



Liveable City Board of Directors
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Strong schools are arguably a city's most valuable public asset, driving property values, attracting businesses, shaping residential growth, and preparing new generations to meet the responsibilities of adult life and the workplace; and

WHEREAS, The Austin Independent School District (AISD) now lags significantly behind other state and national districts in investing in three key components of a successful school system: good experienced classroom teachers, high quality pre-kindergarten programs to set the stage for academic success, and sufficient maintenance to protect major bond investments; and

WHEREAS, AISD currently ranks 49th of the 50 largest Texas school districts in low teacher pay despite having one of the highest costs of living in the state, a discrepancy that results in significant ongoing training costs as experienced teachers continue to leave AISD for better salaries in other districts; and

WHEREAS, AISD now falls over 40 percent short in recommended funding for routine maintenance, resulting in deteriorating campus conditions that do not protect taxpayers' bond investments or provide safe, healthy learning environments for students; and

WHEREAS, Due to the end of federal stimulus funds, AISD now faces a \$5 million shortfall for pre-K funding, despite research showing that high quality pre-K programs are an effective way to close the achievement gap for low-income students and English Language Learners, greatly increasing their likelihood of future academic and workplace success – in fact, every dollar invested in high quality early childhood programs is estimated to save taxpayers \$13 in future costs; and

WHEREAS, Local school districts must shoulder increased responsibility as state and federal education funding is cut or curtailed, with Texas education cuts now projected at roughly \$800 million in the next biennium; and

WHEREAS, Austin's critical shortcomings in the key areas of teacher pay, pre-K and facilities maintenance will only cost more to address the longer they are deferred; and

WHEREAS, A 2006 Texas law requires AISD to gain voter approval for an adjusted tax rate, which could address these immediate needs at an estimated increase of less than \$10 per month on a \$250,000 home; and

WHEREAS, During tough economic times, public investments should be carefully targeted to our most pressing needs and we believe that a strong public school system is an asset Austin cannot afford to lose; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of Liveable City urges the Board of Trustees of the Austin Independent School District to set a tax ratification election for November 2010 to provide urgently needed funding for teacher salaries, pre-K and facilities maintenance with the goal of ensuring a strong public school system for Austin.