

## ***Shepherd ISD Earns State's Highest Fiscal Accountability Rating***

Shepherd Independent School District officials announced that the district received a rating of "Superior Achievement" under Texas' Schools FIRST financial accountability rating system. The Superior Achievement rating is the state's highest, demonstrating the quality of Shepherd ISD's financial management and reporting system. This is the sixth year of Schools FIRST (Financial Accountability Rating System of Texas), a financial accountability system for Texas school districts developed by the Texas Education Agency in response to Senate Bill 875 of the 76<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature in 1999. The primary goal of Schools FIRST is to achieve quality performance in the management of school districts' financial resources, a goal made more significant due to the complexity of accounting associated with Texas' school finance system.

"We are very pleased with Shepherd ISD's FIRST rating," said Shepherd ISD Superintendent Jody Cronin, "as it shows that our district is making the most of our Taxpayers' dollars. This rating shows that Shepherd's schools are accountable not only for student learning, but also for achieving these results cost-effectively and efficiently." The Schools FIRST accountability rating system assigns one of four financial accountability ratings to Texas school districts, with the highest being "Superior Achievement," followed by "Above-Standard Achievement," "Standard Achievement" and "Substandard Achievement." Districts with serious data quality problems may receive the additional rating of "Suspended – Data Quality." Districts that receive the "Substandard Achievement" or "Suspended – Data Quality" ratings under Schools FIRST must file a corrective action plan with the Texas Education Agency.