



EDUCATE TEXAS

a public-private initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EDUCATE TEXAS DELEGATION CALLS LEARNING TOUR TO STUDY SINGAPORE'S WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION SYSTEM "A MAJOR SUCCESS"

Delegation of 37 education, business and philanthropic leaders bring back ideas to Texas after firsthand look at the policies, best practices that have made Singapore an "educational powerhouse"

DALLAS (Oct. 28, 2016) – Educate Texas, through a privately funded grant, recently hosted a delegation of Texas leaders on a learning tour to Singapore, which is regarded as one of the best educational systems in the world. The goal of the week-long excursion was for these Texans to examine and carry back the innovative best practices and ideas to continue to lead, develop and improve Texas' public education system.

"We were fortunate to assemble a stellar group of Texas leaders who were able to learn about the drivers and environment that have led to Singapore's impressive academic gains over the past 50 years," said George Tang, managing director of Educate Texas. "Through conversations and visits with leaders throughout Singapore's educational system, we were impressed by their strategic and purposeful design of their systems to support the country's economic growth."

The Texas team – comprised of 37 leaders representing K-12, higher-ed, business and philanthropic communities from across the state – gained firsthand knowledge and experience into the design, structure and resources that have led to the 274-mile country's evolution into an educational powerhouse. (See list below of attendees.)

The team's agenda included meeting with Singapore's Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the public and higher education systems, and the National Institute for Education, the nation's teacher-preparation and professional-development organization. Thanks to generous funding provided by Charles Butt to cover the tour expenses, the group also conducted numerous site visits to schools, colleges and programs across the country.

The Texas delegation – represented by regional teams from Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley – met throughout the trip to discuss and explore their observations. Key highlights included:

- Since its independence in 1965, the Singapore government recognized that human capital is its only natural resource. As a result, there has been an underlying sense of urgency to ensure its systems enable all citizens contribute to their country's growth.
- There was an intentional focus to design and implement Singapore's education system, explicitly aligning and linking it to the nation's economic-development interests. Further, Singapore leaders placed a strong emphasis on recognizing and honoring the importance of jobs at all skill levels and supporting students to obtain the necessary education – whether it be a university degree, two-year associate degree or technical education.
- The education sector, in particular its teachers and principals, is recognized as the foundation for the country's refining prosperity. As such, only the top 30% of secondary-school graduates are considered to become teachers, and only 1 in 8 who apply are accepted. These carefully vetted individuals are regarded as nation builders.



EDUCATE TEXAS

a public-private initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas

- A rigorous teacher-preparation program has been established to ensure they are equipped with the understanding, skills and knowledge to be successful with the new generation of students.
- Once they enter the system, teachers are fully supported through professional evaluations, targeted development programs and a highly competitive compensation structure.
- Additionally, there's also a pipeline to identify and develop principals through the use of extensive, ongoing professional-development programs.

Within the next several months, Educate Texas, will seek input from the learning-tour participants to compile a report with additional observations, highlights and strategies to implement. This document will be shared with Texas educators, elected officials and members of the Legislature, business leaders and the philanthropic community.

“Visiting Singapore with the Educate Texas delegation opened my eyes to an educational approach that taps into each student’s unique gifts,” said Ed Escudero, president & CEO of High Desert Capital. “But the most memorable interactions, in my opinion, were the conversations and idea exchanges that sprang organically after each presentation. Having the time and opportunity for deeper discussions about our individual educational challenges and opportunities provided the greatest enrichment.”

Those attending the learning tour included the following:

- Representing Dallas were Orlando Riddick, superintendent of Cedar Hill ISD; Todd Williams, executive director of Commit!; John Gasko, dean of the School of Education at the University of North Texas at Dallas, and Ivan Duran, deputy superintendent of Dallas ISD.
- Representing Houston were HD Chambers, superintendent of the Alief ISD; Peter Beard, senior vice president of Regional Workforce Development, Greater Houston Partnership; Lisa Hall, vice president for programs, Houston Endowment; and Joe Arnold, government affairs manager of BASF.
- Representing Austin were Dr. Paul Cruz, superintendent of Austin ISD; Dr. Steve Flores, superintendent of Round Rock ISD; Dr. Richard Rhodes, president & CEO of Austin Community College; Mark Williams, trustee of Austin Community College; Drew Scheberle, senior vice president of the Austin Chamber of Commerce; and Tamara Atkinson, deputy executive director of Workforce Solutions Capital Area.
- Representing San Antonio were Eddie Aldrete, senior vice president of IBC Bank; David Crouch, vice president of manufacturing for Toyota; Margo DelliCarpini, dean of the College of Education at The University of Texas at San Antonio; Vanessa Lacoss Hurd, CEO of The DoSeum; and Kate Rogers, vice president of communications and health promotion at HEB.
- Representing El Paso were Dr. William Serrata, president of El Paso Community College; Ed Escudero, president & CEO of High Desert Capital; and Ivette Savina, assistant vice president for outreach programs & student access at The University of Texas at El Paso.
- Representing the Rio Grande Valley were Art Cavazos, superintendent of the Harlingen ISD; Stella Garcia, provost of the Texas State Technical College, Harlingen Campus; Dr. Nolan Perez, Harlingen physician; Dr. Luzelma Canales, executive director, Rio Grande Valley Focus; and Patty McHatton, dean of the College of Education at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.
- Representing Laredo was Memo Trevino, president & CEO of Southern Distributing.



EDUCATE TEXAS

a public-private initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas

- Other team members included George Tang, managing director at Educate Texas; J. Chris Coxon, managing director of programs at Educate Texas; Cody Huie, grants manager at Raise Your Hand Texas; Alison Badgett of Raise Your Hand Texas; Lindsay Whorton of Boston Consulting Group; and Kaycee Gerhart, the tour facilitator.

ABOUT EDUCATE TEXAS

The Educate Texas public-private partnership includes The Texas Education Agency; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; Texas Workforce Commission; Office of the Governor; Texas Legislature; Communities Foundation of Texas; Ford Foundation; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Greater Texas Foundation; The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust; Houston Endowment; IBM; JP Morgan Chase, The Kresge Foundation; Lumina Foundation; The Meadows Foundation; TG Texas Guaranteed; and Texas Instruments Foundation. For more information, please visit EdTX.org.

CONTACT:

Becky Mayad

becky@mayadpr.com

214-352-1881 work

214-697-7745 cell