

# Coalition news & updates

April 15, 2020 - Please don't hesitate to forward to other districts if information is helpful -

**Hello All,**

Continuing to keep you and all of your teams in my thoughts. As some folks are doing their best to get used to the new normal, you all are on the front line of serving our most vulnerable community members, continuing to demonstrate the passion and dedication of our neighborhood schools.

Over the next week I will be reaching out to each of you to try to schedule a quick zoom or phone call to catch up and touch base. We are still building our legislative agenda, now largely changed by COVID-19 recovery, and your feedback and perspectives are vital. I know you all are still incredibly busy, so I will make whatever time you all have available work!

In this newsletter you will find information (and a request) for an upcoming webinar with Chairman Larry Taylor, an update on accountability, information on county appraisals, and some policy updates. Please also respond to the two questions when you have a moment.

Thinking of you all,  
Julia



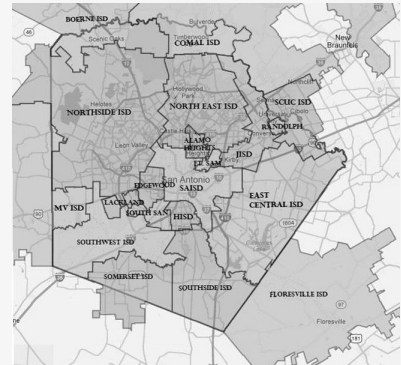
## Webinar with Chairman Larry Taylor

The Coalition for Education Funding is hosting a virtual call with Senate Education Committee Chairman, Sen.

Larry Taylor on **April 22, 2020 at 1:00 pm**. The call will be moderated by Dr. Greg Smith – Supt. of Clear Creek ISD and will last no more than 45 minutes.

Please send [Charles](#) or [me](#) any questions that you would like to have included in the session. Please have them emailed by April 16th at 5pm.

Register [HERE](#).



### What we're reading

[Covid Laid Bare Ed Inequities](#)

[How COVID Affects Ed Funding](#)

[Frontline COVID workers](#)

[Tribune COVID Update](#)

Would you rather postpone our summer meeting to July or have a virtual summer meeting?

### Postpone to July

Select

### Virtual in June

Select

Commissioner Morath recently stated that Reading Academies will proceed as planned.

Do you foresee this being an issue and an increase in cost to your district?

### Yes

Select

No

Select



## Proposed Rule - Compensatory Education Funding

TEA has released [new rules](#) on how schools can report compensatory education students. New options include:

1. Parent Certification (Form signed by the parent/guardian)
2. Direct Certification (Through qualification for another assistance program like SNAP)
3. Direct Verification through Public Records

Schools that participate in the community eligibility provision will still need to report these students to the state for funding purposes. We don't see any major issues with this proposal, as it allows for additional flexibility in documentation. Please let me know if have any concerns or if we can help draft comments.

Comments are open until May 26th and you can submit them [here](#).

## Accountability Post COVID-19

The recently granted accountability wavier offers temporary relief from testing requirements for the 2019-2020 school year. However looking forward to next year there are several concerns that we have and would like the coalition to start to review and address through our legislative priorities.

As a quick review:

- Two out of three domains of our current accountability system depend on comparing scores from one school year to the next (the progress domain and 50% of the closing the gaps domain).
- The granted wavier merely paused accountability, does not wipe past scores, and expects the 2020-2021 school year to be a continuation of the 2018-2019 school year.

While the waiver did grant some relief, we have some concerns and possible advocacy points that we would love for your feedback on:

- Progress from 2019-2020 scores to 2020-2021 scores will fail to provide any accurate measure of growth or loss; children recovering from trauma often suffer academically ([we saw it with the Great Recession](#)) and will need kindness, patience, and caring, not high stakes testing. Progress measurements need to be derived from alternative measures or needs to be waived for another year.
- Neighborhood schools who have provided countless hours and resources to their children should not be punished or be at risk for closure because they serve a high-need population that has [disproportionately felt the brunt of this pandemic](#).
- The COVID-19 disruption will significantly impact all campuses, but especially campuses that were on the cusp of turning around their campus. School closures and/or district take overs should be put on pause for at least another year as schools continue to recover.
- College, Career, and Military Readiness indicators from the class of 2020 will be utilized for next year's accountability metrics. While we are still understanding the affect on graduation/post-secondary enrollment, the data for accountability will almost certainly be effected.

We need creative solutions to monitor school performance while ensuring we allow the entire education community to recover.

If your accountability teams have any time to discuss the current waiver and next year's accountability plan, I would love to spend anytime they have available documenting their concerns.

Several other state-wide organizations are in the process of drafting letters to Commissioner Morath to take action on this now. I will circulate any letters that we may be asked to sign to everyone for their thoughts and approval .

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## Bexar County Appraisals

Bexar County Chief Appraiser Michael Amezcua, recently confirmed that 2020 appraisal values will be moving forward for the year. Despite efforts by city and county officials to [freeze property taxes](#) for 2020, the county is legally unable to do so. While delayed until July, 2020 values are still moving forward.

