



*Always Innovating*

# South Texas ISD

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 6-12**



**A FREE,  
high-quality public  
school district offering**

**ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES**

**for South Texas students!**

# AGAINST A COORDINATED EFFORT TO ELIMINATE A VALUABLE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Currently, public school districts and private interest organizations in South Texas are forming a coordinated effort to support or promote potential legislation that would eliminate South Texas ISD's taxing authority, thereby effectively eliminating South Texas ISD.

In an effort to promote South Texas ISD's successes and to counteract an organized campaign centered on promoting or supporting legislation to reduce or eliminate STISD's taxing authority, South Texas ISD aims to educate and inform key decisionmakers, stakeholders, community leaders, our family of educators, students, alumni, and families, the media, and the general community-at-large by sharing accurate information and dispelling misinformation.

## JUST THE FACTS

### MYTH

#### **HAS CHANGED FROM ITS ORIGINAL INTENT**

"South Texas ISD no longer serves its original purpose to serve students with special needs."

### FACT

South Texas ISD was originally created as a rehabilitation district in the 1960s under legislative authority to serve students with special needs. However, over time, changes in legislation mandated that students with special needs be mainstreamed and served in home districts. In 1983, South Texas ISD was authorized to offer vocational magnet schools, and has been operating in this capacity for 40 years. South Texas ISD continues to serve students with special needs with full-time enrollment and half-day Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs for ALL interested students.

**SOUTH TEXAS ISD HAS EVOLVED WITH THE TIMES AND CONTINUES TO SERVE ITS LEGISLATIVE PURPOSE.**

#### **DUPLICATION OF TAXES**

"There is a 'duplication of taxes' for residents in Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties paying taxes to their home public school districts and South Texas ISD, even if their children are not enrolled at South Texas ISD."

The tax rate of .0492 cents is minimal, and costs the average homeowner approximately \$5.33 per month. This provides students and families with a choice should they choose to pursue a high-quality public school education from one of the top schools in the nation, at less than a nickel per \$100 valuation. There are other taxing entities that serve legitimate public purposes for the greater community that the taxpayer may not directly benefit from. For example, property tax owners pay taxes to home districts regardless of if they have school-age children, and families whose children attend STISD pay public school property taxes at their home district.

**THE MINIMAL TAX ALLOWS FOR THE OPERATION OF STISD TO SERVE STUDENTS FROM ALL THREE COUNTIES SERVED, SHOULD THEY CHOOSE TO ENROLL.**

#### **STISD RECEIVES MORE FUNDING**

"South Texas ISD receives \$5,000 more funding per student than other districts."

The information that is being spread in support of these efforts is inaccurate. The actual revenues that South Texas ISD receives is considerably less compared to other school districts who are able to receive other sources of revenue that South Texas ISD cannot access, such as Interest & Sinking (I&S), IFA & EDA, and more. Because South Texas ISD does not receive the same types of funding as other districts, tax revenues pay for maintenance and construction of facilities, as well as the unique costs associated with servicing three counties such as FREE transportation. Other school districts are able to receive considerable additional funding for these services.

**ONCE ALL SOURCES OF REVENUE ARE INCLUDED, SOUTH TEXAS ISD IS NOT THE DISTRICT WITH THE HIGHEST REVENUE PER STUDENT.**

#### **SOUTH TEXAS ISD IS NOT OPEN ENROLLMENT**

"South Texas ISD is not available to all students."

All students from the three counties served are able to attend South Texas ISD, and FREE transportation to and from South Texas ISD campuses is available to all students at their home cities. The only limitation to enrollment is the physical capacity at each of the campuses.

**SOUTH TEXAS ISD IS AN OPEN-ENROLLMENT DISTRICT.**



# IN SUPPORT OF SOUTH TEXAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

There is a substantial public purpose to keep South Texas ISD functioning as a public school choice available for ALL students in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties to choose to obtain a high-quality FREE public education from one of the highest-performing school districts in the nation, focused on vocational and career education in their profession of choice with FREE transportation.

## ✓ OPEN ENROLLMENT & FREE TRANSPORTATION

- South Texas ISD is a unique, one-of-a-kind FREE public school district that offers South Texas students the opportunity to choose to pursue their instruction and focus on their career field of choice.
- South Texas ISD is a FREE public school option open to ALL students from the three counties and has open enrollment and FREE transportation to and from students' home cities.

## ✓ UNIQUE, COMPETITIVE MODEL

- There is no other similar model of a magnet school district like South Texas ISD in the state, or even possibly, in the nation.
- South Texas ISD provides students with a competitive advantage offering the highest quality education, and consistently ranks among the best in the state and nation.
- All students from Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties deserve this opportunity as a choice.

## ✓ ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

- STISD has historically earned an accountability rating of "A" with postsecondary readiness from TEA – ranking #1 in the Rio Grande Valley and #10 in the State in 2022!
- All students at STISD have historically earned high ratings in academic performance in state and federal accountability measures.
- STISD students historically perform above average in SAT & ACT scores.
- 99% of South Texas ISD graduates attend college/university. The other 1% go into the military.
- 100% are prepared for college, career, and beyond!
- South Texas ISD's model has been so successful in preparing its students for college, career, and beyond, that local public school districts have now begun to replicate the magnet school model as specialty campuses, which is a welcome effort since students at those districts have the opportunity of choice.

## ✓ RESPONSIBLE OVERSIGHT & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Management and oversight of STISD is led by a 24-member board of trustees representing all three counties and comprised of both appointed and publicly-elected officials.
- South Texas ISD's tax rate has remained the same for nearly 60 years.
- South Texas ISD responsibly manages its financial resources.
- Financial resources are focused on academics as priority. Less than 1% of total budget goes towards athletics/related activities.
- South Texas ISD does NOT substantially allocate funds for expenses for athletics, facilities, and other expenses that are not related to academic performance, as other public school districts may.





*As students, parents, and community supporters, we stand in support of keeping South Texas ISD's taxing authority as is to allow this unique, competitive district to continue serving as an opportunity of choice for South Texas students, as it has been doing for nearly 60 years.*

Students and families who desire to take advantage of all the benefits and opportunities offered at South Texas ISD should not be punished by these attempts to overreach and influence legislation to remove South Texas ISD as a public school option.

**We highly encourage you to continue to support the alternative educational opportunities that South Texas ISD provides students.**

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