



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
December 14, 2018**

**Christian Hernandez  
Director of Communications  
254.654.2063  
christian.hernandez@tisd.org**

## **Temple ISD receives ‘superior’ rating for financial accountability**

TEMPLE, Texas, December 14 — The Temple Independent School District held a public hearing during the school board’s regular meeting on Monday, Dec. 10 regarding its financial accountability rating for fiscal year 2017-2018. The Texas Education Agency awarded the district a superior rating — the highest attainable rating.

“I want to publicly thank Kent (Boyd) and Kallen (Vaden) and the entire finance department for their tireless work,” said Dr. Bobby Ott, superintendent for Temple ISD. “I think one of our most important duties is to be fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars.”

Kallen Vaden, chief financial officer for the district, presented the annual financial management report to the board prior to the public hearing.

The Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) is designed to evaluate school systems based on 15 different indicators. The first five indicators are considered critical indicators and are measured on a pass/fail basis – if any of these five indicators are failed the district in question would automatically receive a substandard achievement rating.

Temple ISD passed all five critical indicators and scored 90 out of 100 total points – scoring perfect in all but two indicators.

The public hearing for this rating, which was initially given in September of this year, was delayed pending an appeal filed by the district with the TEA Financial Compliance Office.

“The appeal process was not to change the overall rating – it was superior two months ago and it’s superior now. It’s the highest it can be,” said Dr. Bobby Ott, superintendent for Temple ISD. “It was actually to change the number of points that we were awarded.”

The appeal was ultimately denied and no changes were made to the district’s score.

A goal for appealing the score was to set a precedent for the district’s involvement in the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ). “TEA does not really understand our involvement (in the TIRZ), and they don’t really know how to reconcile our participation with their financial accountability system,” Ott said.

After submitting an open records request with TEA, the district confirmed that less than four percent of Texas public school districts participate in a tax increment reinvestment zone.

“We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in the (Tax Increment Reinvestment) zone and it has afforded us many benefits – including a majority of funding for costs associated with our new administration building,” said Kent Boyd, assistant superintendent for finance and operations. “By appealing our score, we were simply trying to get the state to take a closer look at their formulas and ensure that districts that have the opportunity to participate in a reinvestment zone aren’t negatively impacted for doing so.”

The importance of setting this precedence came with changes on the horizon for financial accountability. Beginning in fiscal year 2019-2020, the FIRST rating system will evaluate school systems on 20 different indicators.

###