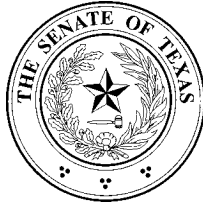


THE SENATE OF TEXAS

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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AGENDA PUBLIC HEARING

Friday, November 13, 2020. 10:00 AM
Capitol Extension, E1.012

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Committee Business

1. Digital Learning: Assess the Texas Virtual School Network and the new Texas Home Learning System to evaluate effectiveness of each and recommend model legislation to improve digital learning options for students, families, and educators.
 - a. Monica Martinez, Associate Commissioner- Standards and Support Services, TEA.
 - b. Dr. Michael Hinojosa, Superintendent, Dallas ISD.
 - c. Dr. Chris Bigenho, Director of the Virtual Learning Academy, Lewisville ISD.
 - d. Hector Madrigal, Superintendent, Karnes City ISD.
 - e. Tiffany Carey, Director of Innovative Learning, Frisco ISD.

2. Monitoring: Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Education passed by the 86th Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:

House Bill 3, relating to public school finance and public education.

 - a. Mike Morath, Commissioner, TEA.
 - b. Dr. LaTonya Goffney, Superintendent, Aldine ISD.
 - c. Dr. James Wilcox, Superintendent, Longview ISD.
 - d. Rick Lopez, Superintendent, Garland ISD.
 - e. Josh Sanderson, Deputy Executive Director, Equity Center.

House Bill 3906, relating to the assessment of public school students, including the development and administration of assessment instruments, and technology permitted for use by students.

- a. Mike Morath, Commissioner, TEA.
 - b. Dr. Kristin Brown, Superintendent, Lyford ISD.
 - c. Kerry Gain, Chief Academic Officer, Del Valle ISD.
3. Examine best practices by school districts and charters in providing education during the CoVid-19 pandemic, including methods of delivery for education. Highlight the best practice responses to challenges such as a lack of electronic devices and broadband/internet connection, as well as methods utilized to ensure students maintain growth throughout the academic year.
- a. Mike Morath, Commissioner, TEA.
 - b. Dr. Michael McFarland, Superintendent, Crowley ISD.
 - c. Andrew Kim, Superintendent, Comal ISD.
 - d. Eddie Conger, Superintendent, IL of Texas.
4. Special Education: Evaluate ongoing strategies to continuously improve special education services for students in public schools, including methods for educating students in a remote setting, as well as the Texas Education Agency's corrective action plan.
- a. Matt Montano, Deputy Commissioner - Special Education Review and Support, TEA.
 - b. Kristin McGuire, Director of Government Relations, TCASE
 - c. Steve Aleman, Senior Policy Specialist, Disability Rights Texas.

IV. Recess

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a plaid shirt, is sitting at a desk and smiling as he looks at a laptop. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a window in the background. A white coffee cup is visible on the desk to the right of the laptop.

Digital Learning

Senate Education Committee

Monica Martinez – Associate Commissioner Standards and Programs
November 13, 2020

Texas Virtual School Network

The Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) exists as two distinct systems

A statewide catalog of supplemental online courses for credit toward high school graduation

- Offers online courses that are high-quality, interactive, instructor-led
- Teachers are state-certified, appropriately credentialed, and trained in effective online instruction
- Provide only individual high school courses
- Students remain enrolled in their home district or charter school (TXVSN receiver district) and are funded for in-person attendance at that home district.
 - The home district pays the TXVSN course provider per student per course completion.
- The TXVSN teacher serves as the teacher of record.

A 100% virtual full-time TXVSN Online Schools (OLS) program serves eligible public-school students in grades 3-12 who reside anywhere in Texas

- Provides access to complete educational programs that are high-quality, Interactive, and instructor-led
- TXVSN teachers are state-certified, appropriately credentialed, and trained in effective online instruction
- Serve students in grade 3 through high school
- Students are enrolled in the district that houses the online school, and that district receives funding for the student based on completion (see next slides).

Grades 3-8

A student achieves successful program completion by

- completing the TXVSN education program;
- demonstrating academic proficiency with passing grades equivalent to 70% or above on a 100-point scale, as assigned by the properly credentialed online teacher(s) for the education program; and
- being promoted to the next grade level.

High School

A student achieves successful course completion by

- completing a TXVSN high school course;
- demonstrating academic proficiency of the content for the high school course with a minimum passing grade of 70% or above on a 100-point scale, as assigned by the properly credentialed online teacher(s); and
- earning credit for the course.

Perfect Attendance is assumed for funding purposes in the TXVSN OLS

Grades 3-8

For enrollment in the grade-level program to count toward ADA eligibility status, the student must successfully complete the program.

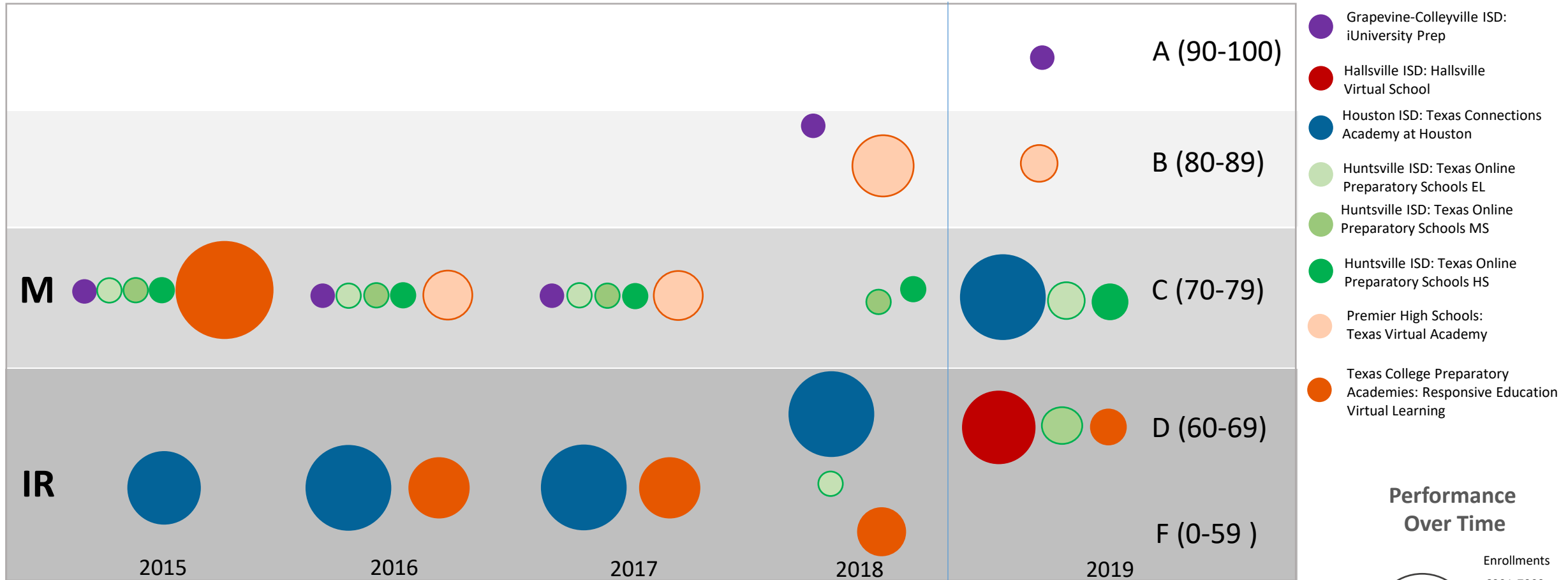
- TEA determines a student's ultimate ADA eligibility status using course completion data reported by the district.
- If the student successfully completed the TXVSN education program, the school retains 100% funding for the full year regardless of the amount of the year a school serves the student.
- If the student did not successfully complete the TXVSN education program, TEA adjusts the student's ADA eligibility status accordingly and FSP funding for that student is reduced to zero dollars.
- Resulting adjustments to state funding are made in the following school year.

High School

TXVSN courses may count toward student eligibility for half-day or full-day attendance funding. A student is scheduled for and receives instruction for 60 minutes each day for each course taken through the TXVSN.

