



Harold V. Dutton, Jr.
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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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March 7, 2022

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

The Honorable Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education
1701 N. Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701

Re: Average Daily Attendance

Dear Governor Abbott:

As you may have heard, ADA funding has been dramatically impacted due to COVID. In 2018-2019 the average ADA was around 95.4%, based upon enrollment. However, ADA in some districts has been as low as 70% coming back from Christmas as an example, which is having a significant impact on school districts budgets. We have spoken to Commissioner Morath, and we believe he has a proposal to address this issue, which we support.

In general, we support an additional attendance adjustment for the 2021-2022 school year with the following parameters:

1. Enrollment numbers for the purposes of calculating ADA should be based upon fall PEIMS snapshot data as of October 29, 2021.
2. ADA should be based upon the average for school districts using the 2018-2019 numbers, with the understanding it is not a statewide average, but an average for that specific school district.
3. School districts will get funded based upon current enrollment and the average ADA from 2018-2019 for the 2021-2022 school year only.

While not every school district is impacted the same, we believe this proposal is balanced when looking at the impact the loss of ADA funding will have on school districts going into the remainder of the year.

Committee Director: Tamoria Jones
Committee Clerk: Olivia Lee

P.O. Box 2910 • Austin, Texas 78768-2910 • Room E2.124 • (512) 463-0804



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We also believe that this proposal does not violate the intent of Section 21 of HB 1525 as developed by this committee and passed by the 87th Legislature. That section was intended to avoid continued reliance on hold harmless to offset enrollment declines. Under the Commissioner's proposal, only attendance *rates* and ADA would be adjusted to help districts weather the disruptions brought on by Omicron and other variants of COVID-19. Districts will still retain considerable incentives under the school finance and accountability systems to find any missing students, get them enrolled in school and back on track academically.

School districts with low attendance rates are currently having to choose between two bad options:

- 1) Use one-time ESSER III funds intended to address learning loss to instead shore up their budgets for the current school year, or
- 2) Lay-off instructional staff and consolidate classrooms in the middle of the school year.

An attendance adjustment as outlined above would provide a much needed alternative to those options.

We believe that during this disruptive time, ESSER III funds need to be used directly for accelerated instruction and combatting learning loss. With the significant impacts we are seeing with attendance rates, we have an obligation to make sure districts do not worry about paying their staff, and instead can focus on getting as much time with the students as possible.

Thank you for your consideration, and let us know if we can answer any other questions.

Sincerely,

Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harold V. Dutton, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Harold V. Dutton, Jr., Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.M. Lozano", written over a horizontal line.

J.M. Lozano, Vice-Chair

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary VanDeaver".

Gary VanDeaver

cc:

Honorable Lt. Governor Dan Patrick
Honorable Speaker Dade Phelan
Honorable Senator Larry Taylor

Committee Director: Tamoria Jones

Committee Clerk: Olivia Lee

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