



TEAMWORK FOR EXCELLENCE

**P L A N O**  
Independent School District

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Judge Issues Findings in Texas School Finance Lawsuit

**PLANO, TX** – State District Judge John Dietz issued a final judgment today declaring the state’s school finance system unconstitutional on several premises. All the school district plaintiff groups succeeded on their claims. Judge Dietz held that the Calhoun County ISD plaintiffs had proven that the current school finance system has evolved into an unconstitutional statewide property tax and fails to sufficiently fund Texas schools at the level required to provide a constitutionally adequate education.

“We knew this win was inevitable,” said Plano ISD Superintendent of Schools Richard K. Matkin. “As Judge Dietz pointed out, the school finance system has irrefutably become a statewide property tax, evident in Plano ISD by the more than \$1.3 billion our district has returned to the state since recapture began in the 1993-94 school year.”

Following a similar ruling in 2005, upheld by the Texas Supreme Court, legislators made an adjustment in school funding, which had a negative impact. “Since the Supreme Court ruling in 2005, when the state readjusted our resources, there has been a steady decline in funding,” Superintendent Matkin said.

Judge Dietz’s ruling now sets the stage for an appeal by the state, possibly directly to the Texas Supreme Court. As part of the final judgment, Judge Dietz enjoined the operation of the school finance system but delayed the effect of the ruling until July 1, 2015 to give the legislature an opportunity to address the constitutional shortcomings of the system.

“This ruling is evidence that the state funding system is a failure in providing schools with the resources they need,” said Superintendent Matkin. “In fact, the system’s inequity makes it unable to meet the state’s own mandates. In Plano ISD, we have had to use our full taxing capacity to replace lost funds, limiting our ability to provide the level of enrichment that all students deserve.”

“When discussing the perils of school finance with parents and patrons, I express my sincere gratitude for the continued support of our school community,” said Nancy Humphrey, school board president. “Without the support of our community as individuals, business leaders and corporate entities, we would not have been able to weather the trials of this unjust financial system. Judge Dietz’s ruling is a triumph that is shared by the Plano ISD community, which is obsessed with excellence in education. Our community has been longsuffering in the years-long division of wealth via Robin Hood. They supported the Tax Ratification Election in 2013 and

have rallied in the involvement of corporate partners to safeguard the success of our schools and the future of our school children. In celebrating this ruling, I also celebrate those community members.”

The extensive written orders follow Judge Dietz’s Feb. 4, 2013, oral announcement from the bench at the end of the longest and most extensive school finance trial in state history. His detailed findings are the result of hearing 13 weeks of testimony in the trial conducted from October 2012 to February 2013, and three weeks of testimony in the supplemental evidentiary hearing, which took place earlier this year to update the record regarding legislation passed in 2013.

### ***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 each student. 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 more than 6,500 staff members who serve more than 55,000 students in 72 schools and 11 service facilities. Plano ISD schools empower students to be able to adapt to new learning and career opportunities throughout their lives, collaborate with, and contribute to, the global community and to be disciplined and creative in their thinking.

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