

**Via E-Mail,
Certified Mail &
Regular Mail**

220-905

October 23, 2025

Dr. Karen Molinar, Superintendent
Roxanne Martinez, Board President
Tobi Jackson, First Vice President
Dr. Michael Ryan, Second Vice President
Anael Luebanos, Board Secretary
Wallace Bridges, Trustee
Anne Darr, Trustee
Kevin Lynch, Trustee
Quinton Phillips, Trustee
Dr. Camille Rodriguez, Trustee
Fort Worth Independent School District
7060 Camp Bowie Blvd.
Fort Worth, Texas 76116

RE: Appointment of Board of Managers and Conservator Due to Campus Performance Ratings

Dear Superintendent Molinar and Trustees:

As you are already aware, one of the district's campuses earned its fifth consecutive unacceptable academic accountability rating following the 2022-23 school year, which requires me to either order closure of the campus or appoint a board of managers to govern the district.¹ Even though the release of preliminary ratings for the 2022-23 school year was delayed until April 17, 2025 due to litigation, my obligation under the law remains unchanged.² Additionally, my responsibility to act is not impacted by the district's closure of the campus after the 2022-23 school year since closure did not happen until after the conclusion of the school year in which the campus earned its fifth unacceptable rating. After engaging in a comprehensive analysis of district data and a thorough vetting of district systems, leadership, and student results, **I am hereby ordering the appointment of both a board of managers to govern the district and a conservator.**

¹ Texas Education Code ("TEC") §39A.111.

² A judicial ruling by the Fifteenth Court of Appeals permitted the release of 2023 A-F ratings, which were released in the [TEA Login](http://TEALogin) (TEAL) Accountability application on April 17, 2025, and were made publicly available on TXSchools.gov on April 24, 2025. Following the appeal process, ratings became final on August 19, 2025.

The timeline for the district to engage in the appeals processes allowed under the Texas Education Code (“TEC”) begins as of the date of this letter. I will appoint members of the board of managers, the conservator, and the superintendent as permitted by law after appropriate appeals processes have concluded.

Campus Performance Rating History

The Leadership Academy at Forest Oak 6th Grade campus, formerly known as Glencrest 6th Grade School, (CDCN: 220-905-064) (the “campus”) earned its fifth consecutive unacceptable accountability rating with the public release of ratings for the 2022-23 school year earlier this year. The district closed the campus in question after that school year, ending a streak of eight consecutive years since the school earned an acceptable rating. Going back further, the campus earned just a single acceptable rating since 2013.

Campus	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Leadership Academy at Forest Oak 6th Grade	F	Not Rated - SB 1365	Not Rated - Disaster	Not Rated - Disaster	F	IR	IR	IR	MS	IR	IR

Prior to implementation of the state’s current A-F accountability system in 2019, in 2016, 2017, and 2018, the Leadership Academy at Forest Oak 6th Grade campus was assigned a final academic accountability rating of *Improvement Required*, which was the lowest rating in the accountability system. These were the first, second, and third consecutive unacceptable ratings for the campus. The campus was required to develop and submit a Targeted Improvement Plan for the 2016-17 school year, develop a Campus Turnaround Plan during the 2017-18 school year, and implement the approved Campus Turnaround Plan during the 2018-19 school year.

In 2019, the campus was assigned a final academic accountability rating of *F*, which is included in the definition of an unacceptable academic rating in the state’s A-F accountability rating system and was the campus’ fourth consecutive unacceptable rating. Upon earning its fourth consecutive unacceptable rating, the campus was required to continue implementation of its previously approved Campus Turnaround Plan and submit Turnaround Implementation Plan updates to the agency.

As a result of the impact of COVID-19, the Texas Education Agency (“TEA” or “agency”) labeled all districts and campuses *Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster* for the 2019-20 school year. Under Texas law, the designation of “Not Rated” during any school year does not break the chain of unacceptable performance. In the 2020-21 school year, districts and campuses were also issued a *Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster*, although if they could demonstrate acceptable levels of performance, districts could apply to have those campuses issued an acceptable rating to break the chain of unacceptable performance. Without earning that level of performance, the designation of “Not Rated” during that school year again did not break the chain of unacceptable performance.

In 2022, the campus was assigned *Not Rated: Senate Bill 1365*. Senate Bill 1365 (87th Texas Legislature, 2021) established that districts or campuses that did not meet the performance target to earn at least an academic accountability rating of *C* were assigned *Not Rated: Senate Bill 1365*. Again, the designation of “Not Rated” during any school year did not break the campus’ chain of unacceptable performance.

