

TEXAS HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES



JON E. ROSENTHAL



DISTRICT 135

May 15, 2024

The Honorable Greg Abbott
The State of Texas, Governor
Post Office Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott,

I appreciate your swift response to the letter my colleagues and I sent you on May 12th. After considering your response, the House Democratic Caucus and I would like to request a meeting with you to work out a solution to avert a school funding crisis before this Fall. That said, respectfully, I have some contentions to several points you made.

Let's not conflate the bipartisan rejection of school vouchers with the failure of the bill increasing public school funding, the bill author withdrew the bill when vouchers failed. For decades, bipartisan majorities in the Texas House have rejected vouchers that would gut our local schools, like we've seen in numerous other states. Governor, you admit that you do not have the votes to pass vouchers, so let us focus on the popular shared objective of funding our public schools before students begin the 2024-2025 school year. Increasing public school funding should not be held hostage to force unpopular school vouchers.

Respectfully, I believe your assertions as to why public schools are facing deficits are disingenuous. Clearly, the actual root cause is that there has not been a significant increase to the basic allotment since 2019.ⁱ There has been no adjustment for inflation, and no significant increases for schools to respond to unfunded mandates.ⁱⁱ You claim total funding "exceeds \$12,000 per student" (the actual total is \$11,803), but that is woefully inadequate compared to the current national average of \$15,633 per student.ⁱⁱⁱ

Finally, you claim (without evidence) that Texans are withdrawing their students due to "growing dissatisfaction with the ideological leanings of education delivered by some public schools." I would suggest that not having adequate funding and the constant political attacks undermining Public Education in Texas probably have had more impact on enrollment.

These are all important questions and topics worthy of discussion as we all work to ensure that our students receive the best education in the nation. Both myself and my colleagues in the House Democratic Caucus are ready to roll up our sleeves and meet with you and your team to discuss real solutions to the public education funding crisis in Texas before the Fall semester. Governor, let us know the day and time and the House Democratic Caucus will be ready to talk.

Sincerely,
Jon Rosenthal

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JR".

State Representative, District 135

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DISTRICT 135

ⁱ <https://www.texasaft.org/policy/funding/fact-check-are-texas-schools-secretly-better-funded-than-ever-before/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.tasb.org/news-insights/truth-about-school-finance>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2024/public-school-spending-per-pupil.html>

DISTRICT OFFICE

8440 GREENHOUSE RD., STE. #A104
CYPRESS, TX 77433
(281) 463-5056

JON.ROSENTHAL@HOUSE.TEXAS.GOV

CAPITOL OFFICE

P.O. BOX 2910
AUSTIN, TX 78768-2910
(512) 463-0722
FAX (512) 463-2331