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Welcome!

by Robert H. Leos

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Thank you for visiting *robertleos.com*. My transition from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to the private sector has given me the opportunity to observe State Board of Education (SBOE) and legislative activities and consider the impact of their actions on students and teachers as well as on those of us in publishing. *The Report* is designed to give you news *briefs* related to those activities and to highlight the efforts of individuals in business and education who are directly involved in the many changes that are occurring in education.

The next report will include a summary of SBOE activities in July 2006. For now, however, thanks to David Anderson of HillCo Partners in Austin who took the time to give us his thoughts on the past special session. If you have ideas for additional content for this report, let me know. I'll consider them. Unless otherwise noted, I wrote all the articles. I'll also take the credit (or the blame) for the picture of David Anderson. Thanks for your support. rhl.

State Board of Education Activities

A summary of State Board of Education (SBOE) activities scheduled for July 6-8, 2006 will be posted here soon.

"This discussion followed a previous presentation on the immersion approach to teaching English language learners."

April: The SBOE passed revised rules for the review, adoption, purchase, and distribution of instructional materials (Chapter 66, second reading and final adoption). As of this writing, the amendments are pending while the SBOE awaits the Attorney General's certification of the amended rules. The amendments approved in April can be viewed using the following link:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/home/sboepending.html>.

Also in April, members heard a presentation on bilingual education issues by Dr. Frank Lucido of Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi. The discussion followed a previous presentation on the immersion approach to teaching English language learners.

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SBOE from page 1

New SBOE Members: Two new SBOE members are preparing to take their seats on the board in early 2007. Dan Montgomery, SBOE District 5, lost his re-election bid to Ken Mercer, former member of the Texas House of Representatives. Cynthia Thornton, SBOE District 10, whose term expires in January 2007, did not seek re-election. Cynthia Dunbar of Richmond, Texas will succeed Mrs. Thornton. Neither candidate faces a Democrat in the November election.

Two new SBOE members are preparing to take their seats on the board in early 2007.

For more information on specific SBOE meetings, use the following link: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/sboe/>

Listen: Live audio of some SBOE meetings is available to the public through the SBOE link included above. In addition, the Division of Instructional Materials and Technology offers information on SBOE activities and other matters of importance through TEA's listserve. You can subscribe to the mailing list by clicking on the following link and pulling down the appropriate mailing list (Instructional Materials).

<http://miller.tea.state.tx.us/list/>

Proclamation 2004 Review

State textbook panels conducted reviews of middle and high school mathematics instructional materials during June 2006. All meetings were held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Highway 290 and Interstate 35. It will be several weeks before the results of the evaluations are compiled, analyzed, and submitted to the SBOE as recommendations from the Commissioner of Education.

A public hearing on the instructional materials considered for adoption in November will most likely be held on September 13, 2006.

For a complete listing of the products scheduled for review, see <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/textbooks/adoptprocess/index.html>.

Middle and High School Math Instructional Materials were reviewed in June 2006 and are scheduled for adoption by the SBOE in November 2006.

WEB SITES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY:

www.tea.state.tx.us/textbooks

www.tea.state.tx.us/technology

Spotlight on David Anderson, HillCo Partners, Austin, Texas

In his office overlooking Congress Avenue in Austin, Texas, David Anderson takes calls from business clients, educators, and friends. His work with Austin's HillCo Partners requires him to be in constant communication with a number of sectors interested in legislation that could ultimately affect them. If his office telephone isn't ringing, his cell phone is. And throughout each of his conversations, the e-mail notification sound on his computer is constant. David took some time away from his activities to discuss some of the educational issues of the day and to offer some thoughts about the next legislative session starting in January 2007.

RHL: You seem to be very busy these days even though the special session ended in May and the next regular session is still six months away. What's on your plate these days?

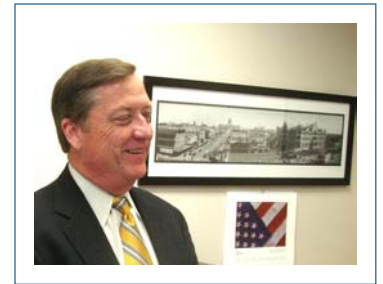
DDA: There's still quite a bit of follow-up involved following a legislative session, regular or special. The impact of the legislation that passed in the special session this year has to be dissected, analyzed, and studied again to realize the true impact on schools, property owners, business operators, and numerous other individuals and organizations affected by the passage of these bills.

RHL: Are school district superintendents generally pleased by the new school finance plan or is the response mixed? Is there a wait and see period here that we need to observe?

DDA: For the most part, the legislation does give some breathing room for school districts with regard to their funding as well as to those districts that for years have returned large sums of money to the state as part of the required redistribution. The long-term implications of the legislation, particularly the new accountability sections of the bill, are very difficult to predict this soon after passage.

RHL: Let's talk a little about your background. You and I had a chance to work together at the Texas Education Agency (TEA) prior to your joining HillCo Partners. I know that you were a teacher, administrator, and then publishing executive prior to coming to TEA. Tell us about some of those experiences.

DDA: Education has always been my passion and it continues to be today. Even in the publishing business, it was always my goal to work closely with editorial and marketing to create a quality product for students and teachers. The TEA experience as Managing Director of Curriculum for the state gave me a great opportunity to work directly on the implementation of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and to have some direct involvement in the development of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). TEKS, TAKS, funding, and instructional materials are the subjects on which school administrators spend much of their planning time. In addition, teachers and students are directly affected by each of these. Being part of TEA gave me a first-hand look at each of these processes.



David Anderson

"Education has always been my passion and it continues to be today."

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RHL: You mentioned that TEKS, TAKS, funding, and instructional materials consume much of the planning time for educators. What other issues are on the minds of teachers and administrators these days?

DDA: One of the major concerns that has been in the news throughout the special session is that of teacher pay. The legislation that passed is certainly a step in the right direction. There are still concerns, however, about teacher and administrator incentives and serious concerns about teacher retention.

RHL: Thinking about the 2007 legislative session, do you think there will be a renewed effort to increase teacher pay?

DDA: Teacher organizations and definitely the teachers themselves are rightly interested in seeing additional pay. Teacher pay, however, should be viewed in the larger picture to include a total package of benefits for school district employees. It's conceivable that the issue will come up during the next session.

RHL: So, are you ready for the session or do you plan to take some time off to recharge the batteries?

DDA: I will have the opportunity for some time off shortly. We're planning to do a little traveling and relaxing prior to the next session. Needless to say, the session promises to be a busy one with new members, new ideas, and new proposals.

RHL: What about the textbook/instructional materials adoption and distribution process? Will lawmakers be

changing the process?

DDA: It's likely that there will be as much discussion as there was in 2005. If I had to predict, I would predict that the focus of the changes in the textbook process will be with the way the products are funded.

RHL: David, thank you for taking the time to contribute to this inaugural issue of *The Report*. Good luck with all you do!

“ . . . I would predict that the focus of the changes in the textbook process will be with the way the products are funded.”

RHL

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