



March 30, 2011

Governor Rick Perry  
P.O. Box 12428, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711-2428

Dear Perry,

I am writing you today as a teacher, district leader, parent, and native Texan. As the superintendent of the Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD, with nearly 17,000 students and growing by over 600 students per year, I have had great interest and anticipation during this legislative session. The future of our great state is at stake because of the potential effect on my children, as well as, all of the children in Texas. I respect that this issue is very complex and there are no easy answers; the intent of this letter is to give you a look at the situation from my vantage point.

### **Dysfunctional School Funding System**

This funding crisis is neither a surprise nor simply the result of our country's economic downturn. It is the consequence of a dysfunctional school funding system that was worsened in 2005 by the implementation of the target revenue system and the effects of the tax rate compression. Out of all of the complexities of school funding this is the most simple. You take in less revenue, maintain services, absorb the impact of normal inflation, fund new mandates and you will run out of money. This is exactly what is happening throughout the state. The only variance is how quickly each district will run out of money.

Imagine if your family was planning a trip to Florida and you prepared them for the trip by giving them everything they need; a safe car, clothing, maps, and even games for the kids. However, you only gave them one tank of gas, no additional money to refuel and no assurance of a solution. Of course this would be absurd. However, our state funding system is not dissimilar. At this very moment, every superintendent in the state knows they will run out of money. Some already have. With every new student, new mandated programs, and the effects of simple inflation (e.g. fuel, electricity, healthcare costs) we get closer to running out of gas with no hope in sight.

### **Stripped of Local Control**

Our local school boards have been slowly stripped of their powers and responsibility to set a tax rate that is appropriate and acceptable to the community. School boards are a wonderful example of direct democracy in action. **Every citizen** in the state has the right to voice an opinion to their local board through the open forum process. If one is not pleased with the tax rate, the programs provided in a district, or the efficiencies of the school district, he or she can express this in a highly public forum. If he remains unsatisfied, he can express this during the next school board election.

School boards will always be more connected to their communities than state officials by the very definition of their roles. They are responsible for the two most important things to most people: their children and their money. Our state and our country have taken the perilous road to increased governmental regulations with the perception that the problems locally can be solved from a distance. In my experience, local school districts are as efficient as their communities expect them to be. When the community becomes dissatisfied, then changes to the elected and appointed leadership are inevitable. **This is democracy.** What we are becoming in this state, as well as around the country, is less than democratic.

**Inefficient Districts?**

In order to justify the funding crisis that has been created through the taxing structure, it has been asserted that our situation is the result of inefficiencies of school districts. We have been told that we have inflated our administrative costs and have vastly increased the percentage of non-teachers. Officials have used data from the 1970's to prove this point, however this data does not include a significant number of staff we now classify through the state's PEIMS system. The term "administration" implies only supervisory staff, such as myself, when in actuality it includes all non-teachers such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers, nurses, custodians, and maintenance workers. In my district, as well as many districts through the state, we have become even more efficient in terms of the ratios of district administration compared to campus staff.

Please consider the following figures for Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD:

	Total	Percentage of Total Staff	Number Ratio
<b>Total Staff</b>	2075	100%	<b>1:1*</b>
Teachers	1067	51%	
Non-Teachers*	1008	49%	
* Includes Librarians, counselors, campus leadership, custodians, food service, maintenance, technology, staff development, and central administration.			

	Dollar Amount	Percentage of Total Budget	Dollar Ratio
<b>Total District Budget</b>	\$124,694,424	100%	<b>2:1*</b>
Instructional Salaries	\$68,123,807	55%	
Non-Instructional Salaries*	\$34,311,372	28%	
* Includes Librarians, counselors, campus leadership, custodians, food service, maintenance, technology, staff development, and central administration.			

Out of our 2075 staff, 1067 are classified as teachers. While the ratio of teachers to non-teachers is 1:1, the salary budget is 2:1. It is also extremely important to recognize the broad scope of positions covered by non-teachers. This includes ALL non-teaching positions, not just administrative positions.

