



101-912

Via Certified Mail ,
Regular Mail & Email

March 15, 2023

Mr. Millard House, II, Superintendent
Ms. Dani Hernandez, Board President
Ms. Myrna Guidry, Board First Vice President
Ms. Bridget Wade, Board Second Vice President
Mr. Kendall Baker, Board Secretary
Ms. Kathy Blueford-Daniels, Board Assistant Secretary
Ms. Elizabeth Santos, Board Member
Dr. Patricia K. Allen, Board Member
Ms. Sue Deigaard, Board Member
Ms. Judith Cruz, Board Member
Houston Independent School District
4400 W. 18th St.
Houston, TX 77092

RE: Appointment of Board of Managers

Dear Mr. House and Trustees:

In November 2019, I notified Houston Independent School District (Houston ISD or district) of my intent to appoint a Board of Managers and superintendent for the district. This intervention was necessary because of the consecutive unacceptable academic accountability ratings received by Wheatley High School, a Special Accreditation Investigation that demonstrated multiple violations of law in the district, and the fact that

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I recognize that several members of the Board of Trustees have been newly elected since 2019 and that current Board members, individually and as a team, have tried to make progress since then. I certainly commend the current Board for voting last week to end its lawsuit against TEA, yet another indication that the current members of the Board of Trustees are trying to move forward for students. But prior academic performance issues continue to require action under state law. Even with a delay of three full years caused by legal proceedings, systemic problems in Houston ISD continue to impact students most in need of our collective support.

Texas law authorizes the appointment of a Board of Managers based on the district's inability to improve student achievement at its low-

efforts to address and correct the

The administrative law judge must uphold my decision unless the administrative law judge finds the decision is not supported by substantial evidence.¹⁴ The decision of the administrative law judge is final and may not be appealed.¹⁵

If a petition for review is not submitted by the deadline, my decision will become final and unappealable.¹⁶

Compliance and Cooperation

A school board has a solemn responsibility to focus above all else on serving all students enrolled in its school system. It does this by ensuring its superintendent is positioned to provide a strong set of supports for district teachers and staff who work directly with those students, not just on some of its campuses, but all of them. The intervention I am ordering is focused on ensuring the Houston ISD governing team is better supporting its students.

The Houstonians who are selected to serve on the Board of Managers, once installed, will be in charge of governing Houston ISD. It is my expectation that the Board of Managers will keep me apprised of the conditions in the district—and TEA will continue to monitor the district's performance and its cooperation with the agency's interventions—but governance and strategic decision-making will lie with these local public servants. It is my sincere desire that the agency, the district, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Managers, and the community work together in a cooperative and productive manner for the best interest of Houston ISD students during the current period of transition and throughout the period of the Board of Managers appointment.

Sincerely,

Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education

MM/lm

Enclosure

¹⁴ TEC §39A.301(b)

¹⁵ TEC §39A.301(c)(3).

¹⁶ TEC §39A.301 and 19 TAC §157.1155(a) and (b).

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