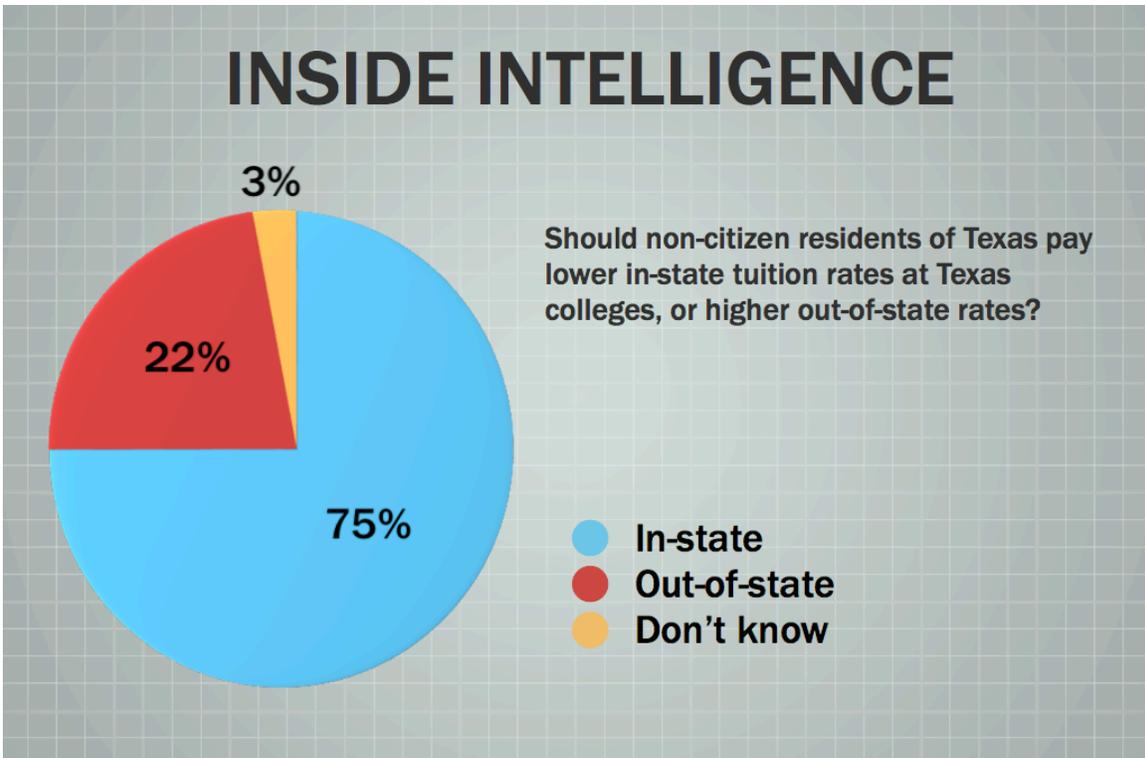


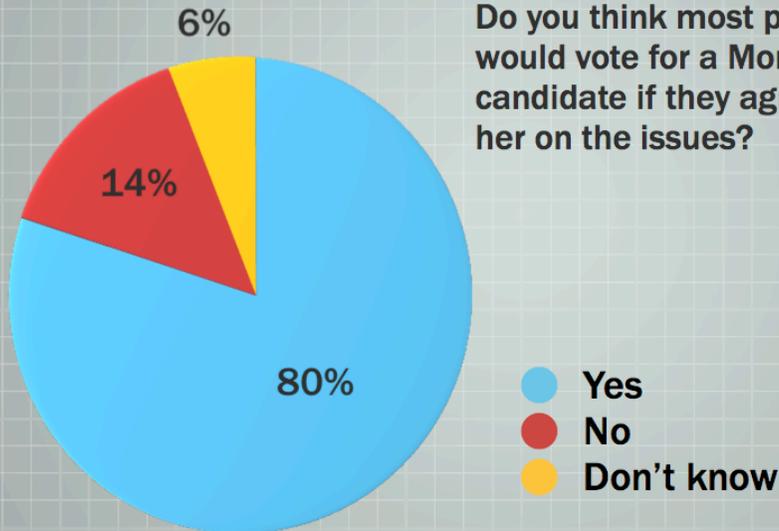
# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider's poll  
for the week of November 7.*

