

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Scott Milder
FOTPS President
SHW Group Architects

Charlene Fern
FOTPS Vice President
Charlie Fern Ink

Dyan House
FOTPS Secretary
Visualeyes Communications

Cindy Baranowski
FOTPS Treasurer
Bank of America

Raana Burnazian
FOTPS Development

Kyann McMillie
2004 Texas Teacher of the Year

Linda Rutherford
Southwest Airlines

Eve Willis
Camelot Communications

ADVISORY BOARD

Ray Chan
WebXess, Inc.

Eddie Deen
Eddie Deen & Co. Catering

Laurence Payne
Houston Habitat for Humanity

Derek Farley
PR Newswire

Jerry Hudson, Ed.D
Texas Tech University

Gary Keep, AIA
SHW Group Architects

Jack Lowe
TDIndustries

Bob Montgomery
Southwest Airlines

Shirley Neeley, Ed.D
Texas Commission of Education

Pat Rosenberg
Texas Partners in Education & Communities in Schools-Houston

David Sords
Coca-Cola Bottling Company

Annell Todd
Texas School Business

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 2005

CONTACT: Scott Milder
(888) 749-1019

TEXANS NAME “LACK OF FUNDING” AS LARGEST PROBLEM FACING TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, POLL SHOWS

TEXAS – A statewide random-sample telephone poll reveals that Texans believe “lack of funding” (named by 30% of respondents) is the most significant problem facing Texas public schools. Placing a distant 2nd at 16 percent was student behavior/discipline, followed by overcrowding (7%), quality of teachers (5%), and the lack of positive parental influence (5%).

The poll was commissioned by *Friends of Texas Public Schools* (www.fotps.org) and for the purposes of objectivity conducted by The Institute of Communications Research in the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech University, sponsored by Southwest Airlines, a charter sponsor of *Friends*. The poll was conducted in December and January with 1007 respondents and a 3% margin of error.

“Our goal was very simply to determine what Texans think about their public schools and what they believe are their most significant challenges,” said Scott Milder, President and CEO of *Friends*. A non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to boosting the public’s confidence in their Texas public schools, *Friends* plans to tell the success stories of public schools in Texas.

“We believe that public school educators are performing remarkably well in spite of the many challenges they face,” Milder said. “Yet they get very little if any credit for their work. People should know that good things are happening in their schools. We need to focus more on what schools do right and help them improve where they might be struggling. Beating them over the heads with their problems (which pale in comparison to their successes) is a ridiculous strategy for motivating improvement.”

The poll also shows the following:

- 80 percent gave the public schools in Texas a grade of A, B or C;
- 88 percent of those with children gave Texas schools a grade of A, B or C;
- 68 percent gave U.S. public schools a grade of A, B or C;
- 79 percent said the quality of education is better or the same as five years ago;
- 48 percent indicated that public schools are worse than private schools;
- 86 percent gave the quality of teachers a grade of A, B or C;
- 49 percent indicated that districts have a problem getting good teachers;
- 54 percent indicated that districts have a problem keeping good teachers;
- 36 percent indicated the school funding debate was having a negative effect on the quality of education in our public schools; and
- 54 percent indicated that there were too many children in the classrooms.

Texas Tech’s Institute for Communications Research provides comprehensive survey research services to the university and clients in public and private sectors. Contact Joel West or Dr. Jerry Hudson at (806) 742-3385 for more information.

Download a copy of the complete report at www.fotps.org.

####