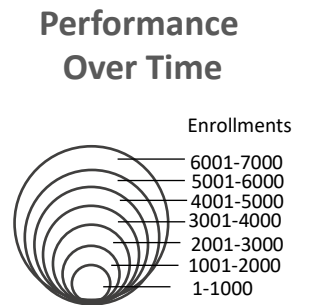
- For **statewide course catalog** participants - a total of no more than three semester courses taken through the TXVSN statewide course catalog may be used in determining a student's ADA eligibility for any one semester with a maximum of six total semester courses in a school year.
- For students in a **full-time online school** - no more than four total semester courses taken through the TXVSN may be used in determining a student's ADA eligibility for any one semester, with a maximum of eight TXVSN semester courses within a school year.

TXVSN Full-time Online Schools Performance Has Varied Over Time



Prior to 2019, if schools “met standard” the dot is placed at a C
 In 2018, schools received a numeric score and a rating of M or IR..
 ** If dots do not appear for a year, they were not rated that year.

M – Met standard/Met alternative standard
 IR – Improvement required



TXVSN Programmatic Considerations

Significant cost reductions were achieved with a decrease in the appropriation from **\$4,000,000 per year in the 2016-2017 biennium to **\$400,000** per year in the 2018-2019 biennium.**

- **The current appropriation does not support the following statutorily required activities:**
 - Review and approval of electronic courses (TEC, §30A.105)
 - Non-profit entity, private entity, corporation review (TEC, §30A.101(c))
 - Informed Choice Reports Public access to user comments (TEC, §30A.1021)
 - Student performance information (TEC, §30A.054)
 - Verification of successful completion by a teacher of required appropriate professional development (TEC, §30A.1111(b))
 - Review of professional development courses (TEC, §30A.1121(b))
- The operating costs of the state virtual school network may not be charged to a school district or open-enrollment charter school.
- If the agency determines that the costs of evaluating and approving a submitted electronic course will not be paid by the agency due to a shortage of funds, the entity that submitted the course for evaluation and approval may pay a fee equal to the amount of the costs in order to ensure that evaluation of the course occurs. (TEC, §30A.105(d)).

Texas Home Learning 3.0

Preventing COVID 19 From Becoming a Generational Crisis for Texans

Hurricane Katrina



Studies estimate **two years of learning loss** resulting from school closures for the fall 2005 semester

Source: Harris and Larsen; The Effects Of The New Orleans Post-Katrina Market-based School Reforms on Medium-term Student Outcomes

Argentina Teacher Strikes



Devastating long-term **impact on unemployment and future wages** resulting from 88 days of missed instruction in 1983.²

Source: Jaime and Willén; The Long-Run Effects of Teacher Strikes: Evidence from Argentina

THL 3.0 is an optional, aligned suite of resources that educators can use fully or in-part in the new learning environment

Texas Home Learning 3.0

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS



PreK-12 digitized, standards-aligned curricular content customized for Texas and the current learning environment

TECHNOLOGY



Suite of technology tools including a learning management system to support student engagement and instructional collaboration

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Content and technology focused professional development to support educators with implementation both in classroom and remote settings

Districts may optionally adopt none, part, or all of any of the three components above

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TEA has negotiated a statewide license for Schoology for all interested LEAs for two years



Free two-year license

for Schoology LMS for any interested LEA
paid for by TEA

- License allows for **integration with existing platforms, forthcoming THL instructional resources** and other products as needed
- **Current Schoology customers may pause** current contract to benefit from additional 2 years of LMS
- Districts must **begin using Schoology** anytime between today and **March 1st, 2021** to benefit from license
- Participating LEAs can choose to continue use of Schoology **after the two years** with a paid license

Adoption-to Date: 397 LEAs representing 2 million students have contracted with Schoology to benefit from this offer.

THL 3.0 is an optional, aligned suite of resources that educators can use fully or in-part in the new learning environment

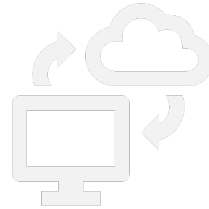
Texas Home Learning 3.0

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS



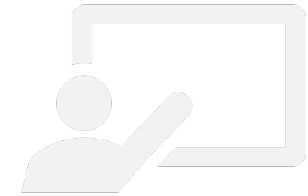
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Texas Home Learning is being built to address this crisis

THL 3.0 curricular resources are selected through a **competitive solicitation process** based on **ability of publisher to develop** high quality, TEKS-aligned instructional materials designed for **flexibility in this new learning environment** and accessible to all learners

- No off-the-shelf curriculum is built for the unprecedented nature of the current situation for Texas schools
- THL curricular resources are being developed specifically for Texas schools in this new learning environment
- THL 3.0 curricular materials will undergo a rigorous review process to confirm alignment with TEKS and quality standards
- Texas teachers will be involved in the review process before the release of each set of materials to interested districts
- Continuous improvements will be made to the materials, informed by feedback from Texas teachers and other stakeholders


THL 3.0 offers free access to TEKS-aligned, digitized resources to be facilitated by teachers that are customized for Texas

THL Instructional Materials Include:

Unit plans and daily lesson plans aligned to Texas standards



Formative & summative unit assessments



Teacher, student, and family supports



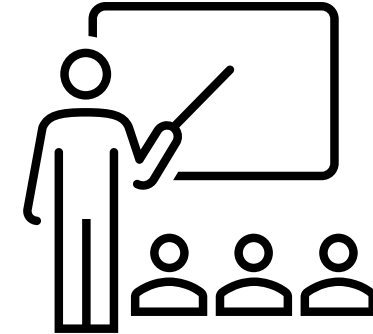
Digital format with printing capability



Built in progress monitoring



Accessibility supports for all learners

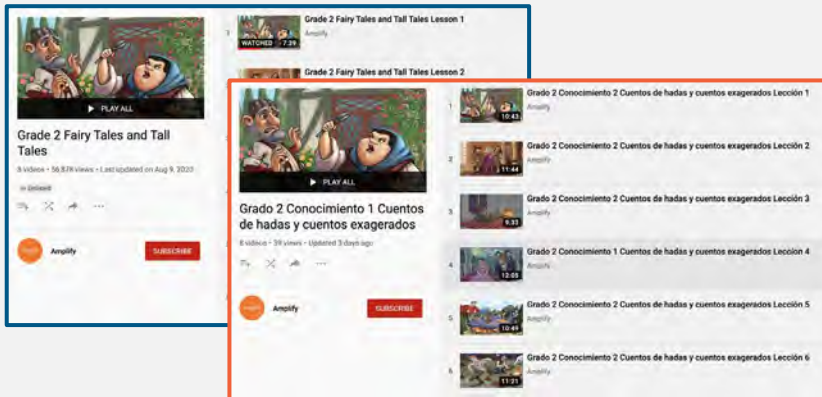


Although designed to be used comprehensively, **districts, schools, or teachers can choose to adopt any portion or subset of the materials as they see fit**

THL 3.0 offers free access to TEKS-aligned, digitized resources to be facilitated by teachers that are customized for Texas

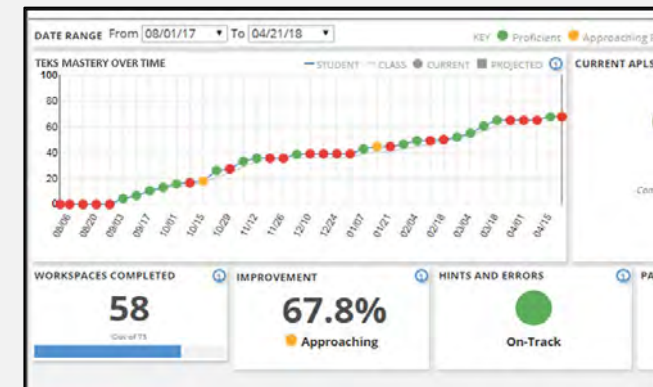
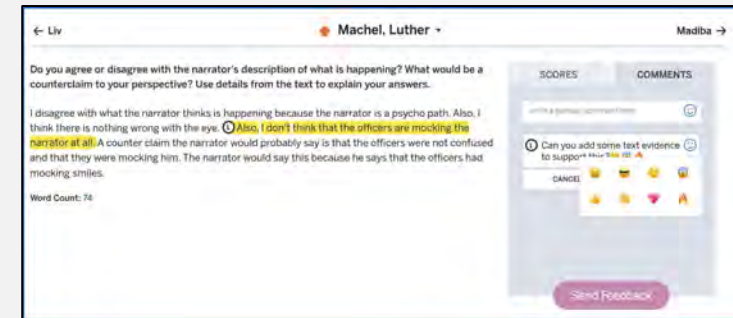
Students

provided with materials for **synchronous** or **asynchronous** instruction in both **English** and **Spanish**



