Legislative Budget Board re School Funding / Sept. 29, 2026

Honorable Chair and Members:

My name is Yulissa Chavez and I am with the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities. I am here today to urge this committee to reconsider raising the basic allotment to adjust for inflation and to switch our school funding model from attendance-based funding to enrollment-based funding.

It is vital that we raise the basic allotment to adjust for inflation, meet the needs of students, and cover operational costs that are imperative to the success and longevity of a school's positive atmosphere, high teacher retention rate, reasonable students to teacher ratio, and Texas' economic success.

First, I want to discuss the illusion that was "raising the basic allotment" from this past regular session. In 2019, the basic allotment was $6,160 per student. As of 2026, the basic allotment was "raised" to $6,215. This is not a cause for praise. This "funding increase" just shifted existing funds under different categories and names rather than providing real, tangible new revenue. This will negatively impact the golden penny yield. In fact, there is a possibility that some districts will lose out on local revenue matching if they do not generate local tax dollars. Further, the lack of raising the basic allotment continues to create a major deficit in our Special Education, Bilingual Education and Career & Technology pathways.

I was a public school teacher who saw the effects of lack of funding first hand. We had deficit budgets, massive class sizes, program cuts and in the worst case of scenarios, school closures.

Next, our school districts should be funded through an enrollment-based system instead of our current attendance-based system. In my experience in schools with a majority low-income population, students would miss the crucial morning attendance count that dictates funding. These students often work, struggling for a stable income that meets basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare and more, and lacking reliable housing and transportation. Further, students with disabilities such as chronic health issues may miss classes or attend their school schedule partially.

The attendance-based model operates on the assumption that absences are voluntary or driven by truancy, ignoring systemic health and socioeconomic barriers. Positive campus culture and community support that drives student presence better than financial penalties. And an absent student does not suddenly reduce the operational costs of a school.

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This advocate participated in programming that equips Texans most impacted by state budget decisions with the knowledge, skills, and support to advocate for policies that strengthen our communities.

Texas Constitution Article VII, Section 1, states that a "general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools."

Do the math, folks. A $55 increase for each student divided over the course of a school year for each student is scraps, not "suitable provision" for public free schools.

Best,



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