

**To:** Texas School Board Members  
**From:** Texas Faith Leaders  
**Re:** State-Organized Prayer in Texas Schools (SB11)  
**Date:** January 8, 2026

Dear Superintendents and School Board Trustees,

We, the undersigned faith leaders, support religious liberty and the right of students to pray at school without government interference. Public education is both a place where students of all faiths come together to learn and a vital institution that prepares students to live in a society of many religions.

We believe in the value of religious instruction. We also understand that the responsibility for religious instruction lies with students, their families, and their local faith communities—not with public schools, and not organized or directed by the state.

By requiring school boards to vote on a state-designated time for prayer and religious text study, Texas' state-organized prayer in school law, SB11, threatens to drive a wedge into public school communities and create unnecessary administrative burdens. Existing laws protect Texas public school students' right to pray and read religious texts at school without government interference—and without the administrative burden that SB11 places on schools and parents.

If SB11's prayer policy is approved, schools will be required to track consent forms, designate non-instructional time for prayer, identify private prayer spaces, and ensure non-participating students are not coerced to pray. Requiring families to opt into a system that already protects their children's religious rights at school distracts from a school's mission of educating children. Students who do not opt in might be bullied and ostracized, and students may feel pressure to opt in to gain favor and time with teachers or coaches. State-sponsored prayer time will also cause division among students based on their religious beliefs.

Instead of approving SB11's misguided state-organized prayer policy, we urge you to pass the attached resolution as an alternative for approval by the School Board. It affirms students' right to prayer and religious study under existing law and respects the religious diversity within public schools. We ask you to support religious freedom in our schools and reject SB11's state-organized prayer policy.

We are available for questions and testimony if we can be helpful in these efforts.

Thank you,

Undersigned Texas Faith Leaders

## **DRAFT RESOLUTION**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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### **INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **RESOLUTION**

#### **Resolution Affirming Our Constitutional and Legal Right to Choose to Pray in School**

**WHEREAS**, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects students' religious freedom in public school. Specifically, the Establishment Clause ensures that the government cannot favor any particular religious belief or religion over non-belief, and the Free Exercise Clause ensures that individuals have the right to practice their religious beliefs, free from government interference; and

**WHEREAS**, Article I, § 6 of the Texas Constitution guarantees the "separation of church and state" and embodies the principle that "religion is a matter of private conscience with which the state . . . is forbidden to interfere." *Watts v. Watts*, 563 S.W.2d 314, 317 (Tex. Civ. App. 1978), writ refused NRE (July 5, 1978), disapp'd on other grounds by *Jones v. Cable*, 626 S.W.2d 734 (Tex. 1981); and

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act, Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code § 110.003, prohibits school districts and other government entities from "substantially burden[ing] a person's free exercise of religion"; and

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Education Code § 25.901 affirms that "[a] public school student has an absolute right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt the instructional or other activities of the school. A person may not require or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity"; and

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Education Code § 25.082(d) establishes a school district's ability to institute a period of silence during which students may choose to "reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract another student";

#### **NOW, LET IT BE HEREBY RESOLVED**

**THAT** the \_\_\_\_ ISD Board of Trustees is committed to cultivating and maintaining a respectful school environment for students and teachers of any or no religious background; and

**THAT** the \_\_\_\_ ISD Board of Trustees, in consideration of the laws and policies recited above, votes against a resolution to adopt a state-organized prayer policy for our district, as contemplated by S.B. 11, 89th Legislature, codified at Texas Education Code § 25.0823.

**PRESENTED AND APPROVED** \_\_\_\_\_

Faith Leaders Say "No" to state-organized prayer in schools

**Rabbi Mara Nathan**  
Alamo Heights ISD  
*Judaism*

**Rabbi Samuel Stahl**  
Alamo Heights ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Rabbi Gideon Estes**  
Alief ISD  
*Conservative Judaism*

**James Dickey**  
Arlington ISD  
*Baptist*

**Rev. Stephen Goss**  
Arlington ISD  
*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

**Dan Malone**  
Arlington ISD  
*Baptist*

**Rev. Samuel Voth Schrag**  
Arlington ISD  
*Mennonite Church USA*

**Rev. Kristin Warthen**  
Arlington ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rev. Allison Angell**  
Austin ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Kate Bremer**  
Austin ISD  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**Christopher Bunch**  
Austin ISD  
*Not Affiliated*

**Elizabeth Dunning**  
Austin ISD  
*Presbyterian (PCUSA)*

**Rabbi Will Hall**  
Austin ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Shelly Hargrove**  
Austin ISD  
*Baptist*

**Dr. Bill Hirt**  
Austin ISD  
*Roman Catholic*

**Rabbi Brian Leiken**  
Austin ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Rabbi Kelly Levy**  
Austin ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Dr. Al Lindsey**  
Austin ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Susan Lippe**  
Austin ISD  
*Judaism*