Teachers

provided visibility into student achievement with ongoing opportunities for **feedback** and continuous improvement



THL 3.0 Instructional Materials Products Announced to Date

Subject	Publisher	Announced	Materials Available*
Integrated Pre-K	 Teaching Strategies (PK)	Nov 5	Coming soon
Math	 Great Minds (K-5)	Aug 26	Module 1 and 2(some grades)
	 Carnegie Learning (6-12)	Aug 31	Topics 1-4
English Language Arts and Reading	 Amplify (K-5 + K-2 Skills)	Sept 24	Units 1 and 2
	 Amplify (6-8)	Sept 24	Coming soon
	 Odell Education (9-12)	Sept 11	Unit 1
Spanish Language Arts and Reading	 Amplify (K-5)	Sept 24	Units 1 and 2
	<i>K-2 Skills Coming Fall 2020/Spring 2021</i>		
Science	 Great Minds (K-5)	Aug 31	Module 1
	<i>6-12 Coming Spring 2021</i>		
Social Studies	<i>K-5 Coming Fall 2020</i>		
	<i>6-12 Coming Spring 2021</i>		
College Prep: RLA and Math	 Texas College Bridge	June 4	All

Adoption-to Date: 160 LEAs have Adopted THL Instructional Materials to Date



*Note: "Units" and "Modules" are the same; "Topics" are a part of modules, made up of multiple lessons

Special Education Remote Learning Interventions



TEA made available tools to ensure that students who need access to **speech pathology** therapies have access to these services, even in a remote setting.

Month	Number of students in therapy	Number of sessions
April	1,224	2,170
May	2,892	12,968
June	2,895	15,009
July	1,596	8,491
August	855	1,784
September	4,410	17,933
October	4,934	21,288

The first 10,000 sessions were paid for by TEA, using \$1M of CARES funding.

Each subsequent session is paid for by the LEA, at discounted rates negotiated by TEA for the state.



TEA is currently developing tooling to ensure students who are receiving remote instruction can also receive **dyslexia interventions**, delivered remotely.

COMING SOON

THL 3.0 is an optional, aligned suite of resources that educators can use fully or in-part in the new learning environment

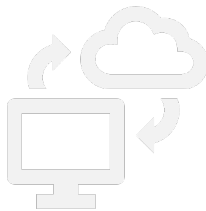
Texas Home Learning 3.0

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Content and technology focused professional development to support educators with implementation both in classroom and remote settings

Districts may optionally adopt none, part, or all of any of the three components above



Differentiated Professional Learning Supports for THL

On Demand Support



Educator-driven planning and implementation supports available when and where they need it

Supports provided

Examples

THL Webinar Series
 Publisher-led Train the Trainer Series
 Technology Integration Supports
texashomelearning.org

Participation

>1K Participants in Live Webinars
34K Website Visits Since Aug

Cross-Initiative Integration



THL resources **embedded within existing TEA initiatives** in the design, planning, and execution phases

Math Innovation Zones
 Blended Learning Grant Program
 Resilient Schools Support Program
 School Action Fund

>100 Current Districts

Spring THL Pilot



TEA-run pilot program to support LEAs in adopting, implementing, and continuously improving use of THL resources

Grant Program for Interested LEAs Currently In Development

~100 Expected Districts



Appendix

Current TXVSN Course Requirements

Each electronic course approved for inclusion in the TXVSN must

- be in a specific subject that is part of the required curriculum;
- be aligned with the TEKS approved for implementation in a given school year for the grade level;
- be the equivalent in instructional rigor and scope to a course that is provided in a traditional classroom setting during a semester of 90 instructional days and a school day of at least seven hours;
- be led by a teacher who meets the requirements for educators of electronic courses;
- be designed specifically for an online learning environment, including instructional tools, assessment features, and collaborative communication tools as appropriate;
- be aligned with the current national standards for quality online courses;
- meet accessibility requirements established by the U.S. Rehabilitation Act, §508, and TXVSN accessibility guidelines; and
- ensure that each student enrolled in a TXVSN electronic course takes any applicable state assessment, according to the standard administration schedule and that each assessment is supervised by a proctor.

Current TXVSN Course Requirements

- Secondary (Grades 9-12) science courses must include at least 40% hands-on laboratory investigations and field work using appropriate scientific inquiry as required by §74.3(b)(2)(C).
- An AP course must have documented approval from the College Board as an AP course prior to submission for TXVSN course review.
- An online dual credit course to be offered through the TXVSN shall be submitted for TXVSN course review and approval prior to being offered.

TXVSN Online School Program Requirements

- Follow the same laws and rules that apply to traditional schools unless otherwise indicated
- Notify students in writing upon acceptance to participate in the TXVSN online school with specific dates and details regarding enrollment
- Document actual dates each student begins and ends enrollment in student data records for local recordkeeping purposes and for state funding reporting purposes
- Ensure that each student enrolled in the TXVSN online school takes any applicable state assessment according to the standard administration schedule and that each assessment is supervised by a proctor
- Allow access to proctored test administrations by any personnel or agent of the TEA
- Adopt an instructional calendar for the TXVSN online school and keep an instructional calendar for each TXVSN online school student on file and make these records available to the TEA, upon request in the requested electronic format
- Assign each teacher that provides instruction in a TXVSN online school a Texas Student Data System Unique Staff Identifier
- Meet all federal and state requirements for educating students with disabilities

All electronic courses to be made available through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) must be reviewed and approved prior to being offered. TEA receives an appropriation to support course review. However, if funding isn't sufficient, TEA may charge course providers a course review fee.

A Texas public school district or charter school may apply to the commissioner for a waiver of the course review requirement if the school district or charter school certifies that courses meet the requirements in state law.

- (1) A school district or charter school that receives a waiver of this requirement must ensure that students enrolled in online courses that have not gone through the course review process perform at a rate at least equal to that of the district or charter as a whole.
- (2) A school district or charter school that does not maintain student performance at least equal to that of the district or charter as a whole may be required to submit courses for review as a condition of continued participation in the TXVSN.

A large, solid orange arrow pointing from the left side of the slide towards the right, positioned behind the text on the right.

TEA is in the process of identifying and approving external course reviewers to better facilitate future course reviews.



TXVSN Full-time Online Schools Operating in 2020-20201

[iUniversity Prep](#)

Grapevine-Colleyville Independent School District
County/District/Campus Number: 220-906-007
Serves grades 5-12

[Texas Virtual Academy at Hallsville](#)

Hallsville Independent School District
County/District/Campus Number: 102-904-010
Serves grades 3-12

[Texas Connections Academy at Houston](#)

Houston Independent School District
County/District/Campus Number: 101-912-100
Serves grades 3-12

[Texas Online Preparatory School](#)

Huntsville Independent School District
County/District/Campus Number: 236-902-108; 236-902-048;
236-902-008
Serves grades 3-12

[Premier High School Online](#)

Premier High Schools (Charter Holder: Responsive Education Solutions)
County/District/Campus Number: 072-801-145
Serves grades 9-12

[eSchool Prep](#)

