



Purpose: The most important challenges facing Dallas ISD today are: (1) how to provide an excellent and equitable education for all of its ~158,000 students, particularly students of color and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; and (2) how to attract back the 1 in 4 students who live within district boundaries but currently opt for other public and private school options.

Building city-wide resolve to advance the attractiveness of Dallas ISD while providing equitable access to the resources needed to eliminate wide income and racial disparities in student outcomes requires the formation of a broad, diverse, and inclusive coalition. Therefore, the purpose of this coalition is to help our community:

- Understand the current and projected enrollment and funding challenges faced by the district;
- Understand disparities in resources and outcomes that exist across the district, the results of recent strategies enacted by the board and administration to address these, and other potential best practices;
- Collectively advocate for adequate funding to advance more equitable educational outcomes and enhance academic offerings, along with district accountability to taxpayers for additional investment.

While the building of trust will require ongoing effort and patience, today's students and their families do not have the luxury of time. Thoughtful urgency is required to take immediate steps towards the long-term pursuit of excellence and equity for all of Dallas' children.

Opportunity: In August 2016, the Dallas ISD administration requested board approval to place a Tax Ratification Election (TRE) in front of voters in November 2016. The TRE would have given DISD taxpayers the option to approve a tax rate that would have generated ~\$105M in additional annual revenue to scale key pilot initiatives (full day pre-K, early colleges, etc.) that had already been approved by the board and were showing promising initial results. As it was proposed, the TRE would have also established measurable 6-year accountability targets which, if not met by the district, would have required voter re-ratification for the tax increase to continue beyond 2022.

DISD's proposal did not receive sufficient board approval to place it on the ballot, receiving 5 of 9 votes and thus falling one vote short of the required 6 vote supermajority required by state law. Dissenting board members cited concerns including: (1) uncertainty over future state funding increases; (2) a lack of clarity on whether DISD had sufficiently analyzed its budget to instead find the dollars through efficiencies; (3) confusion over the proposed accountability measures; and (4) lack of community knowledge and buy-in given the administration's urgency in bringing the TRE to the board to try to capitalize on the high turnout of a presidential election.

The Dallas ISD administration has expressed a willingness to elevate equity more fully within its operations, planning and decision-making, beginning with the completion of an external third-party equity assessment. Private philanthropic support is currently being pursued to fund both this assessment and related board and administration training on best practices that would guide how to incorporate findings into daily and long-term strategic action.

Beliefs: In guiding this work, members of this coalition agree to operate in accordance with the following shared beliefs:

- Every child in Dallas ISD is capable of success and deserves equitable access to a quality education, getting what they need based on their individual needs and history.
- Dallas ISD’s actions should be guided by a comprehensive and transparent equity review, routinely updated, that continually guides its allocation of resources in its mission to eliminate achievement disparities for its students.
- Any plan put forth by Dallas ISD administration and approved by the board of trustees should reflect broad community input on suggested strategies and desired educational outcomes.
- Taxpayers should be granted the right by their elected board of trustees to decide via public election whether or not to invest additional dollars to close existing student achievement disparities.
- Any taxpayer investment should be accompanied by ambitious but reasonably attainable accountability measures and subsequent transparent reporting to ensure that any incremental funding raised is used to produce the desired growth and reduced disparities in student achievement outcomes.

Commitments: If in agreement with the purpose and beliefs described above, you and/or your organization is invited to join this coalition to advance educational equity by committing to the following:

- (1) Participate or appoint a representative to consistently participate in coalition meetings (schedule TBD), communicating in advance when unable to join
- (2) Agree to have your/your organization’s name publicly listed as a member of the coalition (you may terminate participation at any time via explicit communication)
- (3) Engage your personal networks and/or your organization’s constituents in between coalition meetings, in accordance with your organization’s existing protocol (additional facilitation support will be offered upon request)
- (4) Provide pathways for your personal networks and/or your organization’s constituents to use their voices and their votes to advocate for their positions

By signing below, I agree to the commitments set forth above on behalf of myself and/or my organization:

Signature

Organization Name (if applicable)

Name (printed)

Date

Phone

Email