**FACTS:**

The Texas constitution states that the Texas legislature must provide an efficient and free public school system and has faced a series of lawsuits repeatedly that have reaffirmed that the funding has been inadequate (Texas Monthly, 2012).

Setting off the string of cases was 1984’s Edgewood v. Kirby et al..

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund filed a lawsuit on May 23, 1984, on behalf of the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio. They claimed that students in poorer school districts were being treated unfairly. The lawsuit argued that how the state provided money for public schools broke at least four rules in the state constitution (The Texas Politics Project).

Figure Edgewood v. Kirby main plaintiff, Demetrio Rodriguez surrounded by MALDEF attorneys

This was a second attempt at resolving school funding, with the earlier San Antonio v Rodriguez having been decided in 1972 in which Rodriguez challenged Texas' education funding system, arguing that it disadvantaged students in poor districts due to reliance on local property taxes. The Court, in a 5-4 decision, ruled that the system did not violate the Equal Protection Clause. The Court found no fundamental right to education in the Constitution and stated that the funding scheme was not discriminatory or irrational. Justice Powell emphasized that the Equal Protection Clause did not require absolute equality in education.

***A back-and-forth***

1. June 30, 1984: Legislature passes school-reform bill aiding poor schools.
2. MALDEF challenges law, seeking additional monetary reforms in 1985.
3. Court accepts MALDEF petition, hears Edgewood case (January-April 1987).
4. On April 29, 1987, court rules state's school funding unconstitutional.
5. State appeals to Third Court of Appeals, which reverses decision (1988).
6. Plaintiffs appeal to Texas Supreme Court, which rules in their favor (1989).
7. Legislature passes funding bill, "Robin Hood" plan implemented (1990).
8. Supreme Court deems new plan unconstitutional, Legislature devises another (1991).

Figure Former Texas Supreme Court Justice William Kilgarlin, who proposed the "Robin Hood" plan

**QUESTION:**

Did state funding meet the Texas constitutional requirements?