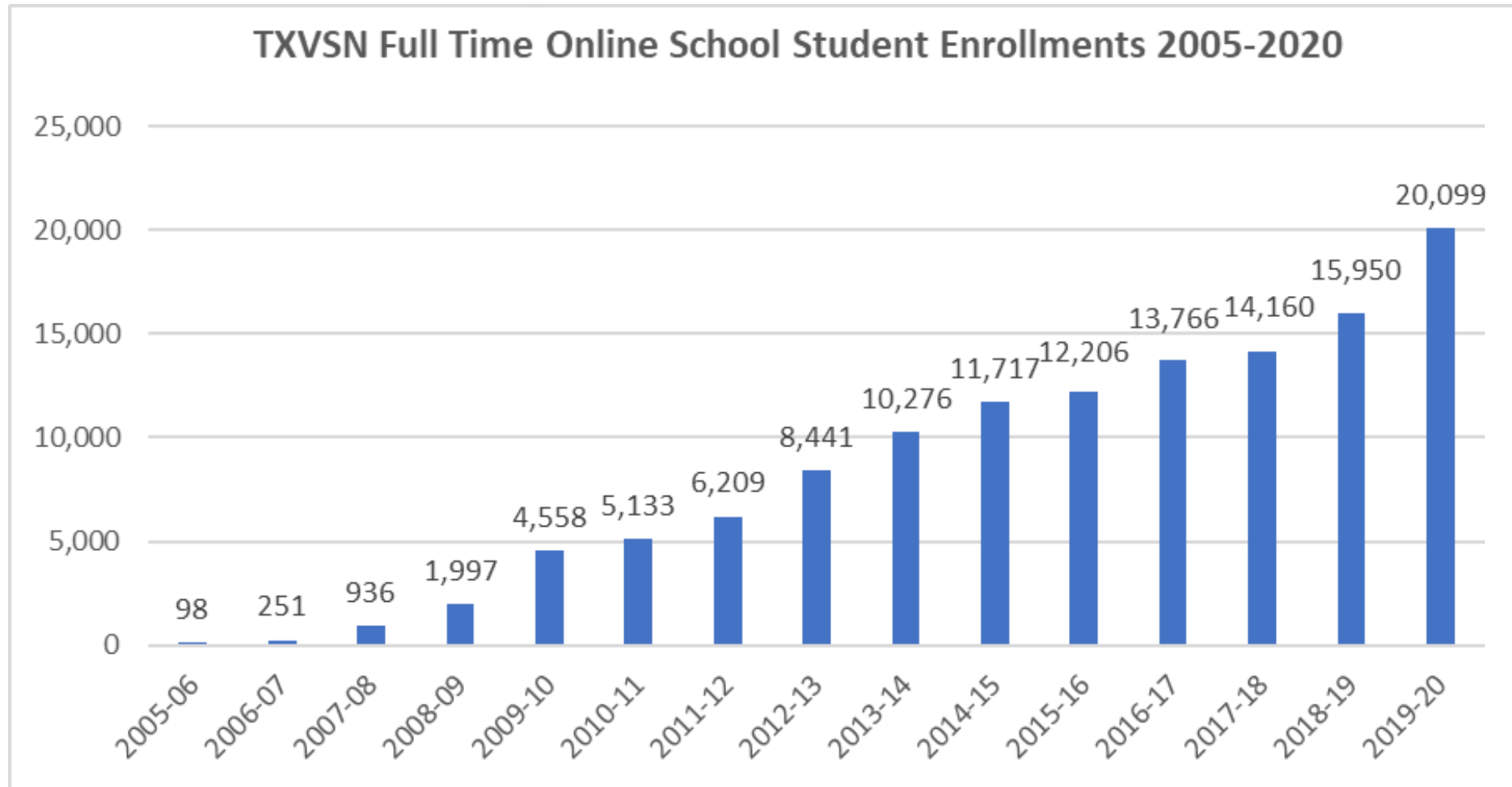
Texarkana Independent School District
County/District/Campus Number: 019-907-006
Serves grades 5-11

[iSchool Virtual Academy of Texas](#)

Texas College Preparatory Academies (Charter Holder: Responsive Education Solutions)
County/District/Campus Number: 221-801-022
Serves grades 3-12

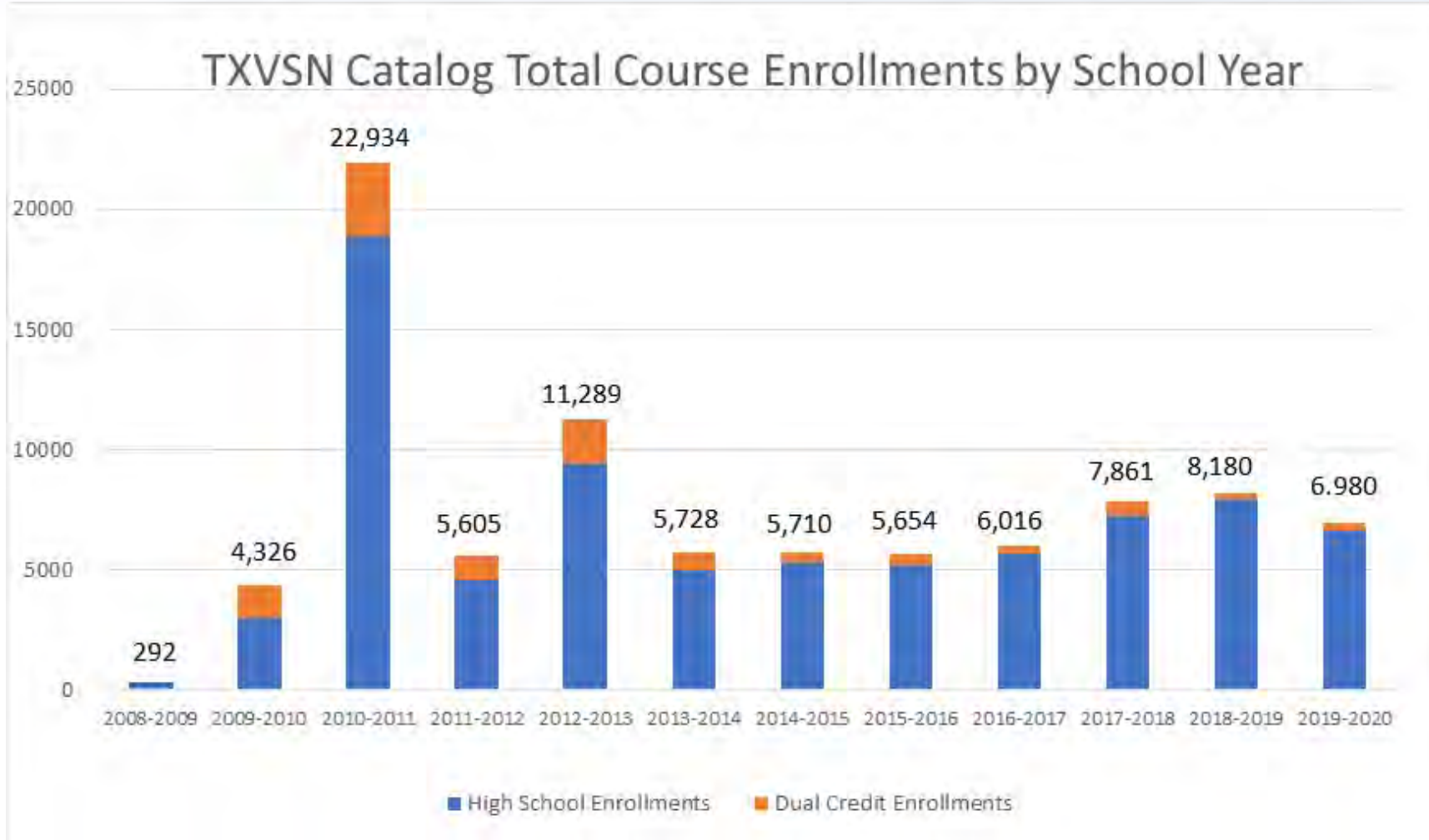
Only schools offering an online program that was operating on January 1, 2013 are allowed to operate a Full Time VSN School.

