



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

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State Leadership Announces Funding For Texas School Systems To Support In-Person Instruction

Funding is being provided to support schools for the remainder of the 2020-2021 academic year as they continue to support student learning that has been disrupted by the pandemic

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) announced today that the State of Texas will provide a "hold harmless" to Texas school systems for the rest of the 2020-2021 academic school year only. This means funding will be made available to school systems in Texas that have seen enrollment and attendance declines because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as long as they maintain or increase current levels of on-campus attendance. Districts will be funded on attendance in line with projections made prior to the public health crisis. This will ensure that school systems in Texas can retain their teachers for the 2020-21 school year for whom they originally budgeted. This final semester of hold harmless means districts have been held harmless for three consecutive semesters — Spring Semester of the 2019-20 academic year and the entirety of the 2020-21 academic year.

"As more districts return to in-person instruction, we are ensuring that schools are not financially penalized for declines in attendance due to COVID-19," said Governor Abbott. "Providing a hold harmless for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year is a crucial part of our state's commitment to supporting our school systems and teachers and getting more students back in the classroom."

"My goal is to get all of our students back in the classroom and this hold harmless funding will ensure our public schools can complete the school year and continue to bring students back to campuses for in-person learning. As always, we are grateful to those teachers across the state who have worked tirelessly during the pandemic to keep our students on track," said Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick.

"The State of Texas is committed to getting more students back into the classroom for in-person instruction and fully funding our schools – despite challenges that occurred as a result of COVID-19. I fully support the decision to provide necessary funding and maintain our commitment to Texas schools," said Speaker Dade Phelan.

"The legislature was already dedicated to fulfilling the commitments made in House Bill 3 from last session. The financial stability provided by this hold harmless will further support our

schools in their efforts to help our students meet the challenges brought on by COVID-19," said Senator Larry Taylor.

"It would be an understatement to say that Texas families have been negatively affected by the COVID environment. And perhaps those most affected have been our public school students who have had to educate remotely or not at all. Texas should do everything possible to get these students back to school but school districts must not be penalized financially for the absence of these students. That is why this hold harmless provision is a financial must for Texas school districts," said Representative Harold Dutton.

Data has shown throughout the COVID-19 pandemic that schools are safe. School systems in Texas must follow public health guidance issued by TEA, which establishes a variety of effective virus mitigation strategies for schools. Based on this guidance, school districts are widely employing a range of measures including masks, screening practices, improvements in ventilation, the use of rapid COVID-19 tests, and improved hygiene procedures. Additionally, all Texas teachers and school staff are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Texas.

In normal times, schools are funded based on the students enrolled and the daily attendance on campus. This year, TEA prioritized flexibility to ensure essential funding support for school systems, by providing full funding based on daily attendance, whether the attendance was in-person or remote. The hold harmless, which was previously provided in the first semester of the school year, allocates funding above the statutory guaranteed level of funding for students who are not enrolled, or for students who attend (even if remotely) less frequently. For the current second semester, it is being provided as long as on-campus attendance participation rates do not decline or those rates otherwise remain high (at least 80 percent).

TEA has published on its [Coronavirus resource website](#) documents that note the baseline on-campus attendance participation rates of every Texas school system in the fall of 2020.

More details on the specifics of the hold harmless calculation can be found in [TEA's Attendance and Enrollment Funding FAQ](#).

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