



TEAMWORK FOR EXCELLENCE

**PLANO**  
Independent School District

2700 WEST 15TH STREET • PLANO, TEXAS 75075  
(P) 469.752.8272 • (F) 469.752.8096 • WWW.PISD.EDU

***For Immediate Release***

## **Texas School Finance System Ruled Unconstitutional**

PLANO, Texas, Feb. 4, 2013 – State District Judge John Dietz ruled today in Austin that the Texas school finance system is unconstitutional by ruling in favor of the Calhoun County ISD plaintiffs on their two principle claims of adequacy and statewide property tax. The Calhoun County ISD plaintiffs consist of a group of 89 school districts represented by Mark Trachtenberg and John Turner, attorneys with Haynes and Boone, LLP.

Judge Dietz held that the school finance system has evolved into an unconstitutional state property tax and that the system fails to provide the plaintiff districts access to funding sufficient to provide a constitutionally adequate education.

“Judge Dietz’s ruling is the first step in an important process. While we expect that the Texas Supreme Court will ultimately have its say, there is no reason why the Legislature has to wait on the appeals process before addressing the constitutional deficiencies in the system. Because of statutory mandates, rising academic standards and declining state funding, districts have lost meaningful discretion over their local property tax rates and have no opportunity to provide enrichment programming desired by their local communities,” said Mr. Trachtenberg, partner with Haynes and Boone.

“I am extremely pleased that the court ruled in favor of Texas school children. We have long said that Plano ISD needs the ability to locally fund the level of education that is expected by our school community,” said Plano ISD Superintendent Richard Matkin. “Judge Dietz clearly laid a path for our Legislature to return local and state funding taken from school districts since the last ruling. Although Plano ISD is our focus and responsibility, our goal is to ensure that the Legislature provides adequate funding to all districts.”

“Plano ISD has a proud heritage of providing an excellent education for all children. We believe deeply that curricular and extracurricular programs, and other courses based upon student interests, are critical to a well-rounded education. The budget cuts of recent years have made that mission increasingly challenging in our district,” said Plano ISD School Board President Tammy Richards. “I applaud the support that Judge Dietz has shown for both additional educational funding and local control.”

### ***About Plano Independent School District***

The Plano Independent School District (Plano ISD) ([www.pisd.edu](http://www.pisd.edu)) endeavors to foster the highest level of student learning. The mission of Plano ISD is to provide an excellent education for all students. Plano ISD is located 20 miles north of Dallas, Texas and serves the residents of approximately 100 square miles in southwest Collin County, including 66 square miles in the city of Plano, northern portions of the cities of Dallas and Richardson and parts of the cities of Allen, Parker and Murphy. Plano ISD employs 7,000 faculty and staff members who serve more than 55,000 students in 71 schools and 11 service facilities. Participating in Plano ISD schools enables students to adapt to new learning opportunities throughout their lives, collaborate with, and contribute to, the global community and to be creative and disciplined in their thinking.

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