TXVSN Enrollment Trends - Full Time Enrollment



Data Source: TEA PEIMS and TEA TAPR. Data as of February 5, 2019

TXVSN Enrollment Trends – Catalog Courses



Data Source: TXVSN Website. Data as of January 27, 2020

Successful Course Completion Has Increased Over Time



Performance Over Time

LBB Performance Measure	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Course Enrollment through TXVSN (2.2.1.OP.1)	22,934	5,605	11,289	5,728	5,710	5,654	6,076	7,861	8,091
Percent of Successful Course Completions through TXVSN (2.2.OC.6)	66.93%	78.34%	76.53%	78.91%	86.41%	91.59%	89.76%	87.71%	90.73%

**Senate Education Committee Hearing
November 13, 2020**

Testimony by:

Chris Bigenho, PhD

Director of Virtual Learning Academy

Lewisville Independent School District

Cell: 214-232-9504

Office: 972-350-1846

bigenhoc@lisd.net

Testimony for Interim charge:

Digital Learning: Assess the Texas Virtual School Network and the new Texas Home Learning System to evaluate effectiveness of each and recommend model legislation to improve digital learning options for students, families, and educators”

The Virtual Learning Academy

Lewisville ISD’s Virtual Learning Academy (VLA) is a district program that offers fully online courses to students in the district and across Texas. All of these courses are approved by TEA through the Texas Virtual Schools Network (TXVSN) and are eligible to be used by school districts in the FSP funding model by generating 60 minutes of instructional time per course successfully completed up to three courses in a year per student. VLA has been delivering fully online courses since 2007.

Topic of this Testimony

1. A Fresh Approach: Fully funded district created and operated full-time online schools for students within district boundaries

Additional Discussion and Question Topics

2. Ideas for improving TXVSN fulltime online- A careful restructuring
3. Helping meet needs of rural districts through modifications of law regulating TXVSN course catalog- Removal of 3 course limit of TXVSN catalog courses
4. Accountability through engagement
5. Thoughts on addressing teacher caseloads

A FRESH APPROACH: A NEW FORM OF FULL-TIME ONLINE SCHOOL

Lewisville ISD's Legislative Focus for 87th Session (1 of 8)

Provide full-day funding for ISDs that choose to create district-operated, full-time online schools that serve the students within its district boundaries utilizing district approved curriculum and courses.

The Need for Lewisville ISD

1. Before COVID-19: Students were asking to for access to fulltime online learning for many reasons:
 - a. Students work to help support the family
 - b. Students participating in high levels of their sport: soccer, gymnastics, dance, competitive cycling etc.
 - c. Students pursuing their career while in high school- Early start on career
 - d. Students who are no longer comfortable attending physical classes because of various anxiety issues
2. Lewisville ISD not allowed to receive full funding for providing these students full-time online learning. While offered in very limited cases, it is not a sustainable practice outside of a handful of students per year.
3. Lewisville ISD was losing nearly 100 high school students per year to one of the state-authorized fulltime online schools. This is a funding loss of over \$600,000 per year and is effectively a defunding of our district.
4. During COVID-19 Year: All limits placed on TXVSN classes remained greatly limiting how they could be used by Lewisville in addressing our immediate needs. These same limits did not apply to the emergency remote teaching.
 - a. Statewide Data- As of September 28: 3,142,180 students (57% of Texas public school students) were reported as receiving remote synchronous or asynchronous instruction. 2,136,847 students (39% of Texas public school students) were receiving on-campus instruction.
 - b. LISD stood up three pathways of learning:
 - i. Virtual Learning Pathway
 - ii. Virtual Plus Pathway (Hybrid Model)
 - iii. Campus Learning Pathway
5. Post COVID-19: Many students will be happy to get back to campuses. However, what happens to the students who “found their sweet spot” in online learning environments when we are no longer able to provide them what they need because the funding stops?
 - a. Equity in education would require us to meet the learning needs of all students. Some student will have discovered that their best learning happened online.
 - b. Blocking ISD's from meeting the needs of students who need or want full-time online learning will result in additional defunding of local school districts.
 - c. Lewisville and other Independent school districts must be allowed to offer fully funded online options to our students giving them a local choice. We know our kids and our community

A FRESH APPROACH- CONTINUED

Lewisville ISD's Legislative Focus for 87th Session (1 of 8)

Provide full-day funding for ISDs that choose to create district-operated, full-time online schools that serve the students within its district boundaries utilizing district approved curriculum and courses.

This Statement Addresses:

1. The need for ISD's to be able to recapture and retain students who need and or want full-time online learning by being able to provide them a virtual campus within the district where they reside.
2. Provides more freedom for local design and control of curriculum and methods of instruction opening the door to greater innovation at the district level. Curriculum control and assurances of quality of courses and teachings reside locally with the district. Student engagement can be increased when we can build our curriculum around local values and community "stories". This is only possible if we are designing with our students in mind and providing the courses within our local communities.
3. Compared to state-wide full-time online schools, the ability to serve our SPED and 504 students can be more effective and efficient as all students would be local and would have access to all services in the district.
4. All state required testing is local and does not require additional budgeting to be set aside to test students all across the state.
5. Accountability in this model is higher as all accountability resides within the district. All of the students we are serving live within boundaries making them eligible to attend and LISD campus. We are accountable to our tax payers.
6. This new approach provides for additional mechanisms to engage with students locally increasing the opportunities to further build community in classes and relationships with teachers.
7. Protections for rural districts who may otherwise be threatened by increasing the number of districts in Texas offering full-time online classes to any student in the state.
8. Eliminates argument of virtual voucher as these new full-time online schools would be limited to serving their own students thereby eliminating the increase of students moving out of districts just because they are not allowed to offer students full-time online options to their own students.
9. For students attending the online school that is within their own district and only serving their own students, the need to be enrolled in a public school the year before would be removed for these schools
10. Removes the need for statewide oversight of for courses that are not being used statewide.
11. Keeps statewide options open through TXVSN to help smaller districts meet their instructional needs.

Ideas for improving TXVSN fulltime online- A careful restructuring

1. Current law has set in perpetuity the ability for 8 Texas educational authorizers to receive full funding for offering full-time online learning to any student in the state.
2. Currently there are 6 authorizers operating 7 full-time online schools that can serve any student in the state of Texas and receive full funding. Two authorizers are currently not exercising their privilege. For the sake of this conversation, I will call these privileges a "Golden Ticket"
3. Current law does not provide any mechanism to add Authorizers as the law is tied to a date of entry rather than something like a set number of authorizers in the state.
4. Current law does NOT provide a mechanism which removes the "Golden Ticket" from an authorizer for non-performance.
5. For authorizers, accountability is simply the A-F rating with no mechanisms to effect change in operating practices of the schools
6. SB 1455 attempted to add accountability but placed the greatest burden on the course provider which has gone into business with the authorizer. Any accountability needs to include both the authorizer (beyond the A-F rating) and the educational service provider (if there is one). The 10 year "do not hire" list for the educational service providers would have greatly limited innovation in the state of Texas as few providers would want to do business in Texas under those rules thereby reducing the diversity of approaches to teaching and learning and available content. Perhaps a shorter time when a provider would not be able to do business in the state followed by a chance to re-enter the market after they have demonstrated success in other states.
7. The authorizer should also be held accountable with a risk of losing the "Golden Ticket"

Proposal

Recall all unused "Golden Tickets" and reauthorize them through an RFP process. In the new law, all "Golden Tickets" belong to the state and could be revoked for poor performance as defined by TEA accountability systems and reissued through an RFP process.

Set a cap on the number of authorizers through a maximum number of "Golden Tickets" available. I propose we start with the eight tickets that are already available and if there is a need to increase them in the future, set the max at "not to exceed" 10 authorizers at any time. In addition, there be limits on the number of "Golden Tickets" for independent school districts and charter schools. I propose the following limits for 8 authorizers: 6 Independent School Districts and 2 Charter Schools (matches current ratio). These statewide online school authorizers would be limited to ONE online campus per ticket and no authorizer could hold more than one ticket.

This change in law for TXVSN state-wide full-time online schools would add greater accountability to schools that do not answer to tax payers in the same way that local fulltime online schools answer to their community of tax payers.

TXVSN CATALOG COURSES- MEETING NEEDS OF RURAL DISTRICTS AND BEYOND

Eliminate the 3 Course Limit and expanding the catalog

Current statute limits all school districts, for the purpose of calculation ADA, to no more than three courses from the TXVSN catalog per student per year.

By eliminating this barrier, school districts would be able to schedule their own students in any combination of face to face and online up to and including fulltime online options even when they don't personally have an online campus in their district. In this case, the funding through FSP remains with the receiving district. Students schedules can be created using a menu approach.

