

Dear Representative or Senator (Last Name),

I am writing to you as a concerned parent of a student(s) in the Spring Branch Independent School District. I am sure that you, like most Texans, value and take pride in our public school system. Governor Greg Abbott recently referred to education as a “civil right.” I agree, and urge that this right be supported fully and fairly for all of our state’s 5,000,000+ students.

The current funding formula creates an undue burden on districts like SBISD that have been declared “Recapture” districts. Even though more than 56% of SBISD students live below the poverty line, SBISD is paying the state several millions of dollars that are earmarked for education, while receiving just a fraction back. This money is badly needed to retain qualified teachers and help strengthen SBISD’s education programs for my child and the other 35,000+ students SBISD serves.

Strong public education is the foundation of Texas communities and was part of the original belief system of our Texas Founding Fathers when they declared independence from Mexico in 1836. I am asking you to support this important Texas heritage and civil right in three simple ways:

1. Back **HB 1324**: this bill will help SBISD recoup the \$31M it currently pays to the state on homestead exemptions that it does not collect. Our district doesn’t collect this revenue from SBISD taxpayers and should not have to repay that money to the state.
2. Support legislation, like **HB 1326**, that addresses the unfair funding formula 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 its full-time Pre-K students, even when those students attend a full day of school. This discrepancy costs SBISD \$7.6M, but it can easily be fixed.
3. Support legislation, like **HB 1037** and **SB 358**, that 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. Say “yes” to **HB 21** – which increases the basic funding for almost all school districts from \$5,140 to \$5,350 per student every year. This bill will bring temporary financial relief to SBISD.

I know there is a lot of talk these days about the importance – and urgency – of fixing public school funding. Addressing these three issues are important, immediate steps that can be made. Ultimately, I want the Texas legislature to turn this talk into action and address this issue fully in a special session.

Thank you for your consideration, and for supporting the important Texas institution of a strong, fairly funded public school education.

Sincerely,

(Your Name Here)