Furthermore, the attorney general's office [issued a ruling](#) that a recently passed senate bill meant to offer property tax relief during natural disasters won't allow appraisal district to pause or utilize previous year estimates.



### White House Requests Census Delay Until October 2020 Setting Redistricting Back to July 2021



White House officials have asked Congress to delay the 2020 Census to October and redistricting reports due back from states to July of 2021 (from March 2021).

While the Texas Constitution calls for redistricting to happen during the "first regular session" after census counts are released pushing the conversation to 2023, there may some precedent for the Governor to call a special session in the summer of 2021 to address redistricting.

Congress still needs to approve the delay and the Governor hasn't made a statement on how Texas will adjust its timeline.

## House Bill 3 Sustainability - UPDATED

As we continue to get close to summer and remain uncertain about federal stimulus in the works, I'll keep this section of the newsletter and will continue to update.

We still don't have guidance or hints from TEA on what elements of the budget they are eyeing for possible cuts or how much they will have to cut. On the superintendent call yesterday (April 14th), Commissioner Morath still seemed committed to maintaining programs through the next school year but did confirm that we will be looking at some degree of possible budget tightening.

While we don't know how large the economic fallout will be, many elected officials are still adamant about protecting elements of our budget, like education, as a well-funded education system is more important than ever.

### Here is what we know so far:

- UPDATE: CARES Act rules are expected to be release over the next month. Commissioner Morath warned again this week to be wary of any estimates that are being shared ahead of these rules being released. There are many elements in the CARES Act bill that depend on decisions the Secretary of Education along with the Governor must make over the next several weeks.

- UPDATE: Glenn Hegar was recently interviewed by the Transportation Advocacy Group and gave some measured updates on where Texas is economically. I recommend reading the [Houston Chronicle's Summary](#)
- (Review) House Bill 3 was funded through several mechanisms: reallocation of existing allotments (Cost of education index, high school allotment, small/mid-size allotment change), surplus revenue from state sales tax, diversion from oil/gas revenue, and revenue from certain online sales.
- Two out of the four funding sources for HB 3 are currently dramatically cut already (oil/gas and sales tax), Hegar has said the **\$3 billion of expected surplus is already gone**. However the recently signed **CARES Act** infuses additional revenue to businesses and industries directly affected by the economic shut down (not directly to oil/gas, but to transportation and travel industries) along with infusing significant dollars to state medicaid programs. Only time will tell if there measures are enough to cover the loss of revenue, but this is one of the fastest stimulus response in our history to attempt to correct the downtown.
- Prior to state shut down, the House Democratic Caucus formed the Special Committee of Closing Outdated Tax Loopholes & Exemptions largely to ensure HB 3 could continue with sustainable funding. Though possible tax reform will not be a panacea for budget shortfalls in the coming session, there are options for additional revenue for the state to consider. For example, based on the [comptrollers latest estimates](#) (2018) the state tax exemptions for the state total around \$47.5 billion.
- While the property tax growth cap was a big "win" for elected officials, it is largely the biggest cost of the HB 3 in the coming years. Any statutory changes would need to wait until next session, but as Hegar is relatively confident that the state is covered for this fiscal year, a statutory adjustment to property tax increases may serve as an additional lever for relief for the next biennium.
- Hegar is asking all agencies to review their budgets now for possible cuts. During the last recession Hegar stated that agencies were asked to cut their spending by 10% and estimates the same percentage might be necessary this time around. However, **as stated above**, many believe public education entitlements will be off-limits. Hegar is expected to present possible options to state lawmakers in the coming weeks.

#### What to watch for in the coming months:

- **Length of the pandemic:** The health of next year's economy is largely determined by country being through the virus and associated protective measures by June, giving the country time to rebound in the fall. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke **recently stated** the pandemic was, "much closer to a major snowstorm or a natural disaster than it is to a classic 1930s-style depression."
- **Additional stimulus from the federal government:** National advocacy organizations estimated the need to cover education budget shortfalls would be around \$75 billion, which is significantly more than the \$13.5 billion in the most recent stimulus package.
- **Movement by Governor Abbott to redirect Rainy Day funding this year:** If Governor Abbott and the LBB decide to move some of this money to cover hard costs related to the pandemic, it could help cover some of the gaps the federal money will not cover. If the pandemic continues into the summer we could see this move become more likely.

#### What you can do:

- Document EVERYTHING, any spending, any additional hours; anything and everything you can do to document decisions and spending you made during this time will be critical to telling the story to the legislature later.
- TASB has release a lot of [resources](#) for district to document spending during this time.
- Schedule some time with us, when you can, so we can start to craft our advocacy platform moving forward. We need to know your biggest pain points, deepest concerns moving forward, and support that has helped you through this crisis. We are available at all hours and are happy to talk with anyone from your team if they have time.

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**Our Members:**

AHISD, ECISD, HISD, JISD, MVISD, NEISD,  
NISD, SAISD, SISD, SWISD

**We are here to help:**

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Bexar County Schools Community Education Coalition