



# UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## News Release

For Immediate Release: November 30, 2009

Contact: Veronica R. Cantu, Director of Public Relations (956) 473-6283 or (956) 324-0452 and via email at [vcantu1@uisd.net](mailto:vcantu1@uisd.net)

### **United Independent School District earns TEA's highest fiscal rating for seventh consecutive time**

For the seventh year in a row, the United Independent School District (UISD) has received Texas Education Agency's (TEA) highest fiscal rating of "superior achievement" under the First Integrity Rating System of Texas or *FIRST* program for the 2007-2008 school year. Implemented in 2001, *FIRST* is a yearly Texas public school financial accountability program in which school districts submit a financial report based on several required indicators. This year, 24 indicators were reviewed which allowed UISD to garner this achievement once again.

"Receiving this recognition for the seventh consecutive year shows that our taxpayers are taken into consideration when we are planning for the future," said UISD Superintendent Roberto J. Santos describing the rigorous indicators requested by the *FIRST* program. "While we have the great responsibility of educating our students, we also realize the responsibility we have to our taxpayers. I believe this award is proof of how we are successfully managing both," continued Santos.

Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance Laida P. Benavides agreed saying "UISD will continue to grow and provide the best educational experience for our students while also being fiscally accountable to the public," she ended.

Created by TEA in response to the Texas Legislature's request to address several public school system accountability issues, the *FIRST* program ensures school districts are held accountable for the quality of their financial management practices and can achieve improved performance, through various given ratings, in the management of their financial resources.

The system is designed to encourage Texas public schools to manage their financial resources in a more fiscally appropriate manner and to allow the maximum allocation possible for direct instructional purposes. The system also discloses the quality of local management and decision-making processes that impact the allocation of financial resources in Texas public schools.

The *FIRST* program also mandates that school districts hold a public meeting to distribute a financial management report which explains the district's rating and its performance under each of the 24 indicators for the current and prior year. This presentation was made on October 21, 2009, at the Student Activity Complex, located at 5208 Santa Claudia Lane at 6:15 p.m. See board agenda posting at: <http://www.boardbook.org/apps/bbv2/temp/45661119-CF44-A2A9-FE800473311B7D59.pdf>.

For more information about the *FIRST* program contact the Office of Public Relations at (956) 473-6283.

###