

State of Texas  
Texas Senate

P.O. Box 12068  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2068  
(512) 463-0107  
FAX (512) 463-8810



11451 KATY FREEWAY, SUITE 209  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77079  
(713) 464-0282  
FAX (713) 461-0108

**Paul Bettencourt**  
DISTRICT 7

Paul.Bettencourt@senate.texas.gov

**For Immediate Release**  
Friday, March 1, 2019

**Contact Information**  
Cristie Ingram | (512) 463-0107  
Cristie.Ingram@senate.texas.gov

**Senator Bettencourt Files Legislation To Restructure the Houston ISD Board of Trustees**  
*SB 1385 opens public dialogue about board governance by adding at-large representation*

**Austin, Texas** - Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) filed SB1385 to dramatically restructure the Houston Independent School District's Board of Trustees. HISD's current Board of Trustees is composed of nine single-member districts. SB 1385 would reduce the number of single-member districts to five and create four at-large trustee positions. This would give all HISD voters a greater say in who sits on the governing body of the largest independent school district in the state of Texas.

**"Over the years, during testimony from HISD, I have heard that some trustees won't help with schools on the 'Improvements Required' list that TEA maintains. Thus, allowing Kashmere High School to stay on the state closure list for nine years and counting!",** remarked Senator Bettencourt. **"This issue alone is enough to start a public policy debate on HISD board governance,"** he added.

Multiple media reports have documented a fractured, dysfunctional Board of Trustees. At times, board factions hurl racial epitaphs at each other during board meetings. In one notable video, a TEA employee had to physically place himself between two board trustees during a confrontation in a board workshop. The persistent dysfunction of the Board has taken the focus away from educating the district's 215,000 students and order must be restored. The school board for the state's largest school district must govern effectively and SB 1385 will make much needed reforms to restore good governance.

**"The HISD board of trustees must function. You can't have elected officials acting this way. There has to be changes for the betterment of the students, parents, staff, and community . It's not partisan. It's not ideological. It's not where you live, or what you look like, it's about pure competence to lead the largest school district in the state,"** said Bettencourt.

SB 1385 specifies this change in board governance and will require elections to the new Board of Trustees in November 2020. SB 1385 also authorizes the Houston ISD Board of Trustees, by a two-thirds vote, to adopt a resolution requiring a member of the Houston ISD Board of Trustees to resign from the board before running for another elected office.

Senator Bettencourt plans to file additional legislation in the coming days on a wide range of issues.

###