



Harlandale Independent School District

Office of the Superintendent

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Today, December 20, 2018, the Harlandale Independent School District filed a Response to the Special Accreditation Investigation Preliminary Report issued by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Preliminary Report identifies initial findings made by TEA in connection with its Special Accreditation Investigation initiated in August of 2017. The Preliminary Report also proposes corrective actions and measures based upon TEA's preliminary findings. The District respectfully disagrees with all of TEA's findings and recommendations.

Under Texas Law and adopted agency procedures, Harlandale ISD has the right to respond to the Preliminary Report before final adoption by TEA. The District has exercised this right and submitted a 65-page Response complete with detailed legal analysis of each of TEA's charges and supported by hundreds of pages of exhibits. The thorough Response can be summarized as follows:

- TEA's conclusion that purchasing and procurement laws were violated is incorrect and based upon misapplied legal requirements. All procurement activities reviewed by TEA involved the acquisition of professional engineering services. The procurement of professional services is governed by different statutes and rules than those applied by TEA. TEA's own purchasing manual supports the District's position. Harlandale ISD was at all times in full compliance with the laws governing the procurement of professional services.
- Consecutive "superior" ratings in the state's Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) confirms the Board's sound management of District fiscal affairs and contradicts TEA findings.
- TEA's assertion that purchasing activities were conducted without Board oversight or approval is simply erroneous. Harlandale ISD has provided TEA numerous meeting minutes which confirm Board approval of all purchasing activities discussed in the Preliminary Report.
- TEA's allegations that individual Trustees interfered with administrative operations is unsupported. Harlandale Trustees, like those of any other district in Texas, are obligated by law to provide broad oversight of District affairs. Trustee requests for information are not violations of law.
- TEA complaints concerning repairs to Gillette Elementary School are unfounded and stem from TEA's failure to study or understand the underlying engineering issues and repairs.
- Multiple activities conducted in connection with the TEA investigation exceeded the authority of the TEA. These include initiating and expanding its investigations without proof of Commissioner approval.
- The Preliminary Report was unable to substantiate charges of nepotism and illegal hiring.
- TEA's proposal to remove the Board is inappropriate, grossly excessive and violates basic democratic rights of those elected and those that elect.

In the interest of transparency, the District's Response, along with all supporting exhibits are available for public and media inspection at the following Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/am4xw9rovcwc54j/AACGAKhpb-yKO3r6rXjFw2IJJa?dl=0>

Rey Madrigal
Superintendent