Districts that have not stood up their own online school can still leverage the TXVSN catalog and purchase classes individually as they need them to fill their needs. In speaking with some rural districts, this was attractive in that they may have students who are not able to come to school because of work. Yet, that student wants to play ball and graduate. With this approach, districts could offer any number of combinations of courses that meets the students' needs keeping the student engaged in their education and engaged in the community.

The student remains enrolled in their home district. This keeps the full funding through FSP in the home district as well. The receiving district then contracts out individual classes to meet the individual needs of their students. All accountability remains in the home district but success data is also reported to TEA through the TXVSN data collection process.

Finally, the TXVSN catalog should be expanded to include middle school courses. I have had multiple conversations with districts looking for course options for hard to staff subjects in more remote regions of the state.

Accountability through Engagement

Guidance on attendance accounting during the 2020-21 school year for the asynchronous model was concerning in that it layered the underlying philosophy of school funding dating back to the late-1800's on top of a teaching/learning modality that, when applied well, works best outside of traditional structures of what we think school should look like.

There are many ways to see engagement in a course and progress toward the goal of successfully completing a course. Unfortunately, the temporal element of daily engagement as a measure of students being present runs counter to the needs of many students who need or want fulltime online learning. Many students are looking for online learning to create the time they need to pursue their own interests in sports, arts, and career. This may mean they need more freedom in how they do class beyond location. Students may need freedom in how they use time and those timeframes may fall outside of daily engagement in an LMS. While the TXVSN model of attendance through successful completion of a class (100% attendance if grade 70 or higher, 0% attendance if course grade is below 70) is also problematic, there are ways to look at attendance for funding purposes without the need to identify individual engagement in a class each day.

Perhaps a system that looks at enrollment numbers, success and completion. This could be linked to percentages of the course that are completed during any particular grading period. This would allow student flexibility related to temporal aspects of completing a course while still holding them accountable to a pace and high levels of achievement.

Setting Maximum Section Size for TXVSN Courses vs. Maximum Caseloads per Teacher

Current ED code allows class size limits to be set through TAC but does not address total teacher caseload during a grading period. This has significant implications for online classes taught through TXVSN.

Caseload defined: total number of students across all sections assigned to a single teacher during any one grading period.

Application of Current Law: Limits the number of students in a section of a TXVSN course but not the total number of students a teacher is carrying in their caseload. In application, programs can currently assign multiple sections of 40 students (TAC 70.1007(c)(6)) to a teacher with no defined limits on the total number of students in the teacher's caseload. In practice, a classroom high school teacher in a district on an accelerated block might have on average 27 students in a class with three sections for a total of 81 students assigned to their caseload per grading period. The limits under current policy as interpreted from current law for online classes is 40 per section with no limits to the number of sections. In practice, there are programs where teachers have in excess of 800 students in their caseload for a single grading period. This clearly impacts the efficacy of this teacher to connect with their students in any meaningful way and relegates the role of teacher to course management rather than educator.

Framework for Change: In the context of the learning environment, limits should be set at the number of students in total across all sections of TXVSN classes assigned to a teacher. In the context of traditional classrooms where physical limits of space exist, current law and code addresses class size limits from the perspective of students per square-foot, subject taught, fixed instructional timeframes, and methods of instruction (Education Code 25.112(c) and TAC Part II 61.1036). However, this framework does not effectively apply to online learning environments where time can be flexible and limits on space do not exist. There are however, limits to the number of students any one teacher can effectively work with in any given grading period.

Proposed Change: Establish in code teacher caseload limits ensuring programs limit the total number of students any one teacher would have in total across all sections of online courses they are teaching in any one defined grading period.

Senate Education Committee

Testimony on Digital Learning



Ms. Tiffany Carey, Director of Innovative Learning

Introduction to Frisco ISD

Frisco ISD is the third largest school district in North Texas serving over 63,000 students. The district has also been one of the fastest growing school districts in the United States over the past 20 years, adding more 55,000 students in that time period. Even while facing the significant challenges associated with enormous growth, the district has remained one of the highest performing districts in the state and is currently the highest performing large district in the state. Frisco ISD employs almost 8,000 people, including more than 4,300 teachers.

Currently, due to COVID-19, Frisco ISD is serving just under 30,000 of our students virtually.

Texas Virtual School Network

What TxVSN Does

The Texas Virtual School Network, as it is currently designed, primarily serves as a catalog of courses available to students throughout the state of Texas. However, this catalog remains limited in breadth to high school courses. Additionally, school districts only receive funding for those courses upon successful completion. TxVSN also provides limited oversight of the small number of approved full-time virtual schools in the state.

What TxVSN Doesn't Do

However, TxVSN was not designed to accommodate school districts utilizing virtual and blended learning options within their own districts. TxVSN classes and schools are open to students regardless of their home district and TxVSN was designed with this more widespread constituency in mind. TxVSN is not an appropriate mechanism for widespread use of virtual learning by school districts for their own students.

Improving Digital Learning Options

Local Programs

The TEA has made significant allowances related to online learning in response to COVID-19. These allowances have provided temporary flexibility, so this testimony addresses the situation as it stands in current law without the allowances made by TEA which can only be made permanent through legislative action. Frisco ISD has a number of students with medical conditions requiring long-term treatment, students in outpatient treatment facilities, and elite athletes, all of whom are impacted by the limitations on online learning in current law. Frisco ISD's mission is to know every student by name and need.

One student is receiving 6 weeks of chemotherapy at a facility outside of the district. Because the student is out of school for 6 weeks, current law would require the student to either enroll in the district in which the treatment facility is located, or in an online school and as Frisco ISD cannot currently operate an online school, the district has been unable to serve this student. As a result, the student is receiving instruction from a different school on a different scope and sequence than the classroom to which the student hopes to return.

A second student spent six weeks in an outpatient treatment facility. While in the treatment facility, Frisco ISD was unable to provide services because the student did not qualify for homebound services. The student then returned to the classroom part time, but had missed so much content and was quickly overwhelmed while attempting to catch up. Later, when the student required additional treatment, the student withdrew from Frisco ISD.

A third Frisco ISD student is an elite athlete who participates in competitions throughout the country. The student chose not to take AP courses because the student's schedule meant the student often missed class and was concerned with having to continually catch up.

Frisco ISD has hundreds more students who may not be able to receive the quality education they deserve because current law prevents school districts from tailoring educational programs that take into account the student's particular needs.

However, the Legislature can make a number of changes that will allow school districts across the state to serve their own students.

The first is to allow districts to count as present for the purposes of Average Daily Attendance, students participating in digital learning programs. This is vitally important to ensuring students receive quality online instruction. Teaching via a digital platform is as resource-intensive as face to face teaching. Recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers will be a primary challenge for online learning, just as it is for face to face. Additionally, the technology infrastructure required to ensure

students have access to high-quality educational resources is expensive. Without full ADA funding for online students, districts will not be able to ensure quality digital learning.

Second, the legislature should allow districts to determine when and whether to offer online courses to students, including students who may wish to select online courses temporarily, rather than full-time.

Third, the legislature should allow districts to establish online campuses in the same manner other campuses are created. This would allow districts to operate full-time programs that can be tracked for accountability purposes.

Finally, the legislature should remove any growth restrictions related to these local programs.

If the legislature made these changes, the student receiving chemotherapy out of district and the student in the outpatient treatment facility would be able to maintain the scope and sequence of their courses making the transition back to the classroom more seamless. The elite athlete would be able to continue pursuing the student's dreams while also receiving a more advanced and rigorous education.

Changes to the Texas Virtual School Network

In addition to providing the opportunity for school districts to serve their own student's better, the legislature can also make changes to TxVSN to help districts all across the state better serve the needs of their students.

First, the legislature should provide ADA funding for TxVSN courses beyond the current three-course limit. This will allow school districts who rely on the TxVSN catalog to provide greater opportunities for their students.

Second, the legislature should codify the current waiver granted by the TEA to allow any district to submit online courses to the TxVSN course catalog to be used by other districts. This increase in the type and quantity of classes offered through TxVSN will be available to all districts, whether that district has a virtual academy or not, and increase access to students across the state without creating competition for small or rural districts.

