

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Lancaster ISD Receives 4-star rating from Texas Comptroller's Office for Fiscal Management and Student Achievement

Lancaster, Texas/Lancaster ISD

The Lancaster Independent School District has seen improvements in finance management and student achievement. As a result of recent transformational efforts, Lancaster ISD received 4 out of 5 stars on the FAST (Financial Allocation Study for Texas) report produced by the Texas Comptroller's Office. The report measures the academic progress and financial efficiency of Texas public school districts and charter schools.

The report stated that Lancaster ISD had "high academic progress" that was at or above 70 percent of all districts statewide and that Lancaster ISD had "very low spending compared to fiscal peers" of \$7,462 cost-adjusted spending per pupil.

"Anytime we are recognized by the comptroller for exhibiting fiscal responsibility—in this case, low spending coupled with high academic progress—that's confirmation of the work that is occurring in our district," Superintendent Dr. Michael D. McFarland said. "It also communicates to our community that we don't take it lightly that we're investing tax payer dollars. We said that we would be transparent, fiscally responsible and that we would make decisions in the classroom to impact student learning.

In order to make spending comparisons as fair as possible, FAST assigns each campus and district up to 40 fiscal peers. Fiscal peers are identified based on their similarity across a number of variables, including enrollment, grades served, student need and labor costs, among others.

In Lancaster ISD's fiscal peer group of 40 districts, only eight other districts received a 4-star rating or higher. (Lewisville ISD, Channelview ISD, Waller ISD, Conroe ISD, Joshua ISD, Eanes ISD, Lake Dallas ISD and Klein ISD).

This year's FAST rating was determined by three-year averages of data from the 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years on academic progress, cost-adjusted spending and spending index measures. These measures are based on the most recent available TEA data.

Right now, this rating shows that we are at 80% of where we would like to be," District CFO Erna Perry said, "We are setting our focus to get closer to the 5 stars, which I know that we can do."

In addition, Lancaster ISD campuses also received ratings: At the top of the list, Lancaster Elementary and Pleasant Run Elementary Schools received the highest rating at 5 stars; Houston Elementary received 4.5 stars; Belt Line Elementary and Rolling Hills Elementary received 4 stars; Rosa Parks Millbrook Elementary, Lancaster Middle School and Lancaster High School received 3.5 stars; and West Main Elementary received 3.0 stars. George Washington Carver Sixth Grade STEM Learning Center did not receive an independent rating.

Earlier this fall, Lancaster ISD announced that the district again earned the highest rating of “Superior” and a perfect score on the 2014 Texas FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) report.

The Lancaster Public Schools serve more than 6,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 11 schools. The mission of the Lancaster Independent School District, a leader in providing innovative, quality programs, is to educate every student with the knowledge; skills; and principles to succeed and contribute in a competitive and technologically advancing world by providing rigorous and engaging learning opportunities that promote diversity; create an environment of integrity and respect; and establish a commitment to continued improvement in partnership with families and community.

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