



Spring Independent School District

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Ralph H. Draper, Ed.D, Superintendent

October 27, 2009

Spring ISD Staff,

Last night, KTRK TV aired the first in a series of investigative reports concerning our district. Over the course of several months, the District has released requested documents for the reporter's inspection and provided any documents requested thereafter. Upon inspecting thousands of documents, the reporter indicated an interest in conducting on-camera interviews with employees of the District and with a member of the Board of Trustees, through the Public Relations Division. Interviews were discussed, considered and proposed.

I made the determination that the inquiry being conducted by KTRK TV was not the proper venue for conducting a fair, impartial and balanced inquiry; and it would neither serve the best interest of the community or the District. In this process the District would have no way of ensuring that an accurate portrayal of the District's responses would be given, or any say as to which responses were included or left out of the story, or in what context responses would be given.

The District agreed to answer questions submitted in writing by KTRK TV. If indeed this is a fact-finding mission, then this should suffice and provide for a greater likelihood that answers will be given in their entirety. Although the Board President agreed to provide him an on-camera interview, the reporter has made several attempts to conduct unscheduled interviews after being informed that the final decision of the administration was to not conduct the interviews.

I find it curious that the first community resident presented in the KTRK TV broadcast is the same individual who led a vigorous campaign to defeat the 2005 bond effort prior to my coming to Spring ISD. This is the same individual who presented a petition to the Board of Trustees in April 2007 to detach his subdivision from Spring ISD and annex it to a neighboring district. After he also appealed the Board's April 2007 decision to the Commissioner of Education which the Board denied again in August 2009, my guess is, a decision has been made that he was unable to discredit the District through a fair and established process that was afforded during a public hearing - the legal process that provides for citizens to petition the Board - it should not surprise anyone that he would resort to using the media to mischaracterize a set of facts to present bits and pieces of the truth and innuendo without context. The real question to be asked is, "What is the motive?"



Spring ISD's responses to inquiries submitted by KTRK plus supporting videos and articles are posted on the Spring ISD Web site because we believe it is important for our Spring community to have all of these responses in their entirety. However, we will not enter into a back-and-forth dispute. Persons wishing to seek redress or resolution of any issue should reference and follow board policy in doing so. Ultimately, we will have to trust in the sense of decency and fair play of our community.

Finally, my request of you is that you stay focused on our vision of transforming Spring ISD into a leader among learning organizations that is known for exemplary student achievement. While we have many examples of this already in our District, it remains a vision for the District as a whole but not our current pervasive reality. Remember, I have been telling you that this trailblazing journey would not be without challenges...it would include withstanding "the status quo"—after all, innovation is an enemy of those doing well under the status quo.

One of the core beliefs supporting our vision is that there is the need for dramatic change...this change calls for dramatic action on our part. We believe that if we create engaging classrooms where the focus is on what students do and learn (a learning platform), rather than on what teachers do and teach (teaching platform), that **all students** will be able to produce exemplary results. I trust the community to judge us on our results. Early results point to four years of steady and consistent increases in our student performance in every student group and in every subject area; all the while occurring in the face of rapid growth, increasing standards and a growing number of at-risk factors and challenges.

Please remain focused on our 2015 Vision...and be assured that, "Truth crushed to the ground will rise again."

Keep your eye on the prize!

Respectfully,

Ralph H. Draper, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools