

Via
E-Mail

128-903
2017-2018

August 17, 2017

Dr. James Barron, Superintendent
Mr. Robert Molina, Board President
Runge Independent School District
PO Box 619
Runge, TX 78151

Re: Potential Actions Following the Completion of the 2017-2018 School Year

Dear Dr. Barron and Mr. Molina:

The purpose of this correspondence is to notify Runge Independent School District ("RISD" or "district") of the action that I may be required to order at some point at least one year from now. As you are aware, during the 84th legislative session, Texas Education Code (TEC) §39.107 was amended, with an effective date of June 19, 2015. The amendments included provisions related to campus turnaround plans for low performing campuses, as well as required consequences for campuses that continue to receive unacceptable performance ratings subsequent to the submission of a campus turnaround plan. Specifically, TEC §39.107(e) mandates that if a campus is considered to have an unacceptable performance rating for three consecutive school years after the campus is ordered to submit a turnaround plan, the commissioner of education must order either the appointment of a board of managers to govern the district as provided by TEC §39.112(b) or closure of the campus. The statute provides no discretion; I must order either campus closure or the appointment of a board of managers.

As you are aware, on August 15, 2017, the Texas Education Agency (TEA or Agency) issued preliminary 2017 academic accountability ratings indicating that RISD has a total of one campus with unacceptable performance ratings, of which the following campus within the district has received four (4) or more consecutive unacceptable academic accountability ratings:¹

- Runge Elementary School (5 years of unacceptable performance ratings)

If by the conclusion of the 2017-2018 school year the campus has received five or more consecutive unacceptable performance ratings, pursuant to TEC §§39.107(e) and 39.1071(b), I will be required to order either the appointment of a board of managers to govern the district as provided by TEC §39.112(b) or closure of the campus. In accordance with TEC §39.107(e-2) and 19 TAC §97.1065(c), timely submission of a valid petition by the parents of a majority of students enrolled at the campus may direct which of those actions should be taken.

¹ If the district has decided to close a campus but has not yet provided official notification to TEA, that campus would not be subject to an order of closure pursuant to TEC §39.107(e). It is advised that any campus closures be officially communicated to TEA as soon as possible.

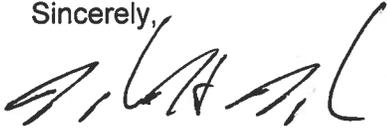
It is my sincere desire that the district will remedy any deficiencies so that the Agency actions described in this notification will not be necessary.

The appointment of the conservator previously assigned to the district will remain in place and will not be impacted at this time. In addition to the role initially identified for Velia Minjarez, her role will now include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Overseeing the operations of the district to ensure the district complies with state and federal law;
- Attending board meetings, including executive session, and directing the board as necessary;
- Ensuring that a comprehensive needs assessment of the district is performed;
- Ensuring that an evaluation of the efficacy of the district's resource allocation is performed; and
- Overseeing central office improvements that support instructional delivery at the campuses.

Any questions regarding this notification may be addressed to the Division of School Improvement at (512) 463-5226 or Sldivision@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,



Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education

MM/sh

cc: Charlotte Baker, Executive Director, Region III, Education Service Center
Gene Acuña, Director, Communications, TEA
Kara Belew, Deputy Commissioner of Finance, TEA
Von Byer, General Counsel, TEA
A.J. Crabill, Deputy Commissioner of Governance, TEA
Cory Green, Associate Commissioner, Grants and Federal Fiscal Compliance, TEA
Christopher Jones, Senior Legal Counsel, TEA
Leo Lopez, Associate Commissioner/Chief School Finance Officer, TEA
C. Lizette Ridgeway, Director, School Improvement, TEA
Ron Rowell, Director, School Governance, TEA
Laura Holder, Principal, Runge Elementary School
Velia Minjarez, Conservator