

Short version

Resolution Against the HISD \$4.4 Billion Bond

Whereas Superintendent Mike Miles has a disastrous record of fiscal mismanagement, including a massive budget deficit increase, questionable expenditures, and a lack of transparency about his Third Future Schools charter network's financial irregularities;

Whereas Mike Miles has wreaked havoc on students and public education—closing libraries, cutting essential services, and targeting Black and Brown communities with restrictive curricula and other harmful policies and falling woefully short in his sole duty to make HISD a place where kids can truly learn and thrive;

Whereas the unelected board of managers, backing every Miles decision and ignoring community feedback, is now supporting his push for the largest school bond debt in Texas history, with no accountability to us after the state removed our elected school board.

Resolved that while the Harris County Democratic Party supports public education and acknowledges the need for full funding, including bonds, it opposes the HISD \$4.4 billion bonds, Proposition A and B, due to Superintendent Mike Miles' fiscal mismanagement, inadequate oversight, and the detrimental impact on students and public education since the takeover.

Long version

Resolution Against the HISD \$4.4 Billion Bond

Whereas Superintendent Mike Miles has demonstrated a concerning pattern of fiscal mismanagement, evidenced by the sharp escalation of HISD's budget deficit from \$118 million to over \$450 million; the allocation of over \$100 million on redundant purchases of furniture and technology, replacing nearly new items without justification; and questionable expenditures, including \$470,000 on a musical production and \$1 M on adult-sized spin bikes intended for elementary schoolchildren, all underscoring a troubling inability to manage substantial public funds in a responsible and effective manner; and a recent poll reveals that 77% of likely voters distrust Miles with HISD funds and 58% perceive him as corrupt;

Whereas the unelected and unaccountable board of managers has raised spending limits from \$100,000 to \$1 million, routinely endorses every decision of Mike Miles, relies on oversight committees solely appointed by Mike Miles, and displays contempt toward community feedback, undermining transparency and eroding democratic accountability;

Whereas the HISD takeover under Superintendent Mike Miles has led to the closure of libraries including the squandering of at least \$9 million in ESSER-funded books purchased for these libraries, the forced exodus of half of HISD's teachers and principals, and the reduction of essential support services, including those for homeless students, wraparound services, college advisors, and Special Education,

with the imposition of rigid curricula in New Education System (NES) schools disproportionately harming Black and Brown communities by restricting educational resources and opportunities for students;

Whereas, the HISD administration under Superintendent Mike Miles demonstrated a troubling lack of institutional knowledge and competence, as evidenced by their unawareness that they could be reimbursed for debris removal following Hurricane Beryl, a fact they did not discover until just a week before the school year started; and the delay in applying for FEMA assistance after the derecho, which only occurred after extensive lobbying, as well as the failure to pursue sustainability funding for essential HVAC repairs;

Whereas the proposed \$4.4 billion HISD bond would impose the largest school bond debt in Texas history, inflating costs by up to \$100 million per school while deceitfully claiming it will not raise taxes;

Whereas the bond budget includes \$10 million per school for lead remediation at schools slated for closure and \$580 million for co-location projects (closures) in historically under-resourced Black and Brown communities;

Whereas the Superintendent has not sufficiently pursued or utilized available resources to improve resilience or planned for the future needs of schools, including responding to demographic changes, ensuring energy reliability, addressing climate mitigation and adaptation, and preparing for natural disasters;

Whereas both the chief financial officer, Jim Terry, and Superintendent Mike Miles have been previously investigated and found guilty of procurement improprieties and policy violations while occupying similar roles in Dallas ISD;

Whereas Mike Miles' Third Future Schools charter network raises ethical concerns, with it currently under investigation for financial irregularities, including the transfer of \$49 million in Texas taxpayer dollars from Third Future Schools Texas to Third Future Schools Colorado—separate legal entities—without any written contracts or invoices, two of its schools - Sam Houston Elementary School and Ector Prep in Midland County, serving only 1,700 students - incurred \$2.5 million in undocumented debt to Third Future Schools Colorado for excessive services, which were used to cover the debts of Third Future Schools Colorado;

Whereas, the HISD administration under Superintendent Mike Miles has enforced humiliating bathroom policies at NES schools, including severely restricted access and requiring students including young children to carry a traffic cone as a pass, which has led to more students wetting themselves in class and undermines a supportive and respectful learning environment;

Whereas, labor rights have been egregiously denied under the HISD administration, as evidenced by custodians and plant operators being reclassified as contract workers, resulting in the loss of paid leave and benefits; and teachers being terminated without adequate recourse for activities such as playing chess with their students or for exceeding ten days of absence in a year, even when such absences include caring for a relative with cancer;

Whereas the Harris County Democratic Party opposes the HISD Bonds, Proposition A and B, due to the risks associated with Superintendent Mike Miles' track record of fiscal mismanagement, his harmful impact on HISD schoolchildren, the unaccountable and undemocratic board of managers that provides

little to no legitimate oversight of the bond, and the disproportionately negative effects of his actions on Black and Brown communities, Special Education students and bilingual students;

Resolved that the Harris County Democratic Party firmly opposes the HISD \$4.4 billion bonds, Proposition A and B, given the harmful impacts on HISD schoolchildren—including the closure of libraries and restrictions on book access—and the ethical, governance, and financial risks associated with Superintendent Mike Miles' demonstrated fiscal mismanagement, misleading cost projections, inadequate oversight, and lack of transparency and accountability to taxpayers.