**Dr. Janet Love**  
Austin ISD  
*Interfaith*

**Dr. Griff Martin**  
Austin ISD  
*Baptist*

**Janet Maykus**  
Austin ISD  
*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

**Pastor Katie Rode**

Austin ISD

*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America***Rev. Carrie Schoenert Houston**

Austin ISD

*Cooperative Baptist***Rev. Cathy Stone**

Austin ISD

*United Methodist Church***Paul Alexander**

Beaumont ISD

*Presbyterian (PCUSA)***Catherine Allen**

Beaumont ISD

*Cooperative Baptist***Rev. Michael Dunson**

Belton ISD

*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)***Rev. Barry Sharp**

Belton ISD

*United Methodist Church***Katherine Langford**

Birdville ISD

*United Methodist Church***Rev. Andrew Thompson**

Buffalo ISD

*United Methodist Church***Dr. Robert Thrift**

China Spring ISD

*Cooperative Baptist***LaRinda Horan**

Clear Creek ISD

*Cooperative Baptist***Rabbi Edwin Goldberg**

Conroe ISD

*Reform Judaism***Dr. Mike Hall**

Conroe ISD

*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America***Rabbi Gabrielle Cohn**

Corpus Christi ISD

*Reform Judaism***Dr. James Klein**

Corpus Christi ISD

*Not Affiliated***Kris Redus**

Corpus Christi ISD

*Baptist***Shirley Hanna**

Crowley ISD

*Baptist***Dr. Ernest Brooks**

Dallas ISD

*Baptist***Rabbi Holly Cohn**

Dallas ISD

*Judaism***Rev. Dr. Kendrick Crawford**

Dallas ISD

*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)***Dale Dietert**

Dallas ISD

*North American Lutheran Church***Chaplain R. Mark Grace**

Dallas ISD

*Baptist*

**Dr. Daniel Kanter**  
Dallas ISD  
*Unitarian Universalism*

**Rabbi Nancy Kasten**  
Dallas ISD  
*Judaism*

**Rabbi Michael Lewis**  
Dallas ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Dr. George Mason**  
Dallas ISD  
*Baptist*

**Rev. Georgia McKee**  
Dallas ISD  
*Baptist*

**Mike McWilliams**  
Dallas ISD  
*Cooperative Baptist*

**Rabbi Debra Robbins**  
Dallas ISD  
*Judaism*

**Margaret Rounseville**  
Dallas ISD  
*Presbyterian (PCUSA)*

**Rev. James Rowe**  
Dallas ISD  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**Casey Shobe**  
Dallas ISD  
*Episcopal Church*

**Rabbi David Stern**  
Dallas ISD  
*Judaism*

**Elaine Stillman**  
Dallas ISD  
*Judaism*

**Rev. Dr. Neil Thomas**  
Dallas ISD  
*United Church of Christ*

**David Tuthill**  
Dallas ISD  
*Episcopal Church*

**Ian Campbell**  
Denton ISD  
*Non Denominational*

**Stephen Reeves**  
Dripping Springs ISD  
*Cooperative Baptist*

**Lynda Blevins**  
Duncanville ISD  
*Southern Baptist Church*

**Mayor Todd Flippo**  
Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rabbi Benjamin Zeidman**  
El Paso ISD  
*Judaism*

**Edward Morris**  
Forney ISD  
*Non Denominational*

**Cantor Renee Waghalter**  
Fort Bend ISD  
*Judaism*

**Cantor Sheri Allen**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Judaism*

**Rev. Karen Calafat**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Episcopal Church*

**Rev. Dr. Natalya Cherry**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rev. Susan Feurzeig**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

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Fort Worth ISD  
*Judaism*

**Rev. Suzanne Halbert**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

**Rev. Kristin Klade**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**Gloria Long**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Episcopal Church*

**Tiffany McClain**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Baptist*

**Rabbi Ralph Mecklenburger**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Dr. Wayne Menking**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**Caryl Sherman-Gonzalez**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Non Denominational*

**Rev. Ginger Watson**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rabbi Brian Zimmerman**  
Fort Worth ISD  
*Judaism*

**Alyssa Dequeant**  
Garland ISD  
*Episcopal Church*

**Rev. Diane Pennington**  
Garland ISD  
*Presbyterian (PCUSA)*

**Rev. John Zeigler**  
Georgetown ISD  
*Presbyterian (PCUSA)*

**Mary Lou Felch**  
Granbury ISD  
*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

**Leslie Todd**  
Greenville ISD  
*Unitarian Universalism*

**Fr. Dennis Schafer**  
Harlandale ISD  
*Catholic*

**Pam Gonzalez**  
Hays CISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rabbi Joshua Fixler**  
Houston ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Friedrich Gartner**  
Houston ISD  
*Catholic*

**Sydney Greenblatt**  
Houston ISD  
*Judaism*

**Rabbi Steve Gross**  
Houston ISD  
*Judaism*

**Dr. Bill Kerley**  
Houston ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rev. Dr. Dan King**  
Houston ISD  
*Unitarian Universalism*