State government spending  
 Political corruption/leadership  
 The economy  
 State budget cuts  
 Water supply  
 Education  
 Unemployment/jobs  
 Health care  
 Immigration  
 The media  
 Taxes  
 Transportation/roads/traffic  
 Border security  
 Social welfare programs  
 Crime and drugs

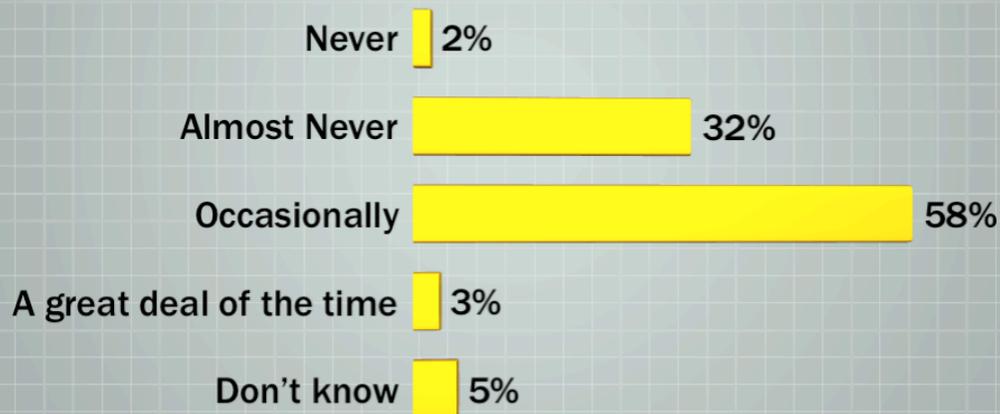


# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE



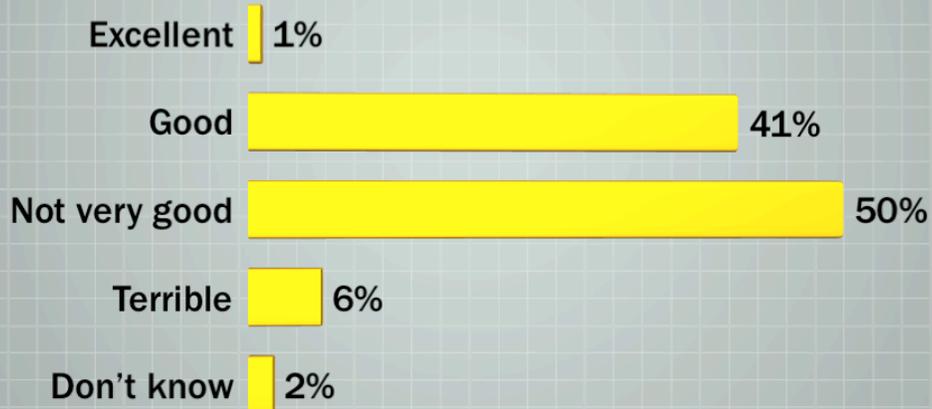
# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

How often do you think people are wrongly convicted of death penalty offenses in the state of Texas?