Recently, we were lectured during a senate press conference that we need to consider the children and to protect the classroom. One senator urged us to demonstrate leadership and to not cut teachers. It was implied during the press conference, as well as in a speech from Governor Perry, that the decision to cut teachers in response to budget cuts is strictly a local one. While it is accurate that it is my responsibility to determine where we cut our budget, it is ludicrous to state that I have any choice in the matter. We were urged to cut just 10% of our personnel budgets for non-teachers. Based on our estimate of projected budget cuts to in the initial year of the biennium, we project a reduction of \$9,600,000 for our district, which is 8% of our current budget. We would need a reduction in non-instructional salaries of 28% to make up for the 9.6 million shortfall. We are projecting an \$11,000,000 shortfall for the second year of the biennium, therefore, the percentage reduction required in non-instructional salaries to make up for this would be 32%.

It must be considered that these positions would not be what people commonly consider as administrators alone. They include custodians, maintenance workers, food service workers, bus drivers, nurses, librarians, counselors, etc. Including all of these personnel units in cuts of this magnitude reduces the staff to levels in which we simply cannot provide the basic services needed to support our teachers and provide for the success of our students. As an example, cuts of this magnitude could perceivably result in the elimination of transportation as a service. However cutting our entire transportation budget would only generate a savings of 4.4 million, which is far below the 9.6 million we are projecting.

We understand that cuts must be made, but to purport that these cuts can be made with a simple 10% reduction in non-instructional personnel is misleading. The revenue shortfall we are predicting represents an 8% reduction in our total district budget. To assume that our district's budget can be reduced by 8% with no reduction in teacher salaries which constitute 55% of our total budget is disingenuous and can only be harmful to districts as we proceed through the budget reduction process. This example holds true for the majority of Texas districts.

In spite of the attempt in Austin to avoid culpability for the fallout of the current school funding system, the legislature remains responsible and its part cannot be washed away with platitudes and a misrepresentation of the facts. The bottom line is that decisions made by legislators four years ago have contributed significantly to the position we find ourselves in today. Political posturing has taken precedence over solutions. Just Saturday, Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst made a statement suggesting that the legislature didn't have to touch the Foundation School Fund in order to balance the budget. While I wish this were true, sadly I know it is not.

I urge you, as leaders in our great state, to commit yourselves to the appropriate funding of public education in our state. We have made terrific strides in improvements in student performance, the development of a world class college readiness curriculum, and an atmosphere that encourages new businesses in Texas. Because of these factors, Texas leads the nation in new home starts and we are adding almost 80,000 new students per year. What you do now in the next few weeks will make a difference for the lives of millions for many years to come. I believe that you take your responsibilities seriously and I greatly respect your positions. I urge you to base your decisions on the facts and not political hyperbole. This is the time for decisive and courageous action. I appreciate your consideration of my thoughts.

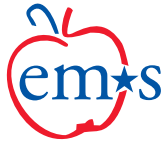
Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim F. Chadwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" being the most prominent.

Jim F. Chadwell, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

*"I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."*

- Stephen Grellet



EAGLE MOUNTAIN-SAGINAW  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
A TEA RECOGNIZED DISTRICT

# Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

## Fact Sheet

### About EM-S ISD

The Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District encompasses 73 square miles in the Northwest corner of Tarrant County. The TEA Recognized district is one of the three fastest growing districts in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and serves Saginaw, Blue Mound, portions of the City of Fort Worth, and unincorporated Tarrant County. Students are enrolled, enriched, and educated in fourteen elementary schools, five middle schools, two high schools, an alternative learning center, and an early childhood center. [www.emsisd.com](http://www.emsisd.com)

**TEA 2011-2012 Rating** | Recognized

**Number of Students 2011-2012** | 16,700

Attendance Rate - 96.3%

Completion Rate - 80.1%

Annual Dropout Rate - 1.12%

**Number of Students Projected 2012-2013** | 17,350

**Total Operating Budget** | \$124,694,424

### Tax Rate

M & O        \$ .9958

I & S         \$ .5000

---

**Total**        **\$1.4958**

**Target Revenue** | \$5,328

### Estimated Budget Reduction

2011-2012        \$ 9,600,000

2012-2012        \$11,000,000

### Demographics

African American - 9.6%

Asian Pacific Islander - 3.8%

Economically Disadvantaged - 38.3%

Hispanic - 34.1%

Native American - 0.3%

White - 48.9%