

## Garza: Texas has lost its way

LISD could receive \$32 million more if funded at same per-student rate as Austin ISD is funded

BY JOE GULICK Lubbock AVALANCHE-JOURNAL, Jan.28, 2012

Lubbock Independent School District Superintendent Karen Garza characterized the past year for Texas public schools on Friday as “the times that try men’s souls.” Speaking to the monthly meeting of the Texas Democratic Women of the South Plains, Garza said she never thought Texas public schools would suffer the funding cuts they did from the Legislature. The original discussion was about cutting the LISD funding by \$27 million. The final amount was \$14.5 million, she said.

Garza said she used to believe Texas was leading the way in public schools. “I feel like we have lost our way,” she said.

She didn’t like having to join a lawsuit against the state, but she felt it was necessary. History shows the only way to get things done regarding school finance is to file suit, she said.

The Lubbock ISD receives about \$5,000 per student from the state under the current target revenue system and the Austin ISD gets about \$6,100 per student, Garza told the group.

If Lubbock was funded equally to Austin, the LISD would receive \$32 million more per year than it currently gets, she said.

Garza said she is optimistic of the success of the lawsuit the LISD joined.

Success will mean the court would decide the present finance system for schools in the state is unconstitutional and will order the Texas Legislature to fix it, she said.

The lawsuit is costing the LISD about \$34,000 to join, she said.

Garza said some federal and state legislators believe all students should be held to the same standards, but not every student is going to a four-year university.

She said she had been at the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center Friday morning and seen students who were being prepared for careers that have starting salaries of \$65,000.