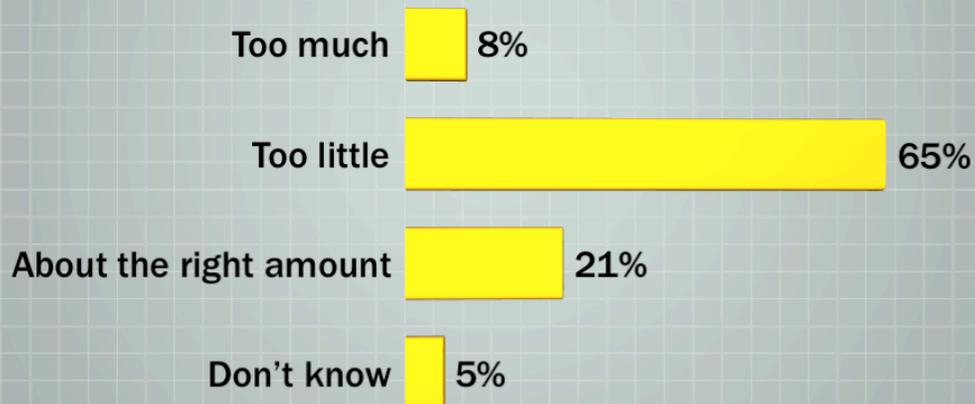
# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Would you say that the quality of K-12 public school education in Texas is:



# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Do you think that Texas spends too much, too little, or about the right amount on primary and secondary education?



*What would you say is the most important problem facing the state of Texas today?*

- "Divide political corruption and leadership // political corruption is a problem, but it is dwarfed by the leadership vacuum. Part of the problem with leadership is, admittedly, a lack of commitment to ethics, but if there is no one to carry the ball, who cares if they step out of bounds?"
- "The Legislature needs to step up and create a comprehensive water policy. This is not a new issue ... just one that appears to big for lawmakers to face."
- "We are dangerously close to caste system of the haves and the have-nots. Inner city kids denied a quality education will only drive up our social costs - welfare, prison, etc. Texas will no longer be an economic beacon."
- "Everything on this list is reliant on the economy. Its strength (or weakness, depending on your view) will drive everything else."
- "Water infrastructure is the most pressing issue facing our state if we are going to continue to grow"
- "No water=No work. We need full-blown conservation efforts to protect our economy, not our environment."
- "Really? I've got to pick just one? Can't I pick one for each year we've done nothing good about any of them?"
- "All the above are symptoms of leadership's inability to address our structural deficit."
- "Health care costs are taking an increasing and growing portion of business expenses and local and state budgets, not to mention increased cost sharing out of individuals pocketbook"
- "This smoke and mirror budgeting has to stop."
- "Everything stems from the budget. If you don't fund your priorities, then the rest doesn't matter."
- "If you get education right, you will address every issue on the list."
- "Our nationwide ranking is pathetic and embarrassing."
- "If spending cuts continue at the recent pace, we may spiral into third world status in several areas. The absence of an educated work force will have long-term economic development consequences."
- "More specifically, public school finance. Even if the system is not ruled to be unconstitutional, major changes are on the table."
- "The structural deficit"
- "Our state lacks revenue generating resources."
- "Without revenue, all others don't matter."
- "This is not an effective survey, too many choices. My choice is meant to reflect my belief that the Republican's hold on state government at every level has eliminated any scrutiny."

Courts are compromised, laws are punitive, administration cannot be challenged, long-held rules are ignored etc. Every decision is meant to help a powerful business or contributor, or discourage the poor, or defile political opponents. Texas will not remain a leading state in this atmosphere; it has already begun to be ignored as a force for positive change. Nothing good has happened through the government since 2003 ... it can't."

- "We have a public education crisis that threatens Texas' future economic viability. Enormous numbers of Texas young people are not completing high school. If this trend continues, we will not have the skilled workforce we need for the future, and Texas will have a giant underclass that lacks the education and skills needed to earn a living wage, and will need government assistance just to make ends meet."

- "The biggest problem is the state's ability to deliver needed services and programs without increasing state revenues in a way that will damage the state economy."

- "Media, and political leadership, are telling the masses what they want to hear rather than being thought leaders. This underlies all problems."

- "Taxes, but not because they are too high. Because the Texas' state/local revenue system is clearly inadequate to support the investments in education, transportation, water, etc that we need to compete in the 21st Century."