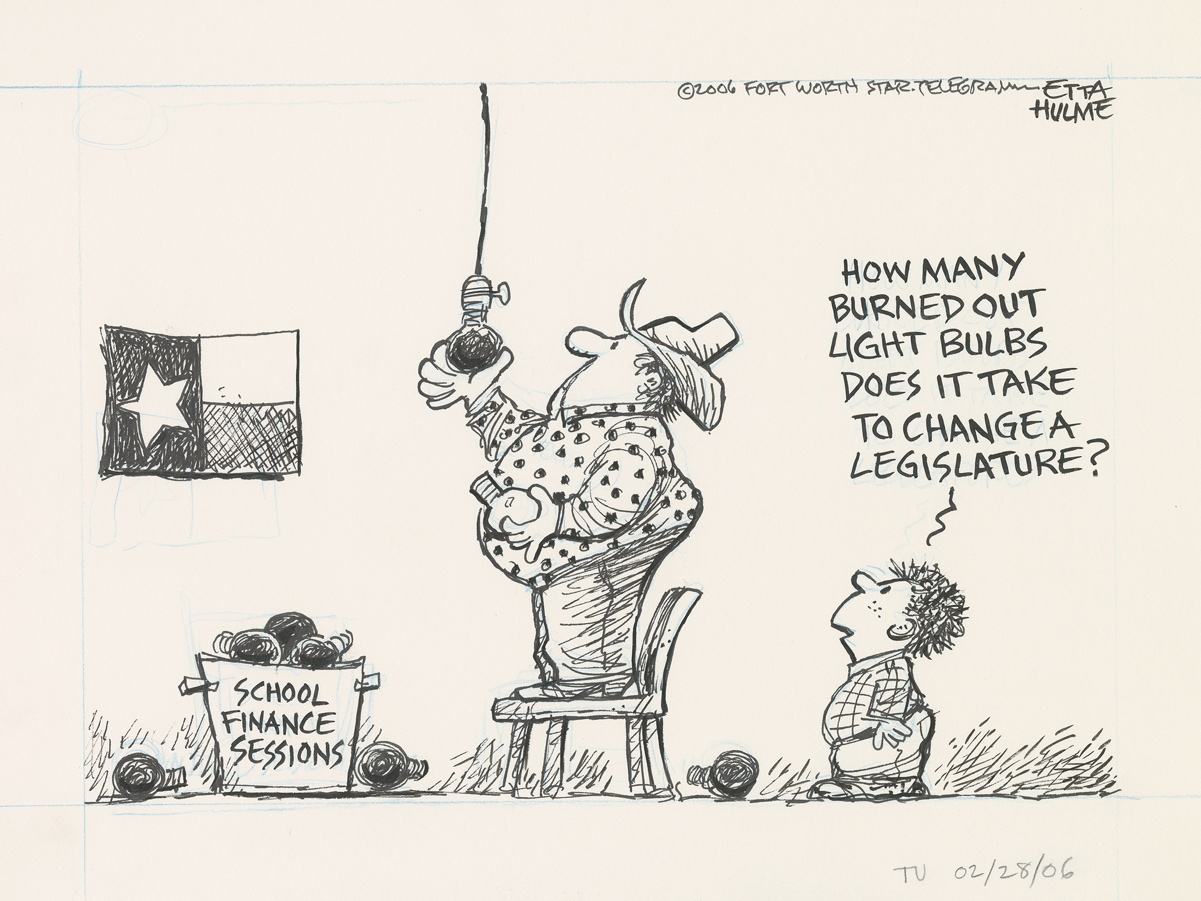
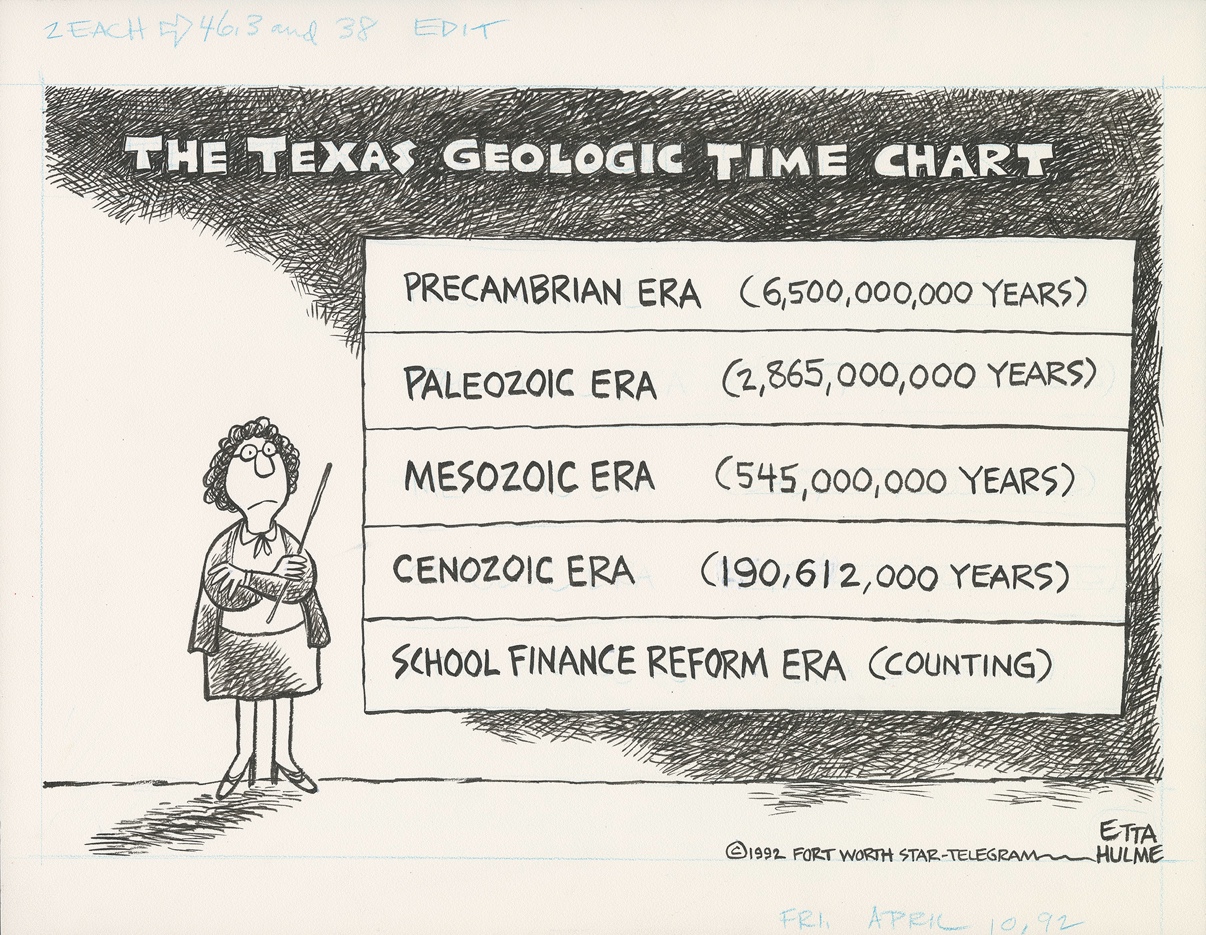
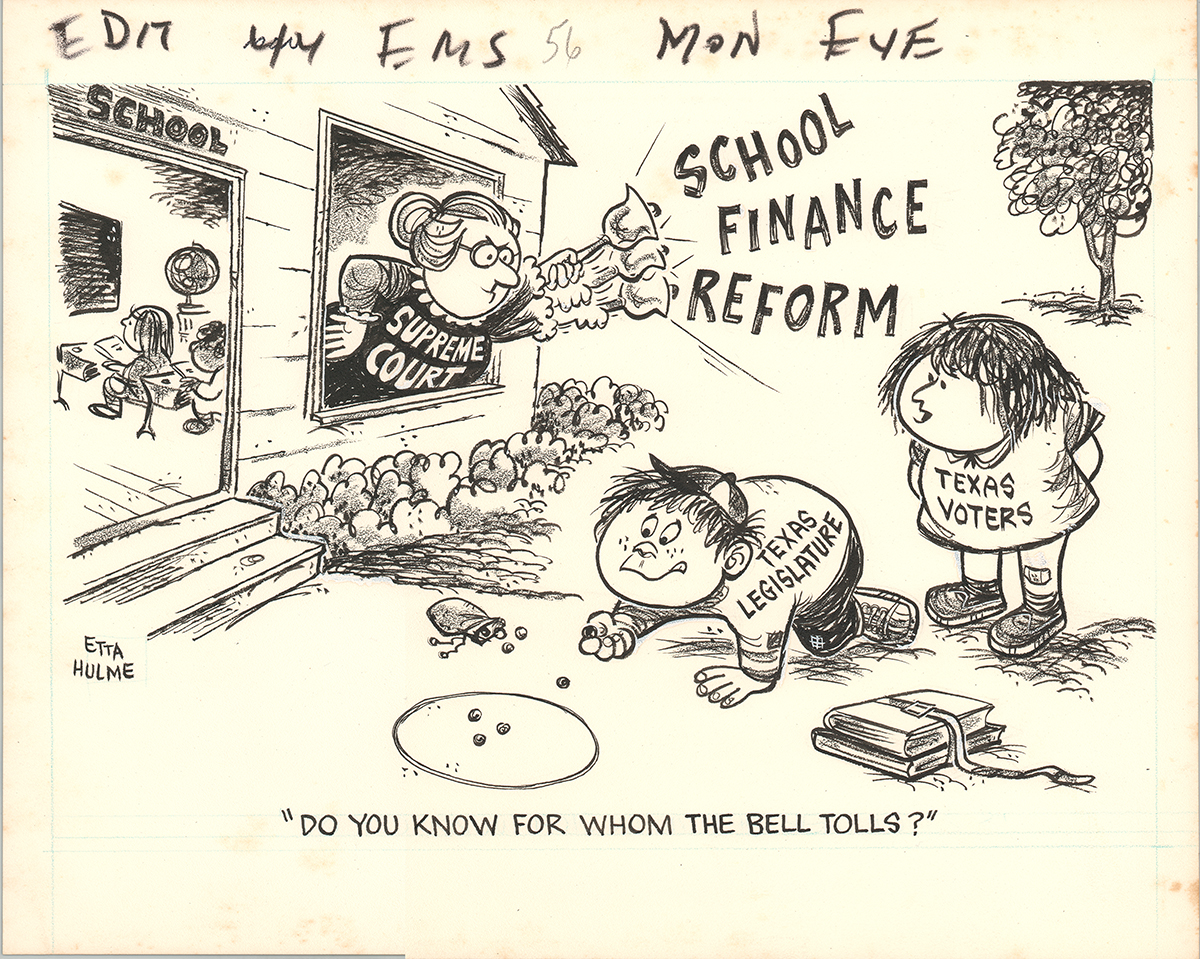
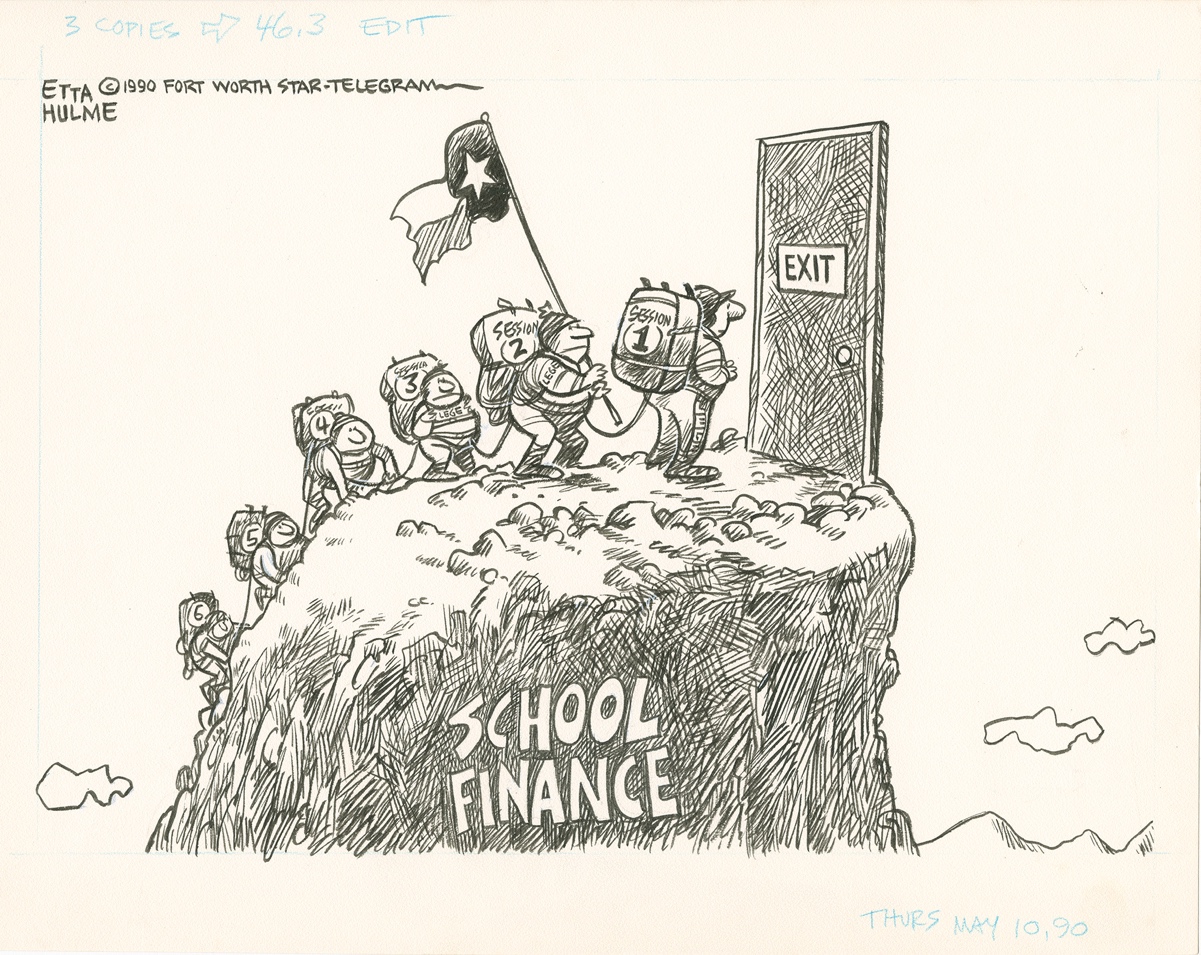
**HELD:**

It did not, even as the legislator responded to the lawsuit in real-time. A new system was to be developed following the guidance of the court. The system would be later known as the Robinhood Plan (The Texas Politics Project; Texas Monthly).

**RATIONALE:**

The Texas Supreme Court, in its 1989 ruling on the case, highlighted the significant disparities in property wealth per student between the Edgewood Independent School District (one of the poorest districts) and the Alamo Heights ISD (in the same county). The court observed that districts with lower property wealth had to impose higher tax rates to generate less funding per student compared to more affluent districts. These inequalities had tangible consequences, such as variations in the ability to hire qualified teachers, build appropriate facilities, offer a robust curriculum, and acquire essential equipment (The Texas Politics Project)

**TEXAS SCHOOL FUNDING:**

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