

Good morning,

I am honored to have the opportunity to speak today. I am Micheal French, Superintendent of Quinlan ISD. I recognize the difficult task each of you have this legislative session. I do not envy the unpopular decisions that you must make to balance the state's budget. I can empathize with your position because in my district we are scheduled to release 40-60 employees including at least 15 to 20% of our administrative staff, multiple coaches, librarians, nurses and counselors. We are also closing a campus and discontinuing our plans to expand our seating capacity for the marching band in our stadium that was built in 1969. I would like to preface this conversation by stating that I am a proud republican and believe in limited government. This includes living within your means and decreasing spending. However, it also includes freedom from over regulation. For example, state mandated testing is over governing of local entities. I appreciate a system that is based on checks and balances. This is a healthy approach. Accountability is a good thing when it does not become an obstruction to learning. However, increasing testing by approximately 20 more days is not a limited government model. This is not more instruction. This is more testing. In fact, the increased testing is approaching government intrusion. A balanced approach should be taken. During this historical financial crisis, a moratorium on the implementation of the new STAR and EOC exams should occur. In addition, a system that assesses at grades 5, 8 and 11 would be sufficient to measure student achievement. For example, when a student meets expectations in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, it is apparent that the child was adequately prepared in the prior grade levels. Local assessments for diagnostic purposes could be given at the non-tested grade levels. Associated costs to this unfunded mandate include substitute teachers, benchmark printing, tutorials, teacher training, testing coordination, but most of all the loss of critical instructional time that has an untold cost that our students, your students will have to pay! When your district is in the bottom 9% of all schools in targeted revenue, unfunded mandates further exasperates the funding gap that already exists. I will be sending each of you information that outlines a balanced approach to tackling the budget deficit. I will make myself available to you if you have any questions or would like to meet. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Micheal French  
QISD, Supt.

## **Generate Revenue**

Utilize at least 1/2 of  
the Rainy Day Fund  
(4.7 billion)\*

Temporary Expansion  
of Sales Tax and/or  
Eliminate Sales Tax  
Exemptions (3 billion)\*

Delay FSP Payments  
(1.9 billion)\*

Healthy Tax Package  
(Tobacco, Alcohol,  
Soft-Drinks)  
(4.4 Billion)\*

## **Limit Government**

Eliminate Unfunded  
Mandates

Suspend/Reduce  
Maintenance of Effort

Strengthen Local  
Decision Making

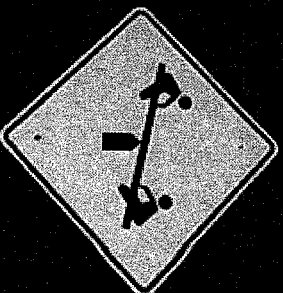
Reduce State  
Mandated Testing

\*All figures are approximate.

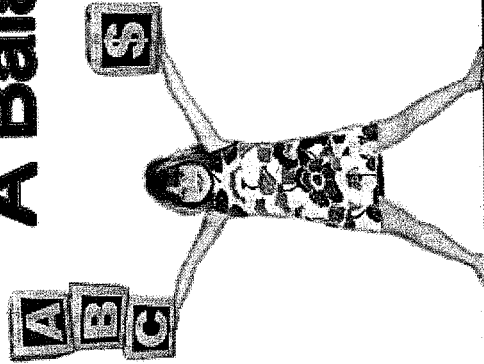
## **Decrease Spending**

Eliminate Discretionary  
Grants (1.9 billion)\*

As a last resort, an  
equitable reduction in  
FSP funding starting with  
districts with the highest  
target revenue.



# A Balanced Approach



A balanced approach should be used to resolve the budget shortfall for the 2012-13 biennium that will bring stability to the system and resolution to the crisis. This approach includes living within your means, generating revenue and limiting government. During this time of serious budgetary concerns, one-sided measures and political posturing should give way to a fair and balanced approach and courageous leadership.



*Generate Revenue*  
*Limit Government*  
*+ Decrease Spending*  

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*Balanced Budget*

Texas must consider all options. Texas cannot be limited by a unilateral approach that reduces the quality of education and increases the funding gap that already exists between school districts.