- "Healthcare and education are by far the biggest financial and societal problems facing the state."

- "Texas spends most of its budget on health care, public schools and prisons. Really hard to choose which of those rings is a bigger circus."

- "Health care is an overarching problem for Texas and the key component of what kind of state Texas will be in 20 years."

- "Hey gang, we're still broke. \$5 to \$8 billion short. Now that this silly prez campaign is all but over, reality is about to hit hard."

- "I would say the issue is State Finance which is both an issue of revenues and expenses. Our current trajectory is not sustainable but is more than just budget cuts or spending. It is also related to our tax structure."

- "The structural debt as it relates to budget cuts is the problem."

- "It begins and ends with the state budget.... always has, always will."

- "The economy, jobs, education and state's infrastructure are key issues the Texas Governor and legislature must deal with if it want Texans to prosper and be prepared to be global competitors in the world economy."

- "While TX is in better shape than most of the USA, the fact that TX lawmakers took ANY of the federal stimulus money allowed them to continue government growth at an unsustainable level."

- "Education is second"

- "We are gutting our education system at all levels and we need to dump the testing oriented system,

invest more money at all levels and make higher education affordable for more people again."

- "Water supply is an issue where you cannot 'kick the can down the road.' Either you have water, or you don't. If you don't have water, your choices are: move or die."

- "The budget is the driver we either go forward or backward. Most of the other issues you mention are related to our spending or cutting back from the budget."

- "Ironically the safety net functions are organic and structural; the dismantling of those structures or methodically compromising their functions is a direct consequence of political failures--including oversight of public office abuses"

- "Education finance will have a direct impact on the budget issues which the next Legislature will face. For that reason, it is education funding which is the most important issue facing TX. today."

- "Tax policy and revenue generated from that policy drives everything else on the list."

- "The true impact of public school cuts is only now becoming apparent. 2013 is shaping up to be equally dismal. We are short-changing our future to keep corporate taxes low so money can be most readily exported out of Texas."

- "The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker couldn't run a

State Fair corny dog stand. All are jockeying for higher office and aren't paying attention to the tasks at hand. Straus made such a big deal of passing a budget without raising any revenue and rejected the idea of a structural deficit, and now he's in the paper saying Texas needs to deal with it. Come again? How do you explain this switch and, more importantly, what exactly are you going to do about it? Staffs are ideologues or crooks or both. The conservative Democrats (not Republicans masquerading as Democrats, mind you) did a better job than this. Texas is disintegrating into an arid, Third World wasteland on their watch."

- "Trick question?"

- "Nothing else will matter if we run out of water."

- "Education, health care, state budget cuts and taxes are all so inter-related that it's hard to consider each of them as a single issue."

- "I know this isn't on the radar right now, but every thing else would be impacted if we got a handle on drugs, legal and illegal. 90% of crime is drug related, the cost is huge, many border problems and education and medical issues are as well. It is a sleeping giant as far as issues."

- "Most of business not paying their fair share of taxes to educate the next generation."

- "Revenue structure a close second"

*Should illegal immigrants who have graduated from a Texas high school and lived in the state for at least a year receive lower in-state tuition rates at Texas public colleges and universities, or should they have to pay the higher tuition rate for out-of-state students?*