Also, during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, the campus received an accountability sanction pause as part of Texas Partnership³ benefits granted to the district based on its partnership with Texas Wesleyan University Leadership Academy Network (LAN) to operate the campus. The campus still received an accountability rating each year during the sanction pause, but the ratings earned during those years did not count toward the campus’ consecutive unacceptable rating count.

In 2023, the campus earned a final academic accountability rating of *F*, marking the campus’ fifth consecutive unacceptable rating. As stated above, this rating did not become final until August 19, 2025, due to litigation that prevented the agency from releasing ratings publicly. Importantly, *during* the school year in which the district earned its fifth unacceptable rating, the district submitted a request to close the campus *at the end* of 2022-23 school year, which was granted by the agency. Since the district closed the campus after the 2022-23 school year, the rating earned during the 2022-23 school year counts toward the TEC §39A.111 consecutive-year count. The subsequent closure of the campus has no bearing on, and does not abrogate, the compulsory action the statute requires the commissioner to take. Furthermore, this closure action did not address the district’s underlying systemic deficiencies that caused the chronic underperformance.

District Performance History

During the 2022-23 school year—the year in which the campus earned its fifth consecutive unacceptable rating—60% of all of the district’s rated campuses earned either an *F* or a *D*, with 45 campuses with an *F* rating and 32 campuses with a *D* rating. That year, the district had 8 campuses with two or more consecutive years of academically unacceptable performance.

As of the 2024-25 school year, 20 campuses have been academically unacceptable for multiple years in a row, including two campuses that have earned unacceptable ratings for four consecutive years. While the total number of *D* and *F* rated campuses has improved in Fort Worth ISD in the most recent year relative to the 2022-23 school year, the number of campuses that have been academically unacceptable for consecutive years has more than doubled.

Unacceptable academic performance in a single year represents significant academic weakness – typically less than 1/3rd of students in those campuses reach grade level and less than ½ of students on those campuses demonstrate a year’s worth of academic growth. When that unacceptable performance continues for multiple years, the children in those campuses develop such significant academic gaps that they may never receive the level of education needed for them to be successful in our country. Multi-year unacceptable ratings represent a school district’s most fundamental mission failure, a complete inability to take necessary action, and the critical steps needed to educate students.

³ TEC §11.174(f).

Beyond the performance of individual campuses that are unacceptable, Fort Worth ISD has demonstrated a chronic inability to support students to learn and achieve at high levels. Across all grades and subjects, only 34% of students in Fort Worth ISD are meeting grade level. This is 16 percentage points below state average. Compared to large and demographically similar districts like Houston ISD and Dallas ISD, Fort Worth ISD students are significantly lagging behind:

<u>District</u>	<u>% of Students Economically Disadvantaged</u>	<u>% of Students Who Meet Grade Level</u>
Fort Worth ISD	83%	34%
Dallas ISD	89%	46%
Houston ISD	78%	49%

Fort Worth ISD's low level of student achievement is a very long-standing issue, predating the COVID-19 disruptions. During the 2018-19 school year, only 35% of Fort Worth ISD students met grade level.

In light of the district's current and historic data, district level intervention is needed to improve overall performance for the students of Fort Worth ISD.

Appointment of Board of Managers

On May 5, 2025, after the release of preliminary 2023 ratings, I notified the district that if the unacceptable 2023 preliminary academic accountability rating assigned to the Leadership Academy at Forest Oak 6th Grade campus became a final rating, I would be required to order the appointment of a board of managers to govern the district or closure of the campus. The district appealed the preliminary performance rating assigned to the campus and, on August 11, 2025, the district was notified that its appeal was denied. Thus, the campus received a final 2023 academic performance rating of *F* on August 19, 2025, the fifth consecutive unacceptable performance rating.

Under TEC §39A.111, once any campus in a district earns five consecutive years of unacceptable academic accountability ratings, the district triggers TEC §39A.111, which states:

CONTINUED UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE RATING. If a campus is considered to have an unacceptable performance rating for five consecutive school years, the commissioner, subject to Section 39A.112, shall order:

- (1) appointment of a board of managers to govern the school district as provided by Section 39A.202; or
- (2) closure of the campus.

Commissioner action under this section of the TEC is compulsory; the commissioner does not have discretion whether to act under this provision. Therefore, I am required to take action according to

TEC §39A.111, and as stated above, I am ordering the appointment of a board of managers to lead the district.

