

June 16, 2021

Governor Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Re: Virtual Learning as an Item for the Special Session

Dear Governor Abbott,

Throughout the 87th Legislative Session, school districts watched as both the Texas House and the Texas Senate considered legislation that would expand parent choice in public education by providing opportunities for local school districts to serve their own students according to their unique and individual needs. As the session ended, school districts were hopeful that the legislature would provide funding for virtual learning options through House Bill 1468, which enjoyed broad bipartisan support.

However, as you know, due to partisan disagreements over unrelated legislation, time expired on the session without legislative action on this vital topic. As a result, many school districts have already announced that they will be unable to provide virtual learning options for families next school year. However, in order for districts to build high-quality, innovative programs for students in the future, the legislature must provide clarity and notice to districts. To that end, we respectfully request that you add virtual learning to the list of items for the legislature to act on during any special session you call prior to the 88th Legislative Session.

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 to expand public school choice for families and meet our students where they are instead of letting them fall through the cracks of a system that was not built for them.

Sincerely,

Aldine ISD
Aledo ISD
Austin ISD
Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD
Conroe ISD
Coppell ISD
Corpus Christi ISD
Corsicana ISD
Dallas ISD
Denton ISD
Forney ISD

Fort Worth ISD
Frisco ISD
Garland ISD
Goose Creek Consolidated ISD
Houston ISD
Huffman ISD
Keller ISD
Klein ISD
Lake Worth ISD
Lewisville ISD
Melissa ISD

Mesquite ISD
Plano ISD
Richardson ISD
San Antonio ISD
Sheldon ISD
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Spring ISD
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