- "How about in state rates for their last 2 years if they have done ok at a junior college that they paid for?"
- "If they're living here, they're paying the same state taxes as legal residents-property, sales, and use taxes. Why not give them the benefit?"
- "Once we've invested a few hundred thousand graduating them from HS, it doesn't make sense to bail on them for undergrad."
- "Come on, aren't we tired of this now? Isn't this one pretty clear?"
- "This is NOT an issue. Lets move on to something that is please."
- "Children do not choose where they live, their parents do. It is wrong to penalize the children. Our higher education institutes need as much revenue as possible - allow them to attend at in state rates."
- "It's the law."
- "A red herring issue. If they go to high school in Texas and get a diploma in Texas, they are in-state students."
- "For the state, it's a question of residency. If the residency requirements are met, then in-state tuition should be charged. Though the student could be deported before the second installment is due."
- "A college graduate will have more resources to contribute to the state than an uneducated person...regardless of immigrant status."
- "Perhaps the minimum length of time to have lived in the state should be raised."
- "No brainer."
- "Punishing these kids, who's parents brought them here, is not in our state's interest."
- "Then if they graduate, give them an automatic green card, let them get a job and become tax-paying, productive members of our society!"
- "It's mind-boggling, that an Oklahoman who lives ten feet from the state border would have to pay a higher rate than another country's citizen whose eligibility is based on having broken the law successfully for at least one year."
- "They should not be allowed to attend state funded colleges and universities until their status as illegals changes."
- "Current law requires them to have attended school in the state for at least three years before graduation and file an affidavit saying they plan to apply for permanent residency as soon as possible. I assume that's what you meant to ask."
- "Let's make more Texans."

- "It is a \$20,000 a year difference. Put the politics of race aside and just look at the economics of it all. Why should in-state residents pay higher fees to subsidize?"
- "To be fair, the question should have stated the current residency requirement (which is longer than 1 year) and that the student is seeking citizenship as the current law provides."
- "I am not sure what requirements exist for in-state tuition, but illegal's should get no advantage over other out-of-state students (i.e. whatever time it takes out-of-state students to achieve residency and receive in-state tuition, same should exist for illegals)"
- "Breaking the law has consequences, even if it was a parent who broke the law and the child suffers the consequences."
- "This is a distraction. Far more important is the fact that Texas schools, K-12 and higher ed., are underfunded. Given the demographic changes taking place in Texas, this is the defining problem of the next several decades."
- "One of the smart investments we make"
- "It is just not fair for some person born and raised in Texas, who moved away to another state for a couple of years due to parent job transfer, but who wanted for their entire life to attend UT, be required to pay more in tuition than an illegal alien who has been in Texas for a couple of years and whose parents haven't paid a dime in taxes to support the higher ed system."
- "If you don't educate people, they stay in the cycle of poverty and end up costing taxpayers more than the cost of subsidizing in-state tuition."
- "Whatever the rules are for anyone else should apply to them. Out of state U.S. applicants can establish residency as well one would think."
- "Education is cheaper than ignorance. Ignorance ends up on the welfare rolls."
- "There should be neither special consideration given for their immigration status nor penalty, but they should pay in-state tuition if they have established residency for three years, graduated, and achieved the necessary level on entrance exams."
- "If there parents were here long enough for them to graduate from high school, clearly somebody was employing them and they were a part of the economic system. Maybe the parents were at fault, you could certainly have an issue with the employer, but the kids deserve the same opportunities as other Texas high school grads."
- "One of two things will happen: Eventually we will have immigration reform, and these undocumented children will be given a path to citizenship. So in the meantime, we need to educate them. Or, we won't have reform, but we also won't deport these kids, so we need to educate them."
- "Perry blew the opportunity to explain this issue."

*Do you think most people you know would vote for a Mormon presidential candidate if they agreed with him or her on the issues?*

