

Dear Representative or Senator (Last Name),

My child attends school in the Spring Branch Independent School District in west Houston. Although SBISD is a "Recapture" district, nearly 57% of our students are economically disadvantaged. In 2017, SBISD will repay to the State around \$53M; this figure will increase dramatically in the near future.

We all know this funding situation cannot be sustained and that our public school finance system needs overhaul. While several options have been discussed, it is important to remember that providing quality, free public education is mandated by our state Constitution. Each year, my property taxes go up and up, our district pays more and more and receives less and less – while the State's contribution continues to go down. We've reached the tipping point. No more is it acceptable for the State to not fully fund its share and divert education dollars to non-education budget items. It's time to make strengthening and positioning our public education system for the future success of Texas.

Ultimately, what is needed is a Special Session on school finance reform. However, in the interim, three important pieces of legislation have been proposed that will ease the financial burden SBISD and other Ch. 41 districts face. I urge you and your colleagues to please support these bills:

1. **HB 1324** will help SBISD recoup the \$31M it currently pays to the state on homestead exemptions. SBISD collects no money on these exemptions, yet is required to pay this money to the state. This makes no sense, and places a tax relief burden on the backs of Recapture Districts like SBISD. While we all appreciate property tax relief, the state needs to pay its share without essentially taking it from our children.
2. **HB 1326** addresses unfair funding for SBISD and other Recapture Districts that provide full-day Pre-K. Right now, these districts receive only a half-day's worth of funding for their Pre-K students, *even when those students attend a full day of school*, costing SBISD \$7.6M this year alone.
3. **HB 1037** and **SB 358** address reimbursement of transportation costs for Recapture Districts. Currently, SBISD is excluded from the transportation allotment in the school funding formula that non-Recapture schools receive. This will cost SBISD \$1.4M this year.
4. **HB 21** –increases the basic allotment by \$125 per student; provides temporary financial relief for recapture school districts and is a positive first step towards complete public school funding reform.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your support for full and fairly funded public school education. We need strong schools; not under-funded schools.

Sincerely,

(Your Name Here)