



Roddy Stinson: Awards/prizes and information you'll never see or hear again

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Voices Crying in the Wilderness Award

TO: The research staff of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, the state's most prominent conservative think tank

REGARDING: The release of a "Policy Brief" on Texas public-school funding, which contains several shockers that will be the subject of no education-establishment get-togethers and receive no media coverage:

—"The Texas education system costs more than \$10,000 annually per student."

—"Texas ranks 2nd among the 10 most populous states and 12th among all 50 states in K-12 total revenues and receipts per student when adjusted for cost of living."

—"Spending per student has increased by at least one-fifth in each of the last three decades in Texas, over and above increases for inflation and enrollment."

—"In 2003, Texas ranked third among the 50 states in public education expenditures as a percent of total state expenditures — 27 percent of the total state budget."

You Don't Always Get What You Pay For Award

TO: The Texas Education Establishment

REGARDING: These numbers uncovered by Texas Public Policy Foundation researchers:

—"Of those Texas high school students who take the ACT, only 17 percent demonstrate they are ready for college."

—"Texas students boast the 3rd-lowest SAT scores and the 8th-lowest ACT scores among the 50 states."

—"Approximately half of all students in Texas public universities and colleges need remedial classes."

If You Build a Bureaucracy, It Will Eat You Alive Award

TO: A long line of Texas politicians, educators and public-trough-feeding interest groups

REGARDING: The time, effort and energy required to create the top-heavy, free-spending public-school industry highlighted in the Foundation report:

—"There is currently one non-teacher for every teacher in Texas public schools, a non-teacher to teacher ratio that is 20 percent higher than for the nation as a whole."

—"From 1995 to 2001, the number of school employees for a given number of students increased by 14 percent. At the same time, the inflation-adjusted expenditures per student increased by roughly the same percentage. This implies that all additional funds applied to public education in Texas have basically been for the purpose of paying additional personnel."

—"At the current rate (of education-industry job growth), in 42 years there will be one public education employee for every public education pupil."

Dream On Award

TO: The author of the Foundation's brief, Education Policy Analyst Jamie Story

REGARDING: His conclusion after examining the research findings:

—"Schools will be improved when fundamental reforms shift more resources to the classroom and allow teachers and administrators to emphasize academic effectiveness."

Beat Goes On Prize

TO: Amy Beneski, associate executive director of the Texas Association of School Administrators, quoted in a Daily Texan article, "Fourth school finance special session called in Texas":

—"... Beneski said that there is nothing wrong with the current system; it is just underfunded. The bottom line is that the state needs to put more money in, she said."

Texas Education Expert Anno Domini 2006 Prize

ALSO TO: Amy Beneski, whose work history is described this way on the Texas Association of School Administrators Web site:

—"Prior to joining the TASA staff, Beneski served as committee clerk/counsel for the Texas House Corrections Committee and assistant general counsel for the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles."

To contact Roddy Stinson, call (210) 250-3155 or e-mail rstinson@express-news.net. His column appears Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Online at:

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