- "Maybe. Depends on who they were running against (isn't Obama a Muslim?) and how much they know about the Mormons...and their own planets they get to go to when they die."
- "But really, 'most people' isn't the standard here. The standard is 'enough to change the outcome'."
- "But the people I know who would vote for Romney could form a minion -- elect a president? Not so much."
- "Yes, but I'm not a fire breathing evangelical"
- "Still holding out hope that, as a country, we are beyond that."
- "The vast majority of hard core Republicans will never vote for a Mormon. Shameful but true."
- "The people who believe that Romney doesn't have any political principles should believe that he doesn't have any religious ones either."
- "Most people I know would, but most of the people I know aren't Republican primary voters, or if they are, they are in Travis County."
- "Gold tablets. Burning bush. What's the difference?"
- "Of course, most people I know are Democrats, rendering this question purely hypothetical."
- "It would be groundbreaking if Mitt Romney even got the nomination given that there is still such a Mormon bias in the U.S."
- "Would like to think so, but also know many Christians would not, particularly in the South, as Mormonism is a cult."
- "Romney reminds to many primary voters of George HW Bush and his read my lips promise.... they believe when push comes to shove Romney will cave the way HW Bush did when going back on his promise..."
- "The trouble with Romney isn't that he's a Mormon, but that he's switched his positions on every issue to accommodate his political whims."
- "Once they find out about many of the beliefs of the Mormon Church, they will not vote for a Mormon candidate."
- "The public's exposure to Romney in 2008 has inoculated him somewhat in 2012."
- "This issue is more than just a proxy for religious bigotry. A candidate's religious views and religious participation do convey important information to voters. Is that aspect of a person's life any less important or revealing than his education, career or family life (all 3 of which are categories that usually get emphasized)?"
- "Are you kidding? Of course not."

- "Most people I know could not care less about things religious or even cultish. Heck I even know some who would vote for an aggie, a cult far better known to us than the Mormon thing."

- "The beliefs of the opposing candidate would also impact that decision. Generally the Mormon issue would be problematic, but if the opponent is suspected of Muslim beliefs, then issues become the deciding factor."

*How often do you think people are wrongly convicted of death penalty offenses in the state of Texas?*

- "Almost never, but that doesn't make it right."

- "Read the news."

- "While our judicial system is not fool-proof, let's not dismiss the 99.9% of the time that the system gets it right in cases where the death penalty is fully warranted."

- "The judicial system is of human origin and subject to err. Greater accessibility of modern scientific tools (DNA analysis) should be embraced."

- "More than they should but less than some say"

- "But, come on, is almost never really an acceptable standard for the ultimate punishment? 'We're Texas - when it comes to justice, we get it right ... most of the time.'"

- "In Houston, Dallas and Tarrant, it has been rampant. Virtually every death penalty under those wretched big city DA's in the 70's, 80's and 90's should be reexamined, and every single charge the Williamson County DA has filed since taking office should be reconsidered by a neutral prosecutor."

- "Every innocent person who is executed is a great tragedy. Advances in science, particularly with DNA are making this less of a concern, although the concern is still there."

- "Once would be too much. Especially when the prosecutors fight against even DNA evidence and the Board of Pardons and Parole refuses to recommend clemency."

- "There are adequate measures currently in place to appeal such wrong convictions. Thankfully, reversals are rare, which means our legal system is working well."

- "In certain counties where there are overzealous prosecutors"

- "Almost never is not never. Most disturbing is that Texas seems in deep denial on this issue."

- "It could be more than occasionally but I don't think it's a great deal of the time, since I don't think it's more than 50 percent."

- "This question is worded properly...you should have asked, 'In the past, do you think people were wrongly convicted of death penalty cases? The obvious answer is yes.'

However, with DNA testing, the

likelihood of being convicted is small."

*Would you say that the quality of K-12 public school education in Texas is:*

• "Between good and not very good. How about average?"

as bad as some would have you think."

• "It is variable from school to school within each school district. Parent participation is a key factor in the quality of the school."

• "Maybe you should have included 'mediocre' as a choice."

• "Suburbia - good to excellent. Inner city - terrible."

• "Okay, but could be so much better with the right investments. For the fifth largest economy on Earth, we should be investing in our people through an excellent education."

• "But quality still largely relies on your locale and your household income"

• "It depends on the district. Some are Excellent and some are horrible."

• "Great teachers, dedicated people, no money"

• "There are numerous exceptions (Highland Park, Westlake), but the combination of lots of factors-- cutbacks in funding, Robin Hood, etc., etc., means that a majority of Texas schoolchildren are NOT receiving the educations they need."