Conclusion

One of the most common concerns expressed related to online learning is that the quality of online learning programs are insufficient. That has been used to justify maintaining current law. However, current law does not prevent students from receiving online instruction, it merely prevents students from receiving online instruction from their home district. Districts should be permitted to serve their own students in the way that best addresses their individual needs.



HB 3 Implementation Update

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MIKE MORATH – COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

NOVEMBER 13, 2020

Historic Time in Texas Public Education



House Bill 3: Highlights



Funding Increases On Average - \$530 per ADA



Supports Teachers and Rewards Teacher Excellence

- Teacher Incentive funding
- Increased Minimum Salary Schedule
- Teacher Mentor Allotment program
- Do Not Hire registry



Increases Funding and Equity

- Compensatory Education increased to 0.225 - 0.275 based on density of neighborhood poverty
- Current year values equalizing Tier One
- Equal treatment of ASF funding



Focuses on Learning and Improving Student Outcomes

- Full day Pre-K, K-3 reading support
- Dual Language
- Increased SPED mainstream funding
- Dyslexia funding
- CCMR Outcomes Bonus
- CTE, P-TECH, New Tech
- Extended elementary school year
- Blended Learning



Reduces and Reforms Property Taxes and Recapture

- Tax rates dropped an average of 8 cents in year one
- Tax rates continue to decline as property values grow more than 2.5%
- Additional board local discretion
- Recapture cut from \$3.82B to \$2.43B* in year one

*\$2.43 billion current law recapture includes the ADA hold harmless for Covid-19 and is prior to adjustment for ESSER funds.

Certain HB 3 Implementation Highlights



Reading Academies

The Reading Academies are set to launch this summer with **51,845 teachers** completing them in year one through either the blended or comprehensive model.



College Exam Reimbursements

As of the October test administration, **2x more** students have taken the ACT and **3x more** students have taken the SAT as a result of more districts offering these exams and being reimbursed.



Teacher Incentive Allotment

803 Letters of Interest received by districts.



Do Not Hire Registry

The registry developed and accessible to Texas' public and private schools and will be available to the public mid March.

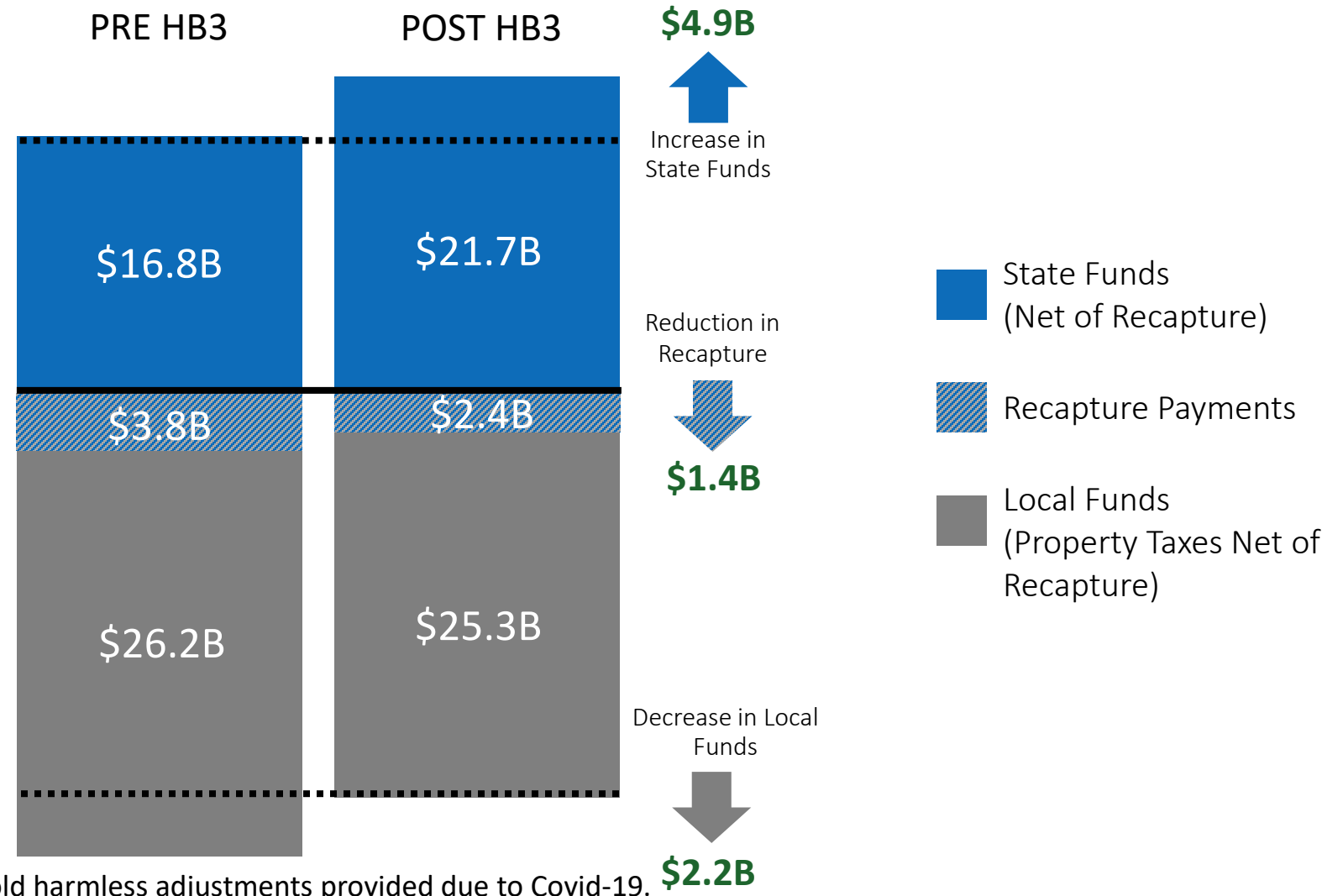


Tax Rate Reductions

Tax rates were **reduced 8.3 cents** from 2018 to 2019.

HB 3 infused \$2.7 billion of net new revenue into district budgets

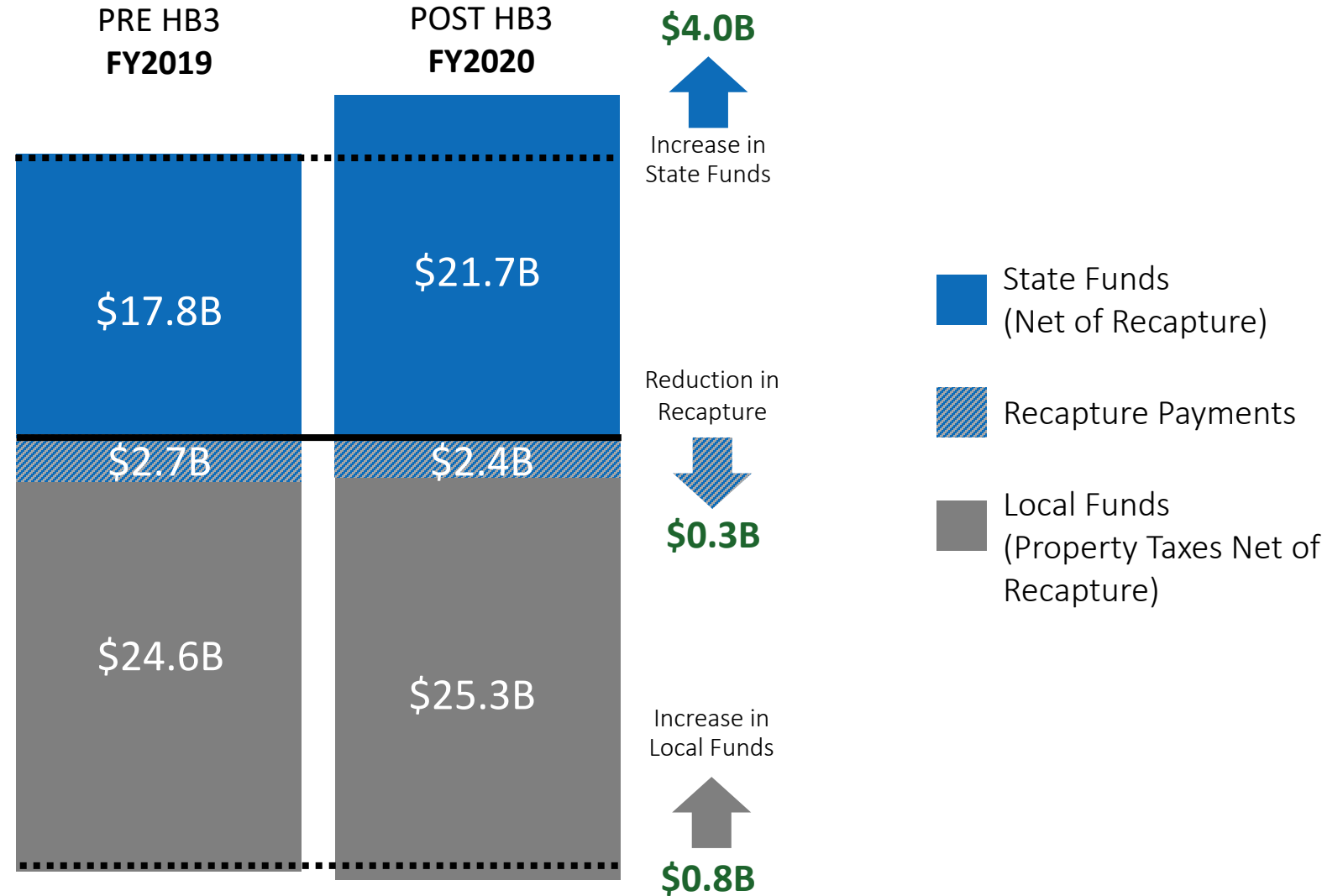
\$2.7B increase
in total funding for public education operations in fiscal year 2020.



