

Senate Resolution 449

By: Senators Anderson of the 43rd and Strickland of the 42nd

A RESOLUTION

1 Congratulating Dr. Terry O. Oatts upon his retirement from Rockdale County Public Schools
2 after 31 overall years of service to public education, with the last 7 years as Superintendent;
3 and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Terry O. Oatts served effectively as Superintendent of Rockdale County
5 Public Schools (RCPS) from May 30, 2018, to February 14, 2025, and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Oatts prioritized the safety and well-being of students and staff by
7 proactively implementing multilayered safety enhancement measures, including fortifying
8 point of entry access to schools through the installation of safety vestibules and controlled
9 access, increasing safety personnel throughout RCPS, negotiating the addition of School
10 Resource Officers at RCPS High Schools, leveraging grant funds to upgrade the district's
11 camera surveillance systems, adopting the first student clear book bag requirement in the
12 state, implementing the EPIC Crisis Alert System, requiring a more expansive background
13 check system for all adults who have specific access to students, and being the first district
14 to acquire the state-of-the-art wireless OpenGate Weapons Detection System; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Oatts established continuous improvement as the centerpiece of Rockdale
16 County Public Schools' strategic plan; and

17 WHEREAS, as superintendent of Rockdale County Public Schools, Dr. Oatts and RCPS
18 have amassed many notable achievements, including but not limited to accelerated Advanced
19 Placement (AP) achievement, a resurgence of students identified as AP Scholars, all three
20 high schools being recognized as AP Honor Schools, a record number of Governor's Honors
21 program (GHP) nominees and semifinalists, rising gifted student eligibility and enrollment,
22 and most notably, increased graduation rates to its highest ever 88.75 percent; and

23 WHEREAS, RCPS has seen gains on state assessments and exceeded both the region and the
24 state on multiple Georgia Milestones Assessments, including increases in career pathway
25 enrollment, career pathway course offerings, career pathway completion, enrollment in
26 Work-based learning and Youth Apprenticeship programs, and End-of-Pathway Assessment
27 achievement; and

28 WHEREAS, importantly, RCPS has seen steady gains in its CTAE Graduation Rate with the
29 current rate being the highest ever at 99.5 percent; and

30 WHEREAS, Dr. Oatts was previously commended for his pandemic leadership, and he has
31 continued to demonstrate calm, consistent, and steady crisis management leadership as
32 evidenced by his handling of the BioLab Fire that prompted environmental safety concerns;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, Dr. Oatts was in constant communication with intergovernmental partners
35 conveying that RCPS stands ready to support first responders and law enforcement officials
36 in addressing the BioLab crisis; and

37 WHEREAS, Dr. Oatts authorized the use of numerous buses to aid in the safe relocation of
38 evacuees, dispatched the RCPS Transportation Fleet Director to be on call for any additional

39 transportation needs to assist evacuation efforts, offered to grant access to the county to any
40 RCPS school facilities as a designated evacuation site at the request of the county, and made
41 the decision to close schools and activate virtual learning for two weeks until the immediate
42 environmental challenges abated; and

43 WHEREAS, Dr. Oatts consistently engaged with various agencies and entities to afford
44 RCPS students, staff, and families additional opportunities to access important resources, he
45 took the lead in collaborating with Georgia Military College that resulted in a satellite
46 campus being established in Rockdale County enabling immediate access to higher
47 educational opportunities for Rockdale County residents; and

48 WHEREAS, Dr. Oatts saw the need to afford students, staff, and families with accessible
49 healthcare, he partnered with Kids-Docs-On-Wheels to ensure a wide range of mobile
50 medical units and prospective telehealth services were available to deliver vaccinations,
51 immunizations, physicals, specialized screenings, and other healthcare services; and

52 WHEREAS, Dr. Oatts is retiring after 31 years of continuous service to communities all
53 across the state of Georgia, in Candler County, Glynn County, Gwinnett County, Henry
54 County, Fayette County, and Rockdale County as teacher-assistant, higher education teacher,
55 school counselor, assistant principal, elementary principal, middle school principal, high
56 school principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent.

57 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
58 congratulate Dr. Terry O. Oatts upon the grad occasion of his retirement and extend sincere
59 best wishes for his future health and happiness.

60 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
61 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Dr. Terry O. Oatts.