

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2020

Mike Morath
Commissioner, Texas Education Agency
1701 N Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Commissioner Morath,

As members of the Texas Congressional Delegation, we write to express our sincere disappointment with the Texas Education Agency's decision to use federal dollars appropriated under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act to offset state losses, instead of disbursing funds directly to local education agencies.

As you are well-aware, students and teachers across Texas readily adjusted to the distance-learning model implemented in the last third of the 2019-2020 academic school year in response to COVID-19. Our students, teachers, and school district officials united and adapted to this "new normal" to conclude the school year; however, many uncertainties linger, especially regarding school finances for the summer and the upcoming academic year.

We have heard directly from constituents representing LEAs, school board members, and school finance officials about the tremendous need for federal relief to help offset district losses brought about by school closures, sanitation and cleaning and distance learning costs, among others. Our LEAs were expecting COVID-19 relief federal funds passed under the bipartisan CARES Act, to help alleviate these unexpected, though necessary, expenses.

Instead, TEA's recent decision to keep CARES Act funding to offset state losses will force district officials to go back to the drawing board to find a way to keep their districts afloat financially and keep their