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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOP, Texas Appleseed Urge DISD to Change Expensive, Ineffective Approaches to Student Discipline

*Funding One Seat in DISD's Elementary DAEP Costs More Than an Experienced
Teacher's Annual Salary – According to Appleseed Cost Study Released Today*

[LINK TO REPORT](#)

Dallas, TX – Community members from [Texas Organizing Project \(TOP\)](#) and public interest law center [Texas Appleseed](#) today challenged financially strapped Dallas ISD to rethink its spending on a “failed” approach to student discipline that removed more than 25,000 students from their regular classroom in 2010-11—costing taxpayers **\$11.3 million** and putting kids at greater risk of dropout and justice system involvement.

“Instead of firing teachers and closing schools, Dallas ISD should save money by changing their unfair discipline policies that have led to suspensions of children for wearing the wrong colored jacket to school,” said TOP member Catina Smith.

“Providing just one seat in the Elementary DAEP costs Dallas ISD *almost \$58,000* a year, which is more than the annual salary of a teacher with 10 to 20 years’ experience. There are better uses for the *more than \$1 million* the district spends each year to operate its Elementary DAEP,” said Durrel Douglas, TOP Communications Coordinator.

In releasing the Dallas “cost of discipline” study, Texas Appleseed Deputy Director Deborah Fowler pointed out that the \$11.3 million price tag is “conservative”—with the district self-reporting spending another \$20.3 million on campus security in 2010-11. “Discretionary removal of students from school for relatively minor misbehavior is not only expensive—it’s very ineffective,” Fowler said.

“Last year’s large-scale, Texas-based study by the Council of State Governments found that an over-reliance on suspending and expelling students does *not make schools safer*, targets minority and special education students disproportionately, and only increases poor outcomes,” Fowler said. Instead, Texas Appleseed and TOP are recommending that Dallas ISD:

➤ **Close the Elementary DAEP in Dallas ISD.**

Dallas should commit to keeping its youngest students on their home campuses. About 300 elementary children were sent to the Elementary DAEP during the 2010-11 school year.

➤ **Limit out-of-school suspension (OSS) to those students who pose a significant risk to the safety of the school community.**

Dallas ISD made 22,827 *referrals to OSS* in 2010-11 and, as a result, lost *about \$2 million* in state reimbursement for weighted Average Daily Attendance (conservative estimate based on referrals resulting in 1.5 missed days of school). Only *eight* of these OSS referrals were removals mandated by the Texas Education Code. Almost all students were suspended from school at the *discretion of school administrators* for violating the Student Code of Conduct, which usually does not pose a safety risk.

➤ **Require campuses with large numbers of disciplinary referrals to implement school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS).**

PBIS trains whole campuses to positively reinforce good student behavior. Implemented in Austin ISD, Amarillo ISD, many school districts across the country, PBIS has been shown to reduce disciplinary referrals, improve school climate, and boost student and teacher morale.

➤ **Appoint a Task Force to review and recommend improvements to Dallas ISD’s approach to student discipline.**

“The community wants to work with Dallas ISD to prepare our students for college and careers, not for dropout and the justice system,” said Douglas. TOP is inviting parents and community members to find out more by attending a **Parent Resource Fair and Town Hall** on Saturday, March 31, from 1-4 p.m. at The Way, the Truth and the Life Christian Church in Oak Cliff, 1702 S. Denley Drive. For more

information, contact Allison Brim, Dallas County Organizing Director, (214) 455-9115,
abrim@organizetexas.org.

For more information about Texas Appleseed's "cost of discipline" study, contact Deborah Fowler,
dfowler@texasappleseed.net, (512) 473-2800 x 105 or Kathryn Freeman, Staff Attorney,
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