



**House District 1 - Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties**  
**District & Capitol Interim Report**  
*August 2016*

***Around House District 1. The Last Ride.*** The Texas Area Health Education Center (AHEC) East Northeast Region located in Tyler recently informed my office of their effort to produce an educational video to help prevent suffering or death caused by improper use of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV). The powerful video, *The Last Ride*, is being posted to the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU) National Classroom and can be accessed at <http://txaheceast.org/resource-center/atv-safety-the-last-ride/>. I encourage everyone to take a few minutes to watch this video and to share it with their families and friends who use ATVs - it could save a life! Thank you to the AHEC staff and volunteers for working on this project.

***Mount Vernon Music.*** The Mount Vernon Music Association recently informed me that earlier this year they received a Texas Commission on the Arts grant that allowed them to engage pianist Evan Mitchell who performed during their 2015-16 season. Congratulations to the Mount Vernon Music Association!



***Voter registration & important election dates.*** Our November 8 general election is not that far away, so please be sure to register to vote to ensure that your voice will be heard. The deadline to register to vote is Tuesday, October 11. Early voting will run from Monday, October 24, to Friday, November 4. Polls will be open on Election Day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; be sure to check with your county registrar's office for more information on locations to vote early or where to vote on Election Day.

***Important elections.*** Not only will voters across the country be casting a ballot for United States President this year, but there are also important local initiatives. Both Paris Junior College (PJC) and Texarkana College (TC) are proposing to expand their tax bases to be able to afford to serve more students who would then be able to pay lower in-district tuition rates. If you live in the service area of either of these institutions, please acquaint yourselves with the issues so you can make an informed choice when you vote. For more information, here are links to both PJC (<http://www.parisjc.edu/downloads/annex-3.pdf>) and TC (<https://www.texarkanacollege.edu/serviceplan/>).

"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."

***Around the Capitol. DPS reminder - school is back in session.*** The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) is alerting drivers to pay closer attention to traffic laws and signs to help ensure that our returning students are kept safe now that schools are back in session. State law requires that approaching drivers stop when a school bus is stopped and operating a visual signal (either red flashing lights or a stop sign). Drivers should not proceed until the school bus resumes motion; the driver is signaled by the bus driver to proceed; or the visual signal is no longer activated. Please note that drivers who illegally pass school buses face fines up to the \$1,250 for a first offense. Committing multiple offenses can result in a driver having his or her license suspended for up to six months, and a ticket for illegally passing a school bus cannot be dismissed through taking a defensive driving course.

Though Texas is only one of four states that do not have some form of a statewide ban on the use of electronic devices while driving, DPS urges drivers to use extreme caution while driving near schools. Many cities and school districts have enacted their own bans especially in school zones.

***Appropriations.*** On August 24th, the Article III Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations met to discuss current public education programs administered by the Texas Education Agency that are funded outside of the Foundation School Program (FSP). The subcommittee reviewed recommendations to increase, decrease or eliminate programs based on measurable performance and effectiveness. Items funded outside the FSP include, but are not limited to: ESC funding; Communities in Schools; virtual schools; early college; T-STEM; Student Success Initiative; pre-K; Instructional Materials Allotment; and reading and math academies.

***West Texas Legislative Summit.*** On August 4th, I participated in the West Texas Legislative Summit in San Angelo. Education issues were the main focus this year and an extensive amount of subjects, from STAAR testing to college readiness, were discussed along with future legislative agendas. The Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Dr. Raymund Paredes, emphasized the agency's new strategic plan, known as *60x30TX*, that is designed to have at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25- to- 34 to have a certificate or degree by 2030. Commissioner Mike Morath, Texas Education Agency, provided an in-depth background of his upbringing and what his big picture goals are for moving Texas education forward. I had the honor to sit on a panel to discuss legislative matters that were passed last session and how schools will be affected by such changes. Lastly, school finance was broken down and discussed by a panel led by House Appropriations Article III Chairman, Trent Ashby. I feel taking the time to have extensive deliberations on such important topics will help provide a thorough assessment of the public school systems in Texas and provide legislators the information needed before next session starts in January.



*Representative VanDeaver speaking at the West Texas Legislative Summit education panel.*

***My office is here to help.*** I thank each of you for letting me serve you as your state representative. Please contact either the District office (903-628-0361) or Capitol office (512-463-0692) if there is anything you think we can do to help you.

"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."