
THE HOLDSWORTH CENTER INVITES 26 PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS TEXAS TO APPLY FOR PREMIER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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The Holdsworth Center, a new leadership institute based in Austin, has invited 26 public school districts from across Texas to apply for its first program beginning in June. Founded by H-E-B Chairman and CEO Charles Butt, the Holdsworth Center has the goal of supporting and developing public school leaders in order to improve, over time, the quality of education offered to every child in every classroom in Texas.

The districts are:

- Aldine ISD – Houston, TX
- Alief ISD – Houston, TX
- Arlington ISD – Arlington, TX
- Austin ISD – Austin, TX
- Brownsville ISD – Brownsville, TX
- Cedar Hill ISD – Cedar Hill, TX
- El Paso ISD – El Paso, TX
- Fort Worth ISD – Fort Worth, TX
- Frenship ISD – Wolfforth, TX
- Grand Prairie ISD – Grand Prairie, TX
- Grapevine-Colleyville ISD – Grapevine, TX
- Harlingen CISD – Harlingen, TX
- Killeen ISD – Killeen, TX
- Klein ISD – Klein, TX
- Lamar CISD – Rosenberg, TX
- Laredo ISD – Laredo, TX
- Lubbock ISD – Lubbock, TX
- Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD – Pharr, TX
- Round Rock ISD – Round Rock, TX
- San Antonio ISD – San Antonio, TX

- Socorro ISD – El Paso, TX
- Southwest ISD – San Antonio, TX
- Spring Branch ISD – Houston, TX
- Temple ISD – Temple, TX
- Tyler ISD – Tyler, TX
- Victoria ISD – Victoria, TX

Of those who apply, six will be chosen to be part of the inaugural class beginning this summer. The first cohort is by invitation only, but in subsequent years the application process will be open to all districts. Strong applicants will demonstrate an existing commitment to human capital and talent development and alignment of vision among the superintendent, key cabinet members (central office staff) and the Board of Trustees.

“While we hope that over time nearly every district in Texas will benefit from this program in some way, we wanted to kick off the first cohort by inviting a group of folks who we know will be eager for the opportunity and committed to the process,” said Kate Rogers, Acting Executive Vice President of the Holdsworth Center. “This group of districts all have dynamic leaders at the helm and boards who are supportive and open to making improvements that will better serve students.”

Until a permanent site is identified and the academic campus, which will become home to Holdsworth is complete, the program will rotate among conference centers located near the selected districts to give superintendents an opportunity to visit and learn from each other, as well as world-class faculty from around the country.

The Holdsworth Center will work with districts over a 5-year period to empower individual leaders — including superintendents, principals and key administrators — to reach their fullest potential. The Center staff and faculty will also assist districts in establishing a common vision and roadmap for identifying, cultivating, training and supporting future leaders.

Through a unique set of experiences including international travel, exposure to the best leadership experts in the country, facilitated lectures with renowned faculty and group discussion, participants at The Holdsworth Center will explore their personal leadership in a setting that promotes reflection, thought and dialogue. Classes and team projects will focus on critical topics such as change management, effective teaming, board relations and best practices in talent management, to name a few.

A staunch advocate for public education, Mr. Butt founded The Holdsworth Center to create sustainable improvement in Texas schools. The Center is named after Mr. Butt's mother, Mary Elizabeth Holdsworth Butt, an educator, philanthropist and lifelong leader for social justice.

The Holdsworth Center will operate as a non-profit organization and Mr. Butt has pledged to invest more than \$100 million in its creation. The Center is governed by a 17-member board chaired by Dr. Ruth Simmons, who served as president of Smith College from 1995 to 2001 and as president of Brown University from 2001 to 2012.

Texas's 1,204 independent school districts serve approximately 5.3 million students, amounting to 10 percent of children in the entire nation.

According to a 2010 Rainwater Leadership Alliance Report, to dramatically improve our nation's public schools, we must focus on the essential role of school leaders. While teacher quality is the single biggest factor influencing student achievement, strong principals are key to teacher development and retention. In fact, principals account for 25 percent—and teachers 33 percent—of a school's total impact on student achievement.

Similarly, a 2010 study by the Wallace Foundation found that “leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership.”

School leadership is crucial because making a significant impact on student achievement requires the cooperation of various stakeholders, including parents, teachers and policy makers.

“Educators in leadership positions are uniquely well positioned to ensure the necessary synergy,” the study concluded.