Letter to the Editor: Gonzales Inquirer April 11, 2019

I begin with a correction to my April 8 school board comments. I have since learned that regular school bus drivers earned a raise last year. I apologize for the mistake and am glad to hear that there was an increase in salary. All support staff deserve a fair wage.

Expressing my concerns to the GiSD school board began in February after hearing comments that the district would be soon be out of money if not helped by a rainy day fund. There are links to my school board comments and follow-up on the Gonzales Inquirer website. I thank them for the platform. Detailed concerns and support data are too long to list in this letter. The concerns I had, along with opinions and frustrations being told to me, led me to actually go and speak these last three months during public comments.

As a district employee I have had questions about purchases of materials, programs, and land, as well as some staffing and salary decisions. Class scheduling and test creation by outside companies is an expense and is not always successful. GISD school board and Central Office are rightfully concerned about the “F” rating recently earned by the district. Of over 1000 school districts in the state, less than ten earned this rating.

The administration response has been more emphasis on STAAR practice, micromanagement of curriculum and its presentation, teacher workshops, data on paper. My question to the board is: is this education? Our teachers are professionals and deserve the respect to follow curriculum in ways that meet individual student needs. They became teachers not to deliver information robotically or to do endless paperwork. They became teachers to touch the lives of young people, to know them as individuals, to creatively open the world of endless possibility along with that information.

Class sizes, numbers of aides per campus, disrespectful classroom behavior, rebuilding morale and Apache Pride are issues that the school board needs to realize also affect the district and learning. Concerns from educators, parents, and community members have been gathered by TASB as they guide GISD in selecting the next superintendent.

Our district has a number of fine students we can be proud of. They deserve an environment where they can be taught and where they can reach full potential. The upcoming year is another opportunity to prepare our students for their next academic year, for growing into the adults they will become. New leadership brings change. Be part of that change. It does no good to only talk to your neighbors. Be involved. These are your children, your tax dollars, and it’s your school board.