

## **ISD Named Plaintiff in the Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition School Finance Lawsuit**

A coalition representing public school districts, taxpayers and parents formally filed a lawsuit against the state in Travis County district court last night. In its suit, the Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition claims the state's public school finance system is unconstitutional because it doesn't treat Texas taxpayers and school children fairly.

Lead counsel Rick Gray of Gray and Becker, P.C. emphasized, "This lawsuit comes at a crucial time in the history of public education in Texas. School districts, taxpayers and students are being treated unfairly by our current system, and it's time to stand up and fight. Our case is strong and comprehensive, and we'll attack the system from all angles. I'm confident that we will succeed and that Texas taxpayers and students will benefit from our efforts."

The group of more than 150 school districts represented by the coalition continues to grow daily, and many more districts, taxpayers, parents and even business owners are expected to formally join in the coming months.

The following districts were named as plaintiffs to represent the Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition in the filed petition: Hillsboro ISD, Hutto ISD, Nacogdoches ISD, Pflugerville ISD, San Antonio ISD, Taylor ISD, and Van ISD. Although the districts vary greatly in size and location, they share a similar story. All are treated unfairly by the current funding system, and their taxpayers and school children are suffering the consequences.

"We want the state to address the inequities that exist in the current funding system," Pflugerville Superintendent of Schools Charles Dupre said. "We believe that every student, regardless of where they live or what occupations their parents may have, deserves the opportunity to receive an outstanding education. We must prepare each child for the future, and an equitable school funding system opens the door to countless opportunities for every Texas public school student."

"We applaud all the districts, taxpayers and parents who have decided to stand up for Texas children and the future of our state," said Dr. Wayne Pierce, Executive Director of the Equity Center, the organization that is facilitating the development and operation of the coalition. "It is never easy to take on the system, but the Texas Taxpayer & Student Fairness Coalition recognizes that we simply can't wait."

## **PISD Joins Equity Center Litigation Group**

Pflugerville Independent School District is now the 150th school district to join the Equity Center's comprehensive litigation effort. By passing a formal resolution, PISD joins a strong coalition of districts who share the common goal of fixing a broken school finance system they feel is inadequate, unfair and lacking in local control.

Charles Dupre, Superintendent of Schools at PISD, had this to say about the district's choice to join: "In Pflugerville ISD, we promise our students and taxpayers we will prepare each child for their future in our world. Unfortunately the state does not share PISD's commitment to each child, as evidenced by its inability, or worse, unwillingness, to establish a school finance system that is fair to ALL school children and taxpayers across Texas."

"When our Central Texas neighbors receive thousands more in per-student funding than we do each year, the state is effectively saying Pflugerville children do not deserve the same opportunities provided other children in the area. The unfair way schools are funded impacts home values and economic development opportunities in our community. We've spent the last several years trying to work with state leaders to find an equitable solution to the school finance mess. It is unfortunate the legislature chose not to fix school funding - instead they cut billions of dollars from an already unfair system. We are hopeful this lawsuit will help shape a new era for Texas public schools - one in which every child is valued and their opportunities for the future aren't constrained by where they live."

Dr. Wayne Pierce, Executive Director of the Equity Center, said, "We are thrilled to have PISD on board. PISD is the perfect example of a district that is not being treated fairly by our current school finance system. We applaud Mr. Dupre's leadership and appreciate the board's decision to stand up for PISD's students and taxpayers."

The coalition of districts plans to file the lawsuit later this month.