

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

_____ 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 _____

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)

Almas Muscatwalla
Plano ISD
Islam

Rabbi Andrew Paley
Plano ISD
Reform Judaism

Rabbi Seymour Rossel
Plano ISD
Judaism

Wendy Campbell
Richardson ISD
United Women in Faith

Rabbi Michael Tevya Cohen
Richardson ISD
Judaism

Rev. Beth Dana
Richardson ISD
Unitarian Universalism

Rabbi Kimberly Herzog Cohen
Richardson ISD
Reform Judaism

Rick Hibbs
Richardson ISD
Baptist

Alice Nunns
Richardson ISD
United Methodist Church

Rabbi Amy Rossel
Richardson ISD
Reform Judaism

Rev. Kerry Smith
Richardson ISD
United Methodist Church

Thad Soles
Richardson ISD
Not Religious

Janis Townsend
Richardson ISD
Baptist

Sharon Vickrey
Richardson ISD
Baptist

Hallie Weiner
Richardson ISD
Judaism

Rev. James Bridges
Rockwall ISD
Unitarian Universalism

Rev. Dr. Sarah Henseler
Round Rock ISD
United Church of Christ

Rev. Lawrence Gipson
San Antonio ISD
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Lisa Johnson
San Antonio ISD
Unity

Rabbi David Kaplinsky
San Antonio ISD
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