



**86th Legislature Report - House District 1  
Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties  
August 2019**

**Around the District. Eagle Scout ceremony.**



*Rep. VanDeaver & Eagle Scout  
Carter Smith at First Baptist  
Church in New Boston.*

Congratulations to Carter Smith, from New Boston, for recently earning the rank of Eagle Scout. I was pleased to attend the Court of Honor ceremony and to present Carter with a Texas flag recently flown over the Capitol.

**Accountability ratings announced.** Just as the 2019-20 school year was starting, local school districts and campuses received their accountability ratings from the state for the 2018-19 school year. Texas has had a "school accountability system" since the mid-1880s when high schools sent select student test papers to the University of Texas for examination. Information on the Texas Education Agency website states: "A system of accreditation was created in 1885 when high schools sent selected test papers for examination by the faculty of the University of Texas. If found satisfactory, the school was considered to be affiliated with the university and its graduates were admitted without examination." See link: [http://tea.texas.gov/About TEA/Welcome and Overview/An Overview of the History of Public Education in Texas](http://tea.texas.gov/About%20TEA/Welcome%20and%20Overview/An%20Overview%20of%20the%20History%20of%20Public%20Education%20in%20Texas)

The ratings issued earlier this month were the first time that campuses received letter grades based on student performance on standardized tests and growth factors. Of the 79 campuses in HD 1, here is the breakdown of their scores:

- A - 12 campuses for 15%
- B - 34 campuses for 43%
- C - 24 campuses for 30%
- D - 3 campuses for 4%
- F - 6 campuses for 8%

The 23 school districts in HD 1 received the following grades\*:

- A - 6 districts for 26%
- B - 13 districts for 57%
- C - 2 districts for 9%
- D - 0 districts
- F - 2 districts for 9%

Fifty-eight percent of campuses and 83 percent of school districts received an A or B grade last school year. I want to thank all of the students, parents, teachers and administrators who worked hard last year adjusting to the requirements for this new generation of accountability ratings. Good luck to everyone for a successful 2019-20 school year! (\*percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.)

**Student safety, texting & driving.** Please use this story about school accountability ratings to remind yourself that our students are back on campus for the new school year and that drivers need to be

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extra cautious not only at designated school crosswalks but around all of our campuses. Be sure to watch out for students walking and using

their electronic devices while not paying close attention to surrounding traffic. This is also a good time to remind Texas drivers that the legislature enacted a "no texting, no driving" law in 2017, that remains in effect today. Please pay attention to your surroundings and not your electronic devices while driving.

**Town Hall meetings.** The schedule for the upcoming Town Hall meetings has been set:

- *October 7* - 5:30-7:30 p.m. - Paris Junior College
- *October 8* - 3 - 4:30 p.m. - Clarksville City Hall
- *October 8* - Mount Vernon
- *October 10* - 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. - Texarkana College

I hope everyone has a chance to attend one of the Town Hall meetings. I look forward to talking with you about important issues facing the state of Texas and House District 1.

***Around the Capitol. Ransomware cyber attacks.***

Twenty-two local Texas governments and agencies were victims of a ransomware attack on August 16, that affected their ability to conduct business as usual since their computers and software had been encrypted with unknown codes. Local, state and federal agencies sprang into action to assist affected entities respond to these cyberattacks. The state's Department of Information Resources (DIR) issued the following suggestions to lessen the chance of such attacks being successful in the future:

- Keep software patches and anti-virus tools up to date.
- Create strong unique passwords that are changed regularly.
- Enable multifactor authentication, especially for remote logins.
- Modernize legacy systems and ensure software is as current as possible.
- Limit the granting of administrative access.
- Perform regular, automated backups and keep the backups segregated.

For more information, visit DIR at:

<https://dir.texas.gov/View-About-DIR/Information-Security/Pages/Content.aspx?id=155>

***Interim charges.*** As mentioned in previous years' newsletters, the Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives issues interim charges (i.e., "homework") to House committees to study between legislative sessions. Each House Committee Chairman has asked his or her committee members to offer suggested issues for consideration for the next round of interim charges. This month, I suggested that the issue of hospital closures in rural areas be studied this interim so the 87th legislature will have a more thorough understanding of the issues contributing to these closures and the impact these closures have on local communities. Obviously, this is an issue that is important in our part of Texas, and I hope the Speaker issues this as one of the important subjects for legislators to spend time examining before the next session convenes in January 2021.

***Social Media.*** Please follow me on both my Facebook and Twitter accounts!

***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.