

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE May 22, 2026

Honorable Members of the City Council Economic Development Committee: Jesse
TO Moreno (Chair), Paul Ridley (Vice Chair), Lorie Blair, Laura Cadena, Zarin Gracey, Bill
Roth, Chad West

SUBJECT Potential School Construction and Zoning Review Updates

This memo is to solicit initial feedback from committee members regarding a potential City Code amendment related to school uses.

This discussion follows the approval of DISD's \$6.2 billion bond election by voters on May 2, 2026. The bond program includes construction of new schools, campus replacements, facility modernization, safety improvements, and related infrastructure investments. To help facilitate and expedite this work, DISD inquired about a possible Code change to allow school by right in certain zoning districts.

While the request originated from discussions related to DISD projects, any potential zoning amendments involving schools and educational uses would need to be evaluated more broadly and would be applied consistently across similarly situated educational institutions including public schools, charter schools, private schools, and colleges.

Current Dallas Code Requirements

Under the Dallas Development Code, public schools are generally permitted by right in nonresidential zoning districts but require a Specific Use Permit (SUP) in residential zoning districts. Private schools currently require a Specific Use Permit in both residential and nonresidential zoning districts.

In response to DISD's inquiry, Planning and Development Department (PDD) staff is reviewing the existing zoning framework applicable to schools and educational uses, including:

- Whether schools should be permitted by right in certain zoning districts.
- Whether distinctions between public schools and private schools remain appropriate.
- Traffic, parking, loading, neighborhood compatibility, and operational impacts associated with school developments.
- Best practices and approaches utilized by peer cities.

Policy Considerations

Staff is evaluating opportunities to support timely development of educational facilities while balancing neighborhood compatibility, infrastructure capacity, and public input considerations.

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The review is intended to evaluate the City's broader zoning approach to educational uses and identify whether amendments may improve consistency, predictability, and efficiency within the development review process.

Next Steps

Staff will continue reviewing best practices related to schools and educational uses. As part of this research effort, PDD also requests that Committee members provide input and comments to help direct the development of any future proposal. Staff will return to the Economic Development Committee at a future meeting with additional findings and potential policy options for Committee consideration.

Please send your comments to PDD Director Emily Liu at yu.liu@dallas.gov by June 30.

Service First, Now!

Robin Bentley,
Assistant City Manager

c: Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, City Manager
Tammy Palomino, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Baron Eliason, Inspector General (I)
Dominique Artis, Chief of Public Safety

Dev Rastogi, Assistant City Manager
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager
Alina Ciocan, Assistant City Manager
Donzell Gipson, Assistant City Manager
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Ahmad Goree, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
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