

September 5, 2000

Message to the AISD Community

As we begin a new school year, we begin with a feeling of renewal. To some extent that is true of every school year. But this year is different. Unlike the uncertainty and unhappy reports of last fall, we enter this year with a sound budget, with clear goals in sight for our classrooms and with high expectations for the performance of every member of our community.

A good deal of credit for this turn of events has to go to the AISD Trustees, who have spent the last year wrestling with incredibly complex and potentially devastating issues. I want to commend the Board for its leadership in handling the difficult issues we face concerning our budget constraints and the needs of our children. We've worked hard all year to get our financial house in order, and their unanimous vote for our new budget on August 28 was the culmination of that work.

Given this more sound financial footing, we can continue working together to marshal all our resources and best thinking to serve our children in their classrooms. We are committed to making our operations ever more efficient in that cause. We want to minimize the impact of the financial challenges ahead of us while maximizing the money that goes to our classrooms and to compensate our teachers for their tireless work on behalf of our children.

The Board and I have agreed that we will begin immediately working on three Board priorities: analyzing class-size issues, enhancing teacher compensation and ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff. We want to be ready by early winter to make recommendations in these areas for the next school year. We will be aggressive in our efforts to preserve and enhance the quality of education in AISD and to ensure that we have a quality teaching force in the district, while dealing with the fiscal realities we face. We will work in consultation with Education Austin in facing the challenges in front of us.

We look forward to an exciting school year, and I look forward to talking to as many of you as I can about your children, our schools, your work and the future of AISD.

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