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A dark day for Texas school children—

## TEXAS SUPREME COURT SAYS CURRENT SCHOOL FINANCE SYSTEM MEETS CONSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

**AUSTIN** – The Texas Supreme Court today upheld the constitutionality of the state's school finance system, overruling a challenge brought by over 600 Texas school districts, and ending the longest legal battle over school finance in state history.

The group of 88 school districts, known collectively as the Calhoun County ISD Plaintiffs in the lawsuit, were represented by Mark Trachtenberg and John Turner, partners with Haynes and Boone, LLP, who expressed disappointment at the Court's ruling.

"This decision represents a dark day for Texas school children, especially given the Legislature's repeated failure to adequately fund our schools," Mr. Trachtenberg said. "Given the importance of education in the 21st Century economy, Texas simply cannot afford to be bringing up the rear among the states in financial support of public education."

Added Mr. Turner: "We believe the trial court's conclusion was correct: schools do not have the resources—or the local control over their tax rates—to meet the standards set forth in the Texas Constitution. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court justices did not agree. At this point, our districts can only hope that the Legislature will reverse course on its own, and make the changes needed to improve our system."

The lawsuit began in 2011, after the Legislature cut \$5.4 billion in public education funding from the state budget, and at the same time that the state's more rigorous student performance standards were being implemented.

In its 100-page order, the Supreme Court reversed a trial court's 2014 ruling that the school finance system violated several provisions of the Texas Constitution.

Prior to today's ruling, the Supreme Court, in lawsuits dating back five decades, had consistently ruled in favor of Texas public schools in their on-going challenges to achieve funding that is in compliance with provisions of the state 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 provided more than \$20 billion to the statewide school finance system, and they are now contributing about \$1.5 billion annually.