• "It's adequate but has received little focus and less leadership. The reforms of the Bush era are fading. The Perry chip on his 'not a Bush' shoulder have meant not much meaningful action. The Lt. Governors attention in this regard is, wait what are we talking about?"

• "Depends on where you live. We are all still captive to our geographical location."

• "Each year, children graduate from Texas High Schools and they must take REMEDIAL English and Math before moving on to College Level courses! If they were truly being taught in school, these classes would be unnecessary"

• "Of course, it's not very good in most places in the U.S. Except maybe the wealthy suburbs around each major city and a few urban magnet schools."

• "Depends on where you live. I don't see families in Westlake or Lake Travis rushing to pull their kids out of public school"

• "This testing madness has completely subverted the curriculum all so the company Sandy Kress lobbies for can make \$1 billion. It's insane."

• "There is room for improvement, but the Texas education system is not

• "Break the back of the teacher union hold and finally get good people,

education degree or not, in the classroom."

- "Ask the Jr. Colleges and the Sr. Colleges how much remedial education they provide...that is probably the best measure..."
- "A restaurant waitress recently complained to me that her son did not know how to write cursive. I tried to encourage her that maybe she was not patient enough and that surely he'd be taught cursive. Then I asked her what grade he was in and she responded that he was a sophomore in High School! That's an educational system that is preparing children to FAIL in the real world."
- "Some ISD's are very good, but most are having a hard time due to budget cuts"
- "If you take out Houston Independent School District you might get better results. That place is worse than worst."
- "SAT and ACT scores taken by Texas seniors intending to go to college are among the lowest in the nation. Anglos and blacks narrowly lead their peers nationally, but Texas Hispanics lag their national peers and, hence, Texas's overall scores are low."
- "Too much teaching to tests and not enough education"

***Do you think that Texas spends too much, too little, or about the right amount on primary and secondary education?***

- "Just spent on the wrong things."

- "Something not often acknowledged is that the goals, standards, and curriculum are very strong. But the implementation is, well, uneven."

- "The massive influx of illegal aliens into our public education system has created what will be a long term catastrophic, adverse impact on the quality of our public education system as we deal with the social and communication issues that will flow from trying to feed, clothe, house and educate millions of poor young people who can't speak English."

- "It may actually be terrible but who really knows?"

- "The system is fine, though the education-ready level of the students may be falling."

- "But, much better than often portrayed in national media."

- "But the trend seems to be in the wrong direction."

- "High stakes accountability testing has narrowed the overall educational experience for students and created robotic test-takers instead of creative right-brain thinkers."

- "I think there is a choice between good & not very good, called mediocre. And, of course generalizing for a state our size is ignoring that there IS a range from excellent to terrible out there, just as for US"

- "Look at results, not spending. Or so the saying goes, until the results start to look bad."
- "We spend without a clue of what it costs. No financial accountability, no measure of productivity."
- "Remove the abundance of administrators and put the money into the classrooms with teachers and teaching tools - books, learning materials, etc."
- "You can't be serious with this question. Is there any reasonable person in Texas who thinks we spend too much on public education?"
- "When more dollars come with a guarantee of better performance by students, teachers and administrators, then it will be time to open the spigot all the way - but not until then."
- "The problems come with maintaining per student funding in an environment of substantial enrollment growth and local revenue disparities."
- "C'mon, they cut property taxes destined for schools in exchange for a business tax nobody pays. Then preserved the RDF while decimating support for public schools in this biennium. This, on top of school systems that weren't well financed to begin with. I'm guessing old man Perot is sick of this crowd."
- "It's about the right amount but its allocated in all the wrong ways."
- "No correlation between amount spent per student and academic success."
- "Too much outside the classroom, too little inside the classroom."
- "You get what you pay for. We skimp on paying teachers; we get high school grads without skills."
- "Hard to make the case that the problem with public education is that we're spending too little."
- "Too little, but think that some of the responsibility falls on local districts. Am upset that as a property wealthy school, I am having to subsidize property poor schools that are not taxing at the same level as I am having to pay."
- "But we spend it in the wrong areas. No district should be allowed to cut a teaching position as long as there are principals and superintendents on the payroll with two titles; i.e. 'vice-assistant' or 'deputy-vice'..."
- "Money alone is not the answer despite some interests groups continuing to bang that drum over and over again.... if that were true the DC schools who spend as much as \$14,000 per student would have the best, we know that is not true."
- "Taxpayers are paying more for less- much less academic achievement. It's time to return to the basics so that students can have the foundational knowledge necessary to become all they can be."
- "More money needs to be spent on teachers and classrooms. The issue is not the money it is where and how it is used."
- "Given the demographic trends, Texas has a more immediate problem

