

April 22, 2020

Commissioner Mike Morath
Texas Education Agency
17-1 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Commissioner, Morath,

I am writing to you as a concerned tax payor in Austin Independent School District. It has come to my attention that are considering opening BASIS Charter Schools in Austin in the Crestview neighborhood.

I **oppose** the opening of BASIS Charter Schools in Austin for the following reasons:

- 1. There is no need for a new charter school in the Crestview neighborhood, as there are high performing Austin ISD elementary schools near the proposed BASIS location.**
The schools within one mile of the BASIS location are Wooten Elementary rated B on state accountability, and Brentwood Elementary is rated A on state accountability. Five additional AISD elementary schools are 2.5 mile away and carry the following accountability ratings: Reilly elementary rated A, TA Brown elementary rated C, Gullett Elementary rated B, Pillow elementary rated C, and Padron Elementary rated B.
- 2. BASIS does not serve students who are representative of students in this Austin neighborhood.**
BASIS serves a significantly disproportionate percentage of certain student populations compared to the percentage served by Austin elementary schools that are near the proposed BASIS campus.

Students served at:

BASIS Charter Schools in San Antonio

Special Education: 1.8%

Economically Disadvantaged: 5.5%

English Language Learners: 14.2%

At-Risk: 22.3%

Nearby Austin ISD Schools (to proposed BASIS location in Austin)

Special Education: Up to 17%

Economically Disadvantaged: Up to 97.1%

English Language Learners: Up to 82.9%

At-Risk: Up to 88.6%

3. BASIS Charter schools will drain funding from Austin ISD schools and harm all Austin students.

Austin ISD estimates that the district will lose an estimated \$21.4 million in revenue over ten years if the BASIS schools open, and recapture payments will increase by \$2.7 million in year 6 after BASIS opens. This loss of revenue to the district will have an impact on all Austin students.

Let's keep taxpayer dollars in Texas and invest in Texas schools already in place and serving the community.

4. BASIS is managed by an Arizona-based, for-profit charter management organization.

The school's founders have received an estimated \$17.5 million from Texas taxpayers over the last seven years from the 3 schools that Basis currently operates in San Antonio.

5. Texas faces a dire budget situation.

All available state funds should be used to support existing public schools to meet current challenges and ensure that Texas can keep the promises made in HB 3, from the last legislative session. Rather than paying for a new charter school that is not needed and has not been requested by Austin parents, Texas should focus state dollars where they are needed most.

6. Finally, the only thing “public” about BASIS is that they receive public tax dollars.

BASIS, unlike traditional public schools, can control the number of students they have, control the type of students they have (see the statistics above) and do not have to follow many of the transparency laws on spending that traditional schools must follow. BASIS has been known to “cherry pick” students, despite open-enrollment laws. Their management company can make profits hidden from the public that they serve. Their schools are managed by a management company in Arizona, not the democratically elected Austin ISD school board.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

M. Theresa Valls Treviño
Austin Resident and Austin ISD tax payer