I do not make this decision lightly. As a former elected school board member myself, I understand the importance and impact local school board members can have on the quality of schools in their districts. Ultimately, the Fort Worth ISD school board has, collectively, through action and inaction over many years, failed the students of Fort Worth ISD. The inability of the district to implement effective changes to improve the performance of students in the district or at the campus necessitates the interventions announced by this letter. Furthermore, the interventions are in the public interest as the failure of governance is demonstrated by the continual academic deficiencies at the campus and across the district.

The members of the board of managers will be named at a future date. They will consist of Fort Worth community members who are committed to governing effectively to support positive change for the students of the district. Effective today, I am directing agency staff to begin the process of identifying prospective members of the community who are committed to improving the district through serving on the board of managers. Interested community members can find more information and apply to serve on the board of managers, by visiting the Texas Education Agency's website at www.tea.texas.gov/board-of-managers. Board of manager candidates will be required to complete an application, attend Lone Star Governance training, and participate in virtual and observational interviews.

Superintendent Appointment

State law also requires that I appoint a superintendent.⁴ I will announce my decision on the superintendent appointment in future correspondence, after completing a review of prospective superintendent candidates, with such review including the district's current superintendent as a candidate.

Conservator Appointment

I am appointing a conservator to the district. The conservator will have all authority permitted under Texas law and will ensure the district supports its low-performing campuses and implements the district's turnaround plans.⁵ I will name the conservator at a future date.

Due Process Procedures

The district is entitled to due process as described in 19 TAC §157.1121. The timelines for all such procedures begin as of the date of this letter. To that end, the district has a right to participate in an informal review regarding the appointment of both the board of managers and the conservator.⁶ Please be advised that the informal review has been scheduled for **October 30, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.**

⁴ TEC §39A.202.

⁵ TEC §§39A.002(7), 39A.051(a), 39A.102(b), 39A.102(b-1); and 19 Texas Administrative Code ("TAC") §§97.1064(m), 97.1065(c), 97.1073(c).

⁶ TAC §157.1121(4).

This review will be presided over by the commissioner of education and serves as an opportunity for the district to present any information or supporting documentation it desires for the commissioner to consider in his decision making related to the board of managers and conservator. All such information and documentation should be submitted to TEA no later than **October 27, 2025**.

The district is not required to attend the review; however, if the district chooses not to attend, the review will proceed, and a final decision will be made based upon the documentation that was submitted by the district.

The informal review is scheduled to take place in person as follows:

Location: William B. Travis Building
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701
Commissioner's Conference Room, 4th Floor

Date: **Thursday, October 30, 2025**

Time: **4:00 p.m.**

Please note the following:

- The review will be scheduled not to exceed 60 minutes.
- Documentation for consideration will be limited to that which was submitted by the district no later than **October 27, 2025**.
- The scope of the review is limited to the appointment of the board of managers and conservator.
- No later than **October 27, 2025**, please notify the agency of the district representatives who will attend the informal review. The notice should include names and roles of representatives and should note who will present information or engage in discussions and questioning during the review. It is requested that attendees representing the district not exceed six individuals. If attendees include members of a body covered by the Texas Open Meetings Act, the number of attendees present cannot create a quorum of the body.
- The review is a closed proceeding and will not be open to the public or media.
- The district must notify the Division of Enforcement Coordination no later than **October 27, 2025** if accommodations or equipment are needed and specify the type of accommodation or equipment needed (e.g., sign language interpreters, projector, laptop, etc.)
- The review will not constitute a formal administrative hearing, and the Rules of Evidence will not apply to the review.

All responses, notices, and requests related to the content of this letter must be sent to:

Division of Enforcement Coordination
Texas Education Agency
EnforcementCoordination@tea.texas.gov

If, following the informal review of the assignment of a conservator and board of managers, the commissioner, or his designee, decides to move forward with the assignment of a conservator and board of managers, the district will have an opportunity to file a petition for review with the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH).⁷

During the pendency of the review process, the board of trustees and superintendent are expected to continue to follow state laws and rules and operate the district in the best interest of the students to promote student achievement and improve student outcomes.

Compliance and Cooperation

Notwithstanding anything contained in this letter, the agency reserves the right to implement all available interventions and sanctions under TEC, Chapters 39, 39A, and 19 TAC Chapter 97 to address the current, or any future, deficiencies identified for the campuses and district.

Throughout the process outlined in this letter, it is my sincere desire that all parties work together in a cooperative and productive manner with a focus on the district's students. Any questions regarding this correspondence may be addressed to the Division of Enforcement Coordination at (512) 463-5899 or EnforcementCoordination@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Morath', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education

MM/lm

⁷ TEC §39A.301.