



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Goose Creek CISD board joins Texas school finance lawsuit

Goose Creek CISD is joining other Texas public school districts in a lawsuit against the State of Texas to challenge the constitutionality of the school funding system.

The lawsuit asserts the school financing system doesn't provide districts adequate funding and distributes it unfairly — impairing the education of students in Texas.

Goose Creek CISD and the other school districts seek a ruling to compel state lawmakers to adequately fund public education, provide local discretion, and tie funding to the standards and requirements set by the state.

Less than six years ago, the Texas Supreme Court struck down the state school funding system. In November 2005, the Court found that the Texas Legislature had over-relied on local property taxes, left local school districts without meaningful discretion over local tax rates, and was operating a state property tax in violation of the Texas Constitution. The Supreme Court also cautioned that the school funding system was on the verge of resulting in a constitutionally inadequate education system.

Six years later, as the lawsuit alleges, Texas is once again operating under an unconstitutional school funding system. Revenue added after the Supreme Court's last decision has now been significantly reduced by the most recent legislative cuts of more than \$5 billion. The business tax created to bring down local property taxes has failed to generate revenue sufficient to replace lost property tax revenue. And the "temporary" target revenue system adopted by the Legislature in 2006 has become a permanent funding system that assigns different levels of money to students in different school districts without regard for the actual costs of educating a growing and increasingly diverse and poor student population.

Texas has added an average of more than 80,000 students every year since the Court's decision. It will add about 170,000 students in the next two years. In 2011, for the first time since World War II, the Texas Legislature failed to provide funding to cover the costs of student growth at current formulas in the next biennium.

Despite these cuts, lawmakers have continued to add requirements for school districts and students and to increase accountability standards and testing requirements.

But the state's funding commitment no longer matches its plans and the Legislature has failed to fundamentally change the system in a way that will rationally connect resources to the requirements the state has set.

The Goose Creek CISD Board of Trustees voted to on Jan. 23 to retain the services of Thompson and Horton, the Houston-based law firm handling the lawsuit.

"We believe this legal team has the expertise, experience, and record of success to represent a diverse coalition of districts seeking this common objective," said Jenice Coffey, Goose Creek CISD Board president.

The school board authorized the expenditure of approximately \$26,000 for this effort.

School districts across the state — including neighbors Crosby, Channelview, Pasadena, La Porte and — continue to join this legal action. The school finance case could go to trial next fall, with a ruling before the 2013 legislative session starts.

This year Texas lawmakers cut \$5.4 billion from public education. The state reduced Goose Creek CISD's funding by about \$11 million.

"Goose Creek CISD is committed to providing the excellent education our parents and our community expect and our children deserve," said Dr. Toby York, Goose Creek CISD Superintendent of Schools. "A permanent funding solution for public education in Texas is long overdue."

The lawsuit, titled "Fort Bend Independent School District, et al. vs. Robert Scott, Texas Commissioner of Education; Texas Education Agency; Susan Combs, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts; and Texas State Board of Education, collectively represents about one-third of the state's public school enrollment, according to Thompson & Horton.

Read lawsuit [here](#).

Read lawsuit press release [here](#).

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