that most other states and, hence, should be doing more to address it. We are not."

- "The problem is not the amount, it is the distribution of those resources."
- "But education like health care is hard to introduce and sustain measurable efficiencies and outcomes that prove up the qualitative output -- not spending smart in either sector; lots of redundancy, incompetency, and waste integrated with quality"
- "It may be enough, it may not be enough. Start by cracking down on gold-plated facilities to serve the current selfish generation raised by

their self-absorbed parents who feel entitled to the best of everything. Bring back Ross Perot."

- "Hopefully if there is any silver lining to the public education cuts from the last Session, it is available funding is more focused on the classroom and directly related to educating students, and less on administering institutions."
- "Too many non-teaching personnel on the payroll."
- "Are you talking about the entire state portion of dollars or per student spending including local tax dollars?"

***Our thanks to this week's participants:*** Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, James Aldrete, Clyde Alexander, Louis Bacarisse, Tom Banning, Mike Barnett, Reggie Bashur, Walt Baum, Don Baylor, Leland Beatty, Dave Beckwith, Amy Beneski, Rebecca Bernhardt, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Hugh Brady, Steve Bresnen, Lydia Camarillo, Kerry Cammack, Marc Campos, Snapper Carr, Tris Castaneda, Corbin Casteel, William Chapman, Elizabeth Christian, Rick Cofer, Lawrence Collins, John Colyandro, Harold Cook, Hector De Leon, June Deadrick, Tom Duffy, Anne Dunkelberg, David Dunn, Jeff Eller, Alan Erwin, Gay Erwin, Jon Fisher, Robert Floyd, Terry Frakes, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Eric Glenn, Daniel Gonzalez, Kathy Grant, John Greytok, Jack Gullahorn, Anthony Haley, Bill Hammond, Sandy Haverlah, Albert Hawkins, Adam Haynes, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Laura Huffman, Kathy Hutto, Shanna Igo, Deborah Ingersoll, Cal Jillson, Jason Johnson, Mark Jones, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Pete Laney, Dick Lavine, James LeBas, Donald Lee, Luke Legate, Rebecca Lightsey, Homero Lucero, Matt Mackowiak, Luke Marchant, Bryan Mayes, Dan McClung, Scott McCown, Debra Medina, Lynn Moak, Bee Moorhead, Steve Murdock, Craig Murphy, Keir Murray, Keats Norfleet, Pat Nugent, Sylvia Nugent, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Bill Pewitt, Jerry Philips, Wayne Pierce, Kraege Polan, Ted Melina Raab, Andrea Rado, Bill Ratliff, Karen Reagan, Tim Reeves, Carl Richie, Kim Ross, Jason Sabo, Mark Sanders, Andy Sansom, Jim Sartwelle, Stan Schlueter, Bruce Scott, Julie Shields, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Todd Smith, Larry Soward, Dennis Speight, Jason Stanford, Keith Strama, Bob Strauser, Colin Strother, Michael Quinn Sullivan, Russ Tidwell, Bruce Todd, Trent Townsend, Trey Trainor, John Weaver, Ware Wendell, Ken Whalen, Darren Whitehurst, Michael Wilt, Seth Winick, Alex Winslow, Lee Woods, Peck Young, Angelo Zottarelli.