**March 5, 2019 GISD school board meeting**

Darwina Gaytan

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I am enclosing attachments of my unfinished comments and data.

The lack of transparency concerning the school rating was disappointing.  It would have been helpful to have the figures projected on a screen or report copies available.  When it is said that we are "close to, just below, slightly above" state figures, that really tells the public attending the meeting nothing. Minus 1%, plus 3%, or minus 10% might all be considered "close to", but each are quite different from each other.

I appreciated questions asked by Mr. Hendershot concerning the HVAC expense.  It was surprising that the board couldn't meet in executive session to have the opportunity to discuss the figures given.  There seemed to be options and you didn't have time to confer with each other before voting.  That was a bit unsettling.

I also appreciated questions by Ms. Smith-Wright about whether or not our scores could improve by STAAR time. Of course she was reassured.  Again, the MOY math test for 7th grade had five errors in the last 20 questions.  One question had two valid answers.  Benchmarks at times are so poor, for various reasons, that the score cannot be used for grading.  I don't find that reassuring.  The constant in the testing is that the more outside restrictions and micromanagement of the classroom/classroom teacher, scores fall.  Teachers know individual students and classes. One size fits all works on an assembly line; it does not work with living, breathing people of any age. You don't learn to read by only reading STAAR-type passages.  Students themselves have made this comment.

Again, it is my hope to present issues that you may not be aware of.  Please take the opportunity to visit the campuses, to talk more than superficially to teachers. Over the last few years students and school climate has changed and not for the better overall.  Of course there are bright spots. Seeing and understanding the realities and the differences on each campus would be invaluable as you work to improve our district.

There are questions I have, policies and practices I see, that still need answers.  Hopefully they will be answered and some of the changes mentioned over this discourse will be implemented.  The FOIA requests submitted to GISD central office are due back to me, at latest, in 20 school days.  This should be April 5, with spring break, etc.  I look forward to that information.

Thank you,

Darwina Gaytan