



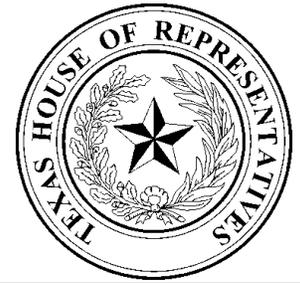
# Diane Patrick

## State Representative District 94

### Capitol Update

Leap Year Edition February 29, 2012

[diane.patrick@house.state.tx.us](mailto:diane.patrick@house.state.tx.us)



#### House Committee Interim Hearings

##### Higher Education

The House Higher Education Committee met to discuss post-secondary transitions from community colleges to four year institutions. Testimony on different models was provided by both community colleges and four year institutions, while students testified on their struggles and success with different transfer agreements. Since most students now start in community colleges, one of the committee's charges is to identify approaches that ease student transfer to four year institutions.

##### Appropriations

The Committee heard invited testimony from the Office of the Comptroller, the Legislative Budget Board, and the State Auditor. Currently, economic indicators suggest our state is moving in a positive direction due to an increase in consumer spending, strong oil and gas industry, and motor vehicle sale increases. Hopefully, these trends will continue in the future.

##### Public Education

I attended the House Public Ed Committee meeting on Charter Schools. Insight into a number of programs was provided by public testimony, including **Rosemary Perlmeter**, Director of Uplift Academy, operator of Summit International Preparatory Academy in Arlington. Over 400 Texas charter campuses educate more than 56,000 students with over 5000 on waiting lists. Charter schools are public schools that are held to the same academic and financial accountability systems as traditional public schools.

#### Mav Spirit Day

Our District Office participated in the community wide February 1<sup>st</sup> UTA Mav Spirit Day with blue, orange, and white balloons and streamers decorating our outdoor sign.

*Pictured with Rep Patrick are District Director Ann Morris and Interns Dakota Slay and Mandeep Minhas.*



#### TAASPYC Symposium

Earlier this month I spoke to members of the Texas Association of Administrators and Supervisors of Programs for Young Children (TAASPYC) attending their annual symposium in Grapevine. Among those representing Arlington ISD were **Connie Spence**, (Principal, Kookon Early Childhood Center), **Jo Kelly** (retired teacher), and **Claudia Gray** (Blanton Elementary pre-K teacher).

#### Grace Prep Academy Students Visit Austin

In mid-February Arlington Grace Preparatory Academy high school students toured the Capitol, Bob Bullock Museum, and the Supreme Court, and had a conversation with Supreme Court Justice **Debra Lehrmann**. Our office assisted the group with their tour arrangements, and I enjoyed having the opportunity to meet with the students, their teachers **Susan Huckaby** and **Nancie Hall**, and **Rick** and **Pat Weintraub**, who accompanied two grandchildren on the trip. As always, our office is pleased to assist constituents planning an upcoming trip to Austin.



#### Horizon Award

Presented to me at the Hispanic Leadership and Advocacy Day in Austin on February 16<sup>th</sup>, the Christian Life Commission's **Horizon Award** was especially meaningful as we discussed the shared priority of educational issues.

*Rep. Patrick receives award from Rolando Rodriguez, Director, Texas Baptist Hispanic Ministries, Jesse Rincones, President Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, Suzi Paynter, Director of the Christian Life Commission, and Dr. Gus Reyes, Director Texas Baptist Hispanic Education Initiative*

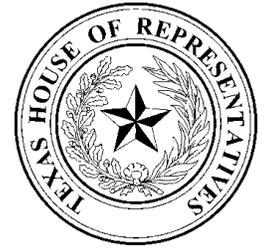




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#### Statewide PTA Award

At this year's Arlington PTA Founder's Day Event on February 7<sup>th</sup>, I was honored to receive the **PTA Legislative Honor Roll Award** for my legislative service. As a PTA Life Member and former president, as well as a classroom teacher and longtime professor of education, it was a humbling experience to receive this award from Texas State PTA representative **Karen Martin** and friends in our community. I applaud the 600,000+ Texas PTA members for their commitment to our children, youth, families, and public schools.

*Karen Martin and AISD PTA President Lori Turano present Rep. Patrick with the PTA Honor Roll Award*



#### Junior League of Arlington 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Recognizing JLA's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I presented a House Resolution to President **Paulette Tutor** and members. As a sustainer member, I am very proud of the many JLA contributions over three decades in our community.

#### Ignite Texas College Retreat

On Saturday February 4<sup>th</sup> our District Office intern **Nichole Collett** and I attended a retreat for young women college leaders participating in *Ignite Texas: Meet the Women Who Serve Event* in Southlake. It was a true honor to be invited to speak along with other female leaders from the north Texas area who have played various critical roles in the success of our communities.

*Ignite Texas Director Marriott Terry and Rep Patrick intern Nichole Collett visit with Senator Florence Shapiro, former Dallas Mayor Laura Miller and State sRep Diane Patrick*



#### STAAR Update

The 2011-12 school year will be the first time Texas students will take new End of Course (EOC) exams, starting with 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Given concerns voiced by parents, students, and school district officials over implementation of the 15% course weight requirement, both Senate and House members sent letters to Texas Commissioner of Education Robert Scott requesting a one-year waiver for this requirement that would otherwise be calculated into the student's final course grade. Subsequently, the Commissioner has issued a one-year waiver on this requirement. This does not detract from our belief that the state must have a strong accountability system, given that taxpayers invest over \$40 billion in public schools every two years. We expect our graduates to be prepared for college and career; however, we recognize that the first year of this new system should also be fair to students.

#### UTA Event Center Grand Opening

On February 1<sup>st</sup> it was very exciting to be a part of the University of Texas-Arlington Grand Opening ceremony for the long-awaited Event Center at College Park. President **Jim Spaniolo** noted that the multi-purpose Center will be home to the UTA Mavericks basketball teams and will provide a first class facility for our community to host graduations and other special events.

#### New Office Staff

This month we have added three new interns to our staff. Texas State University student **Max Davis** will be in our Capitol Office. UT-Arlington students **Dakota Slay** and **Rachel Snyder** will be working in our District Office. These student interns provide valuable resources for our constituents, and we welcome them to our team!

Our *Capitol Update* is distributed from my office to provide information about happenings in Arlington and Austin, and we must follow strict ethical guidelines. Factual information may be provided, but political opinions or affiliations may not. If you would like more information about a specific issue, feel free to contact our office by telephone, email, or just stop by.

*Sincerely,*

*Diane Patrick*

Diane Patrick, Ph.D.

*Proudly representing Arlington, Pantego, Dalworthington Gardens*

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