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**CITIZENS GROUP ANNOUNCES IT WILL
HOLD DISD CANDIDATES TO A HIGHER STANDARD
Dallas Friends of Public Education will put kids first.**

DALLAS— Standing in front of DISD Administration Headquarters today, a newly formed group of concerned voters announced that it is time for DISD Board members to “put students first.”

The group, Dallas Friends of Public Education (DFPE) is a coalition of parents, teachers, and concerned taxpayers that says it is time for a change in the way business is conducted at the Dallas Independent School District. The group plans on being active in this November’s DISD elections by vetting potential DISD board members and holding candidates to a higher standard.

“We are all about the kids” said the group’s spokesperson, retired State Representative Harryette Ehrhardt. “Our group is here to remind candidates for the board that the students and their needs must be at the heart of everything they do., and that begins with board trustees providing basic, competent administration.”

The DISD has been rocked by turmoil in recent years, including last year’s \$84 million accounting “gaffe” which resulted in hundreds of teacher layoffs, and an attempt by Trustees to illegally extend their own terms, canceling last May’s elections. The Texas Attorney General was forced to step in and overrule the Trustees, forcing this November’s board elections.

Maria Cruz, a teacher and parent of a DISD graduate pointed out the impact of these scandals. “All of these things are extremely disruptive and distract from the primary purpose of the school district. As a parent and a teacher, I know personally how these issues with the school board negatively affect our ability to educate our students.” Cruz went on to say “We need to change how our school district operates, and that change must begin with the school board. That is why all of us have formed Dallas Friends of Public Education.”

DFPE member and DISD Alumnus Troy Simms added, “We love our schools, and we want them to succeed. That is why we are here today, and that is DFPE’s goal – successful schools.”

Ehrhardt outlined the five issues that the group will focus on when vetting DISD Board candidates.

- Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency – especially in the budgeting process
- Respect for the Voters and Their Right to Vote
- Basic Ethical Standards – school board members should not be allowed to profit from the district
- Magnet Schools, Learning Centers and Comprehensive Schools should all receive adequate funding
- Using Fair Standards to Evaluate Teacher and Student Achievement

Ehrhardt stated that Dallas Friends of Public Education will be interviewing DISD School Board Candidates in the coming weeks. The group will be evaluating candidates based on the criteria mentioned above and will be making endorsements based on their evaluations.

“We will be holding candidates to a higher standard. Our students deserve the best,” declared Ehrhardt.

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