

Why Move PISD Problems to County Level?

by Robert Canright

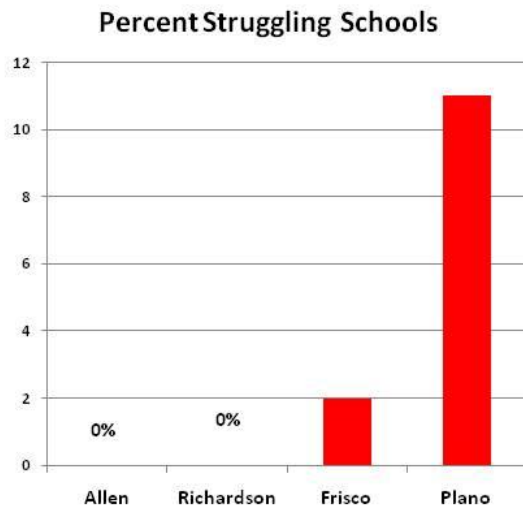
Two PISD Board members stand on their record to run for the Collin County Commissioners' Court, yet the record of the PISD Board of Trustees leaves much to be desired: (1) the Board has a long record of ignoring the concerns of parents, (2) the Board does not represent the Plano community, and (3) the Board has a long history of making excuses for poor performance.

From the recent frustration over school feeder realignments to the bitter battle ten years ago over Connected Math, the Board of Trustees has only made a pretense of listening to parents. Additionally, the PISD Board and Administration have developed a reputation both here in Plano and across the state for appearing to be anti-Christian. The Plano community is not anti-Christian, so the Board and Administration misrepresent our community. After the PISD lawyers won in Circuit Court in the Candy Cane lawsuit, my daughter called me from Lubbock and asked why people in Lubbock would think she was persecuted for her Christianity in Plano. This lawsuit made us look bad across the state, and we can thank the Board for this.

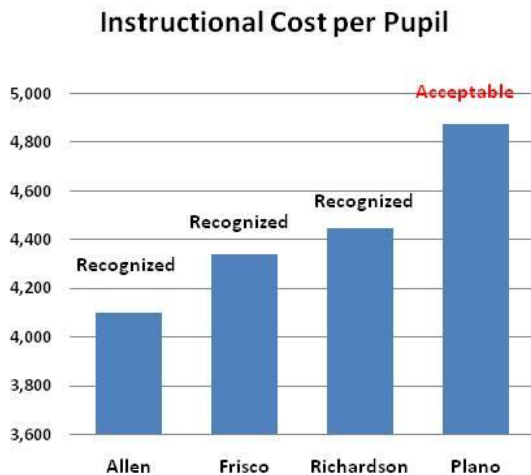
Last year I demonstrated that our neighbors outperformed us in the TAKS tests at lower cost. The same is true this year.

Plano Schools Poorly Managed

Poor Plano Performance

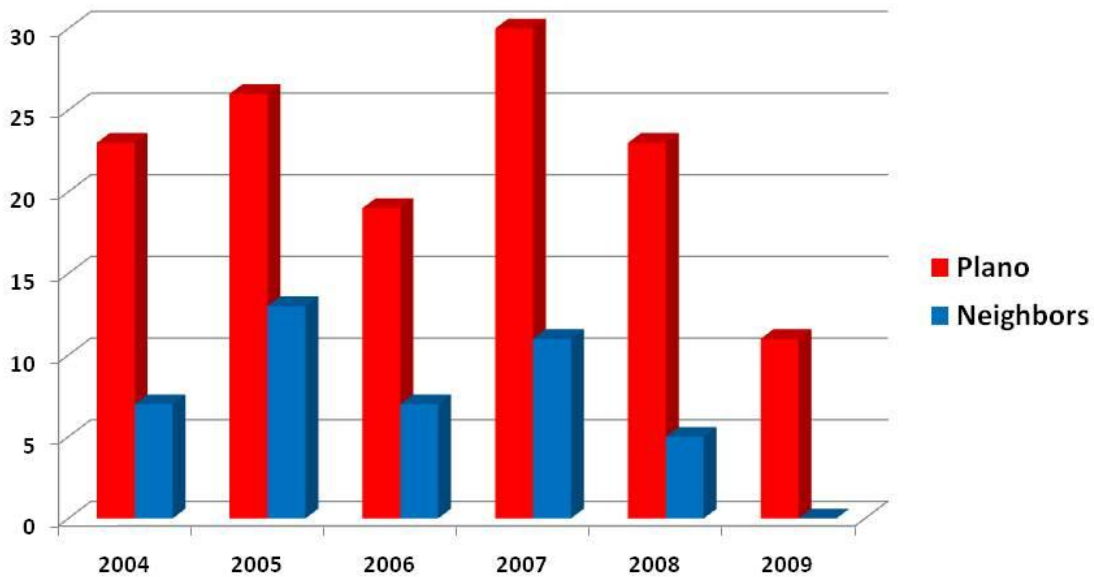


High Plano Cost



Furthermore, the TEA data prove that Plano has always done worse than our neighbors.

Plano Has More Struggling Schools 2004 to 2009 Plano vs. It's Neighbors by Percentage



We see Plano has many more struggling schools than our neighbors: Allen, Frisco, and Richardson. (I define a struggling school as one that is TEA rated Acceptable or Unacceptable.) Plano does have many outstanding students, fine teachers and principals, but problems with our curriculum hurt many students. The Board makes excuses for poor management, which is why the problem has gone on for so long.

Do you citizens of Plano want to take problems of this type and move them to the county level? Do you want to be ignored? Do you want your costs to increase while performance goes down? I do not think so.

I am certain Duncan Webb and John Muns believe they have done a fine job. They were consistently re-elected. However, re-election is not a sign of approval but a lack of interest by the public along with a system of elections designed to maintain control of the Board by a small but well organized group. The at-large system of representation allows a small group of voters from one part of town to dominate the entire town. Geographic districts would allow real representation. That elections are won by a plurality instead of a majority means the winner of an election might be rejected by the majority of voters. For example, in last year's election Barbara Hinton won after being rejected by 58% of the voters; in 2008 Skip Jenkins won after being rejected by 52% of the voters. No one can say Barbara Hinton or Skip Jenkins represent

the citizens of Plano when the majority of voters rejected them. The Board of Trustees does not represent the citizens of Plano, nor does it serve the interests of all the children of Plano. The Board and Administration focus on the cream of the crop, who commendably achieve high SAT scores and impressive numbers of National Merit Scholarships. The average student, however, would be better served by the neighboring ISDs.

I hope this spirited election for the Collin County Commissioners' Court will bring more interest to the Plano ISD elections. Voters in the past had no way of knowing there were problems within the Plano ISD because newspapers kept silent. The citizens of Plano were lulled into complacency. But the internet now provides us with the free flow of information we need to be informed voters. An informed and active electorate is the backbone of democracy. Let us all do our part and vote in all elections, not just the big ones.