

HB 3 - Public School Finance and Public Education (Huberty Et al.)

The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities is pleased to see the efforts of Chairman Huberty and so many others to address the problems in the current school finance system. In particular, we are excited to see the additional funding included to raise the basic allotment from \$5,140 to \$6,030 (a net increase of \$890 per student). There is no doubt that is a significant infusion of funds into the public school system for all children!

We appreciate the addition of funding for dyslexia and related disorders which is much needed and a mechanism to provide our beloved teachers with raises based on formula funding and not a bonus or incentive program.

However, as advocates for students with disabilities, there are areas that we feel must be addressed to ensure equity in funding and ensure that our children are given the appropriate opportunities to succeed in a system that has neglected, under-enrolled, and found ways to deny or limit the services and supports that our children need.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- The definition of classroom teacher leaves out many special educators, assistants and aides who fill critically important roles in areas of high need or areas that have acute shortages.
 - **HB 3 should expand the definition of classroom teacher to include all special education staff – including those in a support role.**
- Removing the multiplier for the special education weights by using the basic allotment, rather than the adjusted allotment, may negatively impact some schools districts who may receive less total funding in the new system for their students who receive special education.
 - **HB 3 should continue the use of the adjusted allotment if the current weight system is maintained.**
- Public input is valuable and currently HB 3 limits public input by allowing the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to make many funding decisions without input from the State Board of Education or the public. Public hearings are crucial to gain community support for initiatives and to inform agencies about potential unintended consequences of their rulemaking and actions.
 - **HB 3 should include a stronger mechanism for public input on critical funding issues.**
- The Enhancement Services Grant Program for private providers may be too limited according to the specified disability categories (dyslexia, autism, speech disability, or learning disability) to provide a significant impact to students who need help.
 - **HB 3 should include all disability types and be restructured to provide the most service for those who need the most support.**
- Lastly, no transformative school funding plan can succeed if it ignores 9.2% of the current student population. After all that has happened with the 8.5% enrollment target, the illegal and poor quality of special education as documented by the U.S. Department of Education, the lack of oversight that has allowed approximately \$111 million dollars of IDEA funds unspent under the maintenance of financial support (MFS) clause, and antiquated weights that have not been changed or updated since 1994 – our children deserve more from Texas.
 - **Reforming special education allocations and funding weights must be part of this transformative school funding effort.**

Please don't leave students receiving special education services and supports in this broken system!



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