



# Maintain Full Education Funding and Equity in State Budget

**TLEEC Public Comments to Senate Finance, Re: Public Education  
Submitted to Senate Finance Committee, February 22, 2021**

Dear Chairwoman Nelson and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition (TLEEC) is a collaborative of over 25 organizations and individuals with the mission to improve the quality of public education for all children, with a focus on racial equity. We advocate at the local, state, and national levels for high-quality teaching, curriculum and instructional practices and bilingual education for emergent bilingual students (i.e. English learners), as well as fair funding and enhanced college access and success.

We respectfully submit our recommendations for the Article III budget:

- **Maintain full funding for education and hold harmless provisions for 2020-21 attendance funding.** We encourage the committee to consider the full cost of education based on the past three-years' attendance average for districts and projected enrollment growth, and not overly weigh the current drop in enrollment and attendance related to the pandemic. Underfunding schools based on current, temporary circumstances would leave schools without the financial resources they need to find and locate students, engage them across all instructional formats, and recover from the pandemic's instructional disruption. Spring 2021 "hold harmless" provisions should be extended to ensure schools have the financial resources to finish the 2020-21 school year without reductions in force or other local budget compromises.
- **Invest in public K-12, higher education, and critical services that support students and families.** School communities require supplemental supports as they continue to face this pandemic. In addition to continuing academic instruction, schools provide meals, digital devices and connectivity across rural and urban communities, health services, and housing and legal aid information. These critical support services must be sustained in budget considerations through the state's maintenance of effort by strategically directing federal stimulus funds to supplement, not supplant, public school funding.
- **Prioritize funding for historically marginalized students, such as emergent bilingual students (i.e. English learners), students receiving special education services, and students from limited incomes.** Following the 2011 legislative budget cuts, Title I elementary schools spent drastically less on young English learner students' bilingual education programs, and on programs that benefit students from households with low incomes ([Marder & Villanueva, 2017](#)).

Historically marginalized students have also experienced the most severe instructional disruption from the digital divide, and health and economic consequences of the pandemic. State budget considerations must maintain equity for historically marginalized students' education.

- **Protect student financial aid.** Student financial aid programs like the TEXAS Grant, Texas Educational Opportunity Grant, and Tuition Equalization Grant make college affordable and accessible to tens of thousands of Texans. Funding for these programs must be maintained as a strategy for economic and educational recovery critical to the future prosperity of all Texans.

*For questions, please contact TLEEC either through Ana Ramón (ana.ramon@idra.org), or Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes at IDRA (chloe.sikes@idra.org), or Fátima Menéndez at MALDEF (fmenendez@maldef.org).*

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### **TLEEC Member Organizations**

ARISE Adelante	Texas American Federation of Teachers
Breakthrough Central Texas	Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE)
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD)	Texas Association for Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE)
Dr. Hector P. García G.I. Forum	Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC)
Easterseals Central Texas	Texas Center for Education Policy, University of Texas – Austin
Every Texan	Texas Hispanics Organized for Political Education (HOPE)
Houston Community Voices for Public Education	Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)	Texas NAACP
McNeil Educational Foundation for Ecumenical Leadership	Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA)
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)	The Education Trust in Texas
Mexican American School Board Members Association (MASBA)	UnidosUS (formerly known as NCLR)
National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) – Tejas Foco	
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	