

May 14, 2021

Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick  
Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
P.O. Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711

The Honorable Larry Taylor and  
Members of the Senate Education Committee  
P.O. Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711

Re: Online Learning Legislation

Dear Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Chairman Taylor, and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Throughout the 87th Legislative Session, school districts have watched as both the Texas House and the Texas Senate considered legislation that would update and expand the current virtual learning framework for Texas students. Both chambers moved forward with exciting and innovative proposals that would open the door for Texas school districts to meet their students' individual needs by serving them in the environment most suited for them. Moving forward, we know that virtual learning is a significant part of the future of education for our students.

While we certainly understand there are significant competing interests in advancing such complex and important legislation, we also recognize that in order for school districts to truly meet the needs of our students, we must have the ability to serve those students in the way that is best for them. Over the past year, many students have discovered that virtual learning provides them with an opportunity to learn and grow in their own unique way. A number of students have been able to accelerate their learning and pursue outside interests to broaden their experiences. Some students have been able to work to support their family while still focusing on learning. Others, such as elite athletes, have taken advantage of more flexible scheduling to pursue their passions while continuing to prioritize their education. Still others have benefited from the ability to remain enrolled in their own school while receiving treatment for life threatening illnesses or mental health challenges. To be clear, the vast majority of students are better suited to an in-person environment, but there are thousands of students across the state of Texas who thrive in a virtual environment and we have an obligation to ensure that they receive the best education possible by providing them with the choice to receive their learning virtually. We have an opportunity this session to meet our students where they are instead of letting them fall through the cracks of a system that was not built for them.

With this in mind, we urge you to advance legislation that would provide funding for school districts to serve their own students in an online environment. While some school districts

would possibly take advantage of the ability to open their programs statewide if that provision was included, many have no plans to do so. Please do not let thousands of students miss out on an opportunity to engage with their education in the way that is most effective for them.

Sincerely,

Aldine ISD  
Aledo ISD  
Alief ISD  
Austin ISD  
Bryan ISD  
Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD  
Castleberry ISD  
Cedar Hill ISD  
Clear Creek ISD  
Conroe ISD  
Coppell ISD  
Corpus Christi ISD  
Corsicana ISD  
Dallas ISD  
Denton ISD  
Fort Worth ISD  
Frisco ISD

Galena Park ISD  
Garland ISD  
Goose Creek Consolidated ISD  
Grand Prairie ISD  
Grapevine-Colleyville ISD  
Houston ISD  
Huffman ISD  
Humble ISD  
Keller ISD  
Klein ISD  
Lake Worth ISD  
La Porte ISD  
Lewisville ISD  
Lovejoy ISD  
Melissa ISD  
Mesquite ISD  
Pasadena ISD

Plano ISD  
Prosper ISD  
Richardson ISD  
San Antonio ISD  
Sheldon ISD  
Sherman ISD  
Spring ISD  
Terrell ISD  
  
North Texas Commission  
TCEA  
Texas Schools Coalition

