behavior and many other topics.

If you know of another site we can link up with that provides help for teachers, please let us know and we will put it on our site.

### **Meet Our New Partner: P I E, Inc.**

We invite you to take a look at Primary Insurance for Educators, a company dedicated to providing schools and service center employees with no cost financial and retirement planning services.

PIE is affiliated with Texas School Cooperative. They have been providing annual returns above 8% even in these economic times.

TRS annuities will seldom provide for all the needs of retired educators in maintaining a comfortable standard of living. TRS annuitants have not had a raise in their benefits since the mid-1990's.

There appears to be little relief on the horizon.

You can insulate yourself from these situations through sound financial planning and investments.

We recommend PIE to our members and urge you to contact them by calling Mike Harper at 903-285-1558 or by clicking on the company's icon for other contact information.

