



# Texas School Coalition

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## Texas School Coalition lawsuit seeks funding for all schools *School Finance Trial Began Today in State District Court*

**AUSTIN, Texas** – Mark Trachtenberg and John Turner, attorneys with Haynes and Boone, LLP, represent 88 school districts in a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the state school finance system. They issued the following statements today after the trial of the lawsuit began:

“Today, in opening arguments, we were pleased to present our two primary claims to the court. First, school districts lack the funding they need to meet the State’s own mandates and expectations for schools. Second, our districts have to use their available taxing capacity just to try to meet State requirements, and therefore lack any real control over setting their local tax rates. The result is a *de facto* state property tax,” said Trachtenberg.

“The combination of higher academic standards, growing populations of economically disadvantaged students and significant budget cuts in the last legislative session has led us to where we are today,” said Trachtenberg.

Commenting on the state property tax claim, Turner said, “School districts are supposed to have a meaningful ability to use local tax dollars to supplement the educational programs in their communities. They should not be forced to raise local taxes merely to compensate for funding the State has failed to provide. Districts have lost the meaningful discretion to control their own local property tax rates, in violation of the Texas Constitution.”

*The Texas School Coalition represents school districts that return tax dollars raised from their local homeowners and businesses to the state. Since 1993, these revenue-contributing districts have given more than \$15 billion to the statewide system and they are now contributing more than \$1 billion annually.*

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