

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, the Texas Constitution requires that the State of Texas provide “support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.” The State’s school finance system is a component of this constitutional mandate; and

WHEREAS, Texas Supreme Court decisions interpreting the Texas Constitution have required a school finance system that contributes to a “general diffusion of knowledge;” and

WHEREAS, the 2011 legislature cut more than \$5 billion dollars from public education and failed to fund an increase in statewide public school enrollment of approximately 80,000 additional students; and

WHEREAS, public school districts across the State of Texas have recently faced financial difficulties based in part on the state funding cuts; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies suggest that adequate school finance correlates with higher academic achievement within our nation’s public schools; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin greatly benefits from high-performing public schools. Strong public schools provide recruitment and retention benefits for the City’s numerous businesses. Further, a well- educated populace provides a strong pool of qualified candidates to serve as business and civic leaders within the community; and

WHEREAS, school funding provided to the districts within the City of Austin’s jurisdiction has a direct economic impact on the Austin community; and

WHEREAS, an efficient and high-quality education system undoubtedly benefits the economic development of this City and the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, Austin area school districts, including Austin Independent School District have joined several other Texas school districts in five lawsuits that challenge the State of Texas' school financing system as constitutionally inadequate; and

WHEREAS, the consolidated lawsuits, which are set for trial in October of 2012, allege that the current public education finance system is not efficient, is not adequate, and limits meaningful discretion for setting local property tax rates; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

This City Council supports the Austin Independent School District and other area school districts' participation in the consolidated school finance lawsuits and supports their efforts to speak with one voice in the litigation of public school finance matters essential to the fair treatment of Texas taxpayers and public school children;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Council authorizes the City Manager and appropriate City staff to take necessary steps to prepare and file an amicus brief expressing the City's

“statement of interest” in support of the litigation on behalf of the area districts.

ADOPTED: _____, 2012

ATTEST: _____

Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk

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