



# LEANDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**SB 296** – relating to the mitigation of the impact of residential development in public school districts.

Leander ISD is located just northwest of Austin, Texas. Leander ISD encompasses nearly 200 square miles and our enrollment is currently just over 32,000 students. We are projected to grow to just over 53,000 students in 2020.

Leander ISD has acquired 21 elementary school sites over the last 15 years. Over those 15 years, Leander ISD has learned that planning up front with the developers and cities/counties on location of elementary schools can lessen the impact on a subdivision and community. By proper planning of a useable school site, this can help reduce the traffic impact to the neighborhood and allow the school district to acquire the land at a more reasonable cost. In addition, it can help reduce the operating cost for the school district by providing a safe walk zone for the neighborhood to that elementary school.

When a school district is not involved in the upfront discussions of a residential development, it will usually have a negative impact on the area around the school location and the land will end up costing the school district (tax payers) more money. Some examples of what happens when the ISD is not involved in the upfront discussions of a residential development:

- 1 Leander ISD has had to put a elementary school site fronting a major roadway due to the fact there was not any other choice on where to locate the elementary school as the development had just about built out. If Leander ISD were included in the upfront discussions concerning a useable school site, Leander ISD and the city would never have put the school in that location due to the major roadway fronting the school.
- 2 Another example was where a development was nearly fully developed and had final platted the last section of homes. Our demographics indicated a need for a school in this vicinity and the school district ended up paying by the square foot for the land instead of by the per acre price, much more money, due to buying a platted lots.

Leander ISD has seen a tremendous amount of student growth and we are projected to continue growing. SB 296 has the capability to save tax payers money on the cost of the land and provide for a much better planned community by ensuring communications between the ISD's and developers take place up front. Mandating this discussion as part of the planning process can only lead to improved school location decisions.