**Rabbi David Lipper**  
Houston ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Rev. Laura Mayo**  
Houston ISD  
*American Baptist*

**Rev. Cindy Mood**  
Houston ISD  
*Presbyterian (PCUSA)*

**Keith Rosen**  
Houston ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Rev. Omar Rouchon**  
Houston ISD  
*Presbyterian (PCUSA)*

**Rabbi Adrienne Scott**  
Houston ISD  
*Judaism*

**Cantor Rollin Simmons**  
Houston ISD  
*Judaism*

**Lisa Stone**  
Houston ISD  
*Judaism*

**Ann Sullivan**  
Houston ISD  
*Baptist*

**Rev. Deborah Whisnand**  
Houston ISD  
*United Church of Christ*

**Rabbi Dan Gordon**  
Humble ISD  
*Judaism*

**Cori Tucker**  
Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD  
*Not Affiliated*

**Amanda Wertz**  
Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD  
*Baptist*

**Rabbi Marina Yergin**  
Judson ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Mark Walker**  
Katy ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Tana Weiss**  
Katy ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Dr. Dan Stiver**  
Keller ISD  
*Baptist*

**Kathleen Bryson**  
Kerrville ISD  
*Episcopal Church*

**Janet Crawford**  
Killeen ISD  
*Baptist*

**Matthew Wesson**  
Klein ISD  
*United Church of Christ*

**Lynnette Beavers**  
Lewisville ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rabbi Geoffrey Dennis**  
Lewisville ISD  
*Judaism*

**Rev. Chris Rothbauer**  
Lewisville ISD  
*Unitarian Universalism*

**Emma Martinez**  
Lubbock ISD  
*Baptist*

**Rev. Katie Hays**  
Mansfield ISD  
*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

**Rabbi Nathan Farb**  
McAllen ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Jeannette Keton**  
McKinney ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rabbi Lisa Goldstein**  
North East ISD  
*Reform Judaism*

**Roger Lance Mayes**  
North East ISD  
*Cooperative Baptist*

**Dr. Paul Ziese**  
North East ISD  
*Episcopal Church*

**Diana Bridges**  
Northside ISD  
*Cooperative Baptist*

**Robin Diamond**  
Northside ISD  
*Judaism*

**Rev. Jacqueline Freeman**  
Northside ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**The Rev. Dr. Edward Kern**  
Northside ISD  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**Rev. Sandra Leifeste**  
Northside ISD  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**Dr. Richard Pressman**  
Northside ISD  
*Judaism*

**Carissa Vega**  
Northside ISD  
*Non Denominational*

**Meredith Bewley**  
Pflugerville ISD  
*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

**Rev. Dr. Donald Kuntz**  
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD  
*United Methodist Church*

**Rev. Mara Bim**  
Plano ISD  
*Baptist*

**Rev. Daniel Gowan**

Plano ISD

*Presbyterian (PCUSA)***Rev. Kerry Smith**

Richardson ISD

*United Methodist Church***Almas Muscatwalla**

Plano ISD

*Islam***Thad Soles**

Richardson ISD

*Not Religious***Rabbi Andrew Paley**

Plano ISD

*Reform Judaism***Janis Townsend**

Richardson ISD

*Baptist***Rabbi Seymour Rossel**

Plano ISD

*Judaism***Sharon Vickrey**

Richardson ISD

*Baptist***Wendy Campbell**

Richardson ISD

*United Women in Faith***Hallie Weiner**

Richardson ISD

*Judaism***Rabbi Michael Tevya Cohen**

Richardson ISD

*Judaism***Rev. James Bridges**

Rockwall ISD

*Unitarian Universalism***Rev. Beth Dana**

Richardson ISD

*Unitarian Universalism***Rev. Dr. Sarah Henseler**

Round Rock ISD

*United Church of Christ***Rabbi Kimberly Herzog Cohen**

Richardson ISD

*Reform Judaism***Rev. Lawrence Gipson**

San Antonio ISD

*Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)***Rick Hibbs**

Richardson ISD

*Baptist***Lisa Johnson**

San Antonio ISD

*Unity***Alice Nunn**

Richardson ISD

*United Methodist Church***Rabbi David Kaplinsky**

San Antonio ISD

*Judaism***Rabbi Amy Rossel**

Richardson ISD

*Reform Judaism***Rev. Edwina Baethge**

San Marcos ISD

*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**Carrie DeLeon**

Spring ISD

*United Methodist Church*

**Emily Prevost**

Temple ISD

*Baptist*

**Rabbi Neal Katz**

Tyler ISD

*Judaism*

**Bill Routon**

Tyler ISD

*United Methodist Church*

**Dr. Jerry Faught**

Wichita Falls ISD

*Baptist*

**Dr. Michael Maness**

Woodville ISD

*Baptist*

**Rev. Michael Davis**

Wylie ISD

*Buddhism*