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HFT on Board's Approval of 'District of Innovation' Plan

HOUSTON—Statement by Houston Federation of Teachers President Jackie Anderson on the state-appointed Houston school board's vote today approving Superintendent Mike Miles' 'District of Innovation' plan for the Houston Independent School District:

“The District of Innovation plan is the latest sinister effort by Superintendent Mike Miles and his acolytes on the school board to derail and destroy the education of Houston students. Evidence of teacher expertise and knowledge apparently doesn't matter much to the board, since this plan allows HISD to hire uncertified teachers without a waiver and conceal that from families. The secrecy shows that Miles realizes parents would not approve of this. The plan also allows class sizes to increase for elementary grades, when smaller class sizes are crucial for optimum learning; permits schools to dispense with a campus behavior coordinator, as if chronic misbehavior doesn't impede instruction or safety; and allows for a custom teacher evaluation system with no teacher input, setting up for a punitive, subjective system.

“The District of Innovation plan is only innovative in that no other school district interested in investing in real solutions, not destroying public education, would even consider these provisions. This plan will last for five years, the entire length of time a child attends elementary school—the formative years when everything after depends on that foundation.

“Approval of this plan is a misuse of the public trust given to people responsible for the education and future of our children.”

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