RICE CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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RICE CISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RICE CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT RESOLUTION

Resolution Affirming Our Constitutional and Legal Right to Choose to Pray in School

WHEREAS, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects students' religious freedom in public school. Specifically, the Establishment Clause ensures that the government cannot favor any particular religious belief or religion over non-belief, and the Free Exercise Clause ensures that individuals have the right to practice their religious beliefs, free from government interference; and

WHEREAS, Article I, § 6 of the Texas Constitution guarantees the "separation of church and state" and embodies the principle that "religion is a matter of private conscience with which the state . . . is forbidden to interfere." Watts v. Watts, 563 S.W.2d 314, 317 (Tex. Civ. App. 1978), writ refused NRE (July 5, 1978), disapp'd on other grounds by Jones v. Cable, 626 S.W.2d 734 (Tex. 1981); and

WHEREAS, the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act, Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code § 110.003, prohibits school districts and other government entities from "substantially burden[ing] a person's free exercise of religion"; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Education Code § 25.901 affirms that "[a] public school student has an absolute right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt the instructional or other activities of the school. A person may not require or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity"; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Education Code § 25.082(d) establishes a school district's ability to institute a period of silence during which students may choose to "reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract another student";

Board of Education:

Jason Pausewang, President Joe Romo, Vice President Bridget Belman, Secretary

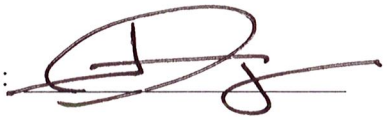
Bill Ishee Nicole Owers Jennifer Rodgers Chriss Schiurring

NOW, LET IT BE HEREBY RESOLVED

THAT the **Rice CISD Board of Trustees** is committed to cultivating and maintaining a respectful school environment for students and teachers of any or no religious background; and

THAT the **Rice CISD Board of Trustees**, in consideration of the laws and policies recited above, votes against a resolution to adopt a state-organized prayer policy for our district, as contemplated by S.B. 11, 89th Legislature, codified at Texas Education Code § 25.0823.

PRESENTED AND APPROVED: 23 Feb 2026

Rice CISD Board President Signature: 

Rice CISD Board Secretary Signature: 