The numbers on this slide are inclusive of the ADA hold harmless adjustments provided due to Covid-19. **\$2.2B**

HB 3 infused \$4.4 billion of net new revenue (year over year) into district budgets

\$4.4B increase
 in total funding for public education operations in fiscal year 2020 over fiscal year 2019, resulting in a *year over year* gain of \$872 per ADA.



TEA support of House Bill 3 implementation

With the passage of House Bill 3, support to improve student outcomes has never been greater.



tea.texas.gov/HB3

HB 3 in 30 Video Series



TEA has produced **25 videos** on HB 3 implementation guidance for the field. These videos have...



427,540

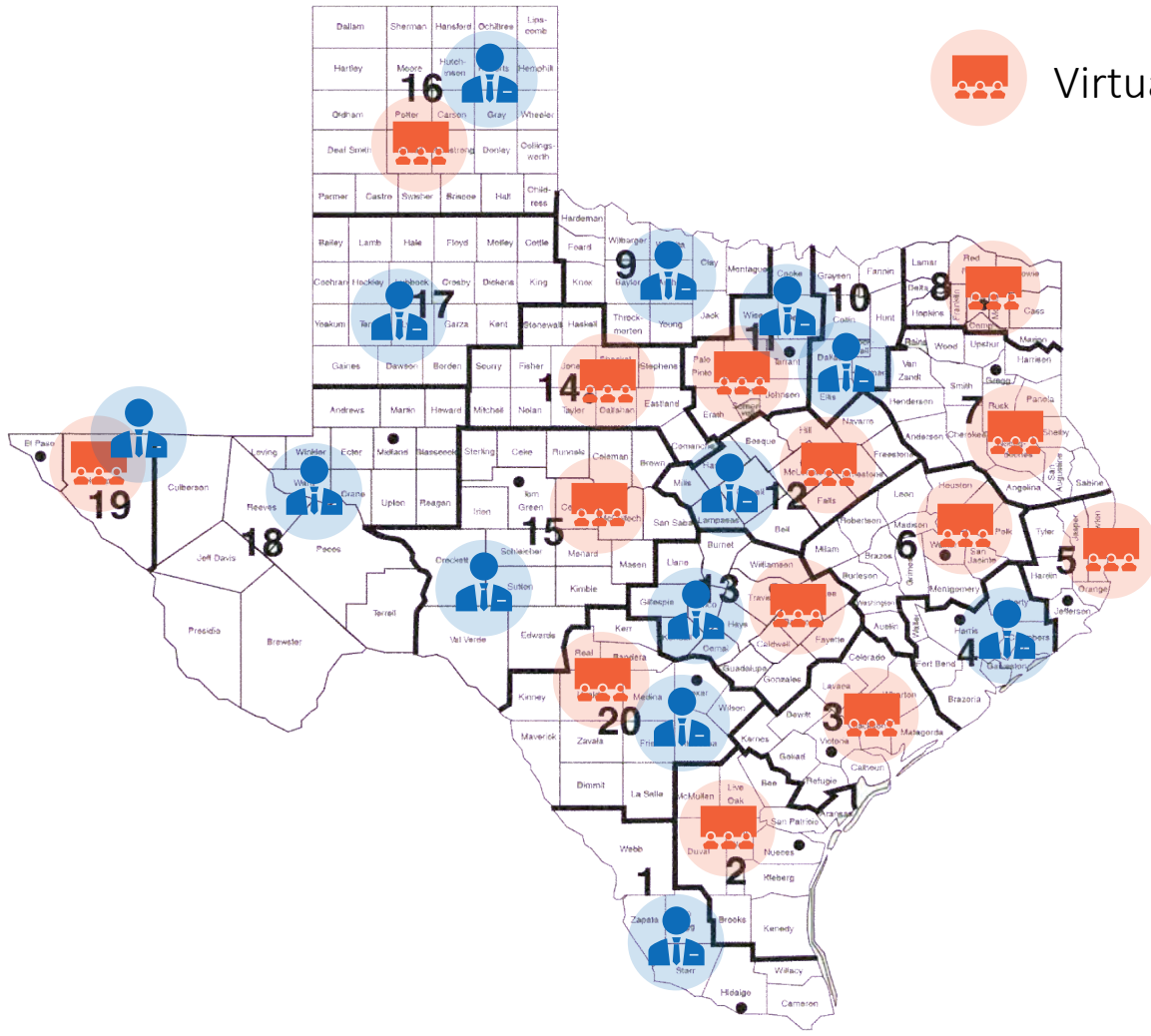
unique video views
(as of Sept. 2020)



1,731,312

minutes watched
(as of Sept. 2020)

TEA Visits to ESCs Across the State



Virtual Visit



In-Person Visit

Commissioner Morath held over **13 in-person** visits and **11 virtual visits** with Superintendents and administrators briefing them on the initiatives and opportunities in HB 3 as well as **monthly ESC director meetings.**

TEA's School Finance team held over **5 in-person** visits and **2 virtual visits** with Superintendents and administrators briefing them on the initiatives and opportunities in HB 3.

HB 3: TAA Correspondence Letters

52

To the Administrator letters on HB 3

These letters provide useful guidance to districts and direct them where to find information on TEA's website.

HB 3 Guidance and Correspondence

Date	Title	Division
10/10/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Blended Learning Grant Program	Special Populations
10/03/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Teacher Incentive Allotment	Educator Systems and Support
10/03/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Teacher Appraisal survey	Educator Systems and Support
09/26/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Update on Changes to the Bilingual Education Allotment	Special Populations
09/19/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Early Childhood and CCMR Board Adopted Plans and Goals	Governance
09/12/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Reading Practices	School Programs
09/05/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation of the Special Education and Dyslexia Allotment and Senate Bill 2075 Monitoring	Special Populations
08/29/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Gifted/Talented Education Certification and Funding	Special Populations
08/29/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: Charter School Funding	School Finance
08/22/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: College, Career, or Military Readiness CTE, Incentives for High School Models, and High School Equivalency	College, Career, and Military Preparation
08/22/2019	House Bill (HB 3) Implementation: Small and Mid-sized District Allotment	State Funding
08/15/2019	Changes to Reporting Requirements and Creation of the Registry of Persons Ineligible to Work in Public Schools	Educator & System Support
08/15/2019	Updates to Program Intent Codes	Financial Compliance
08/08/2019	House Bill 3 (HB 3) Implementation: College, Career, or Military Readiness Sections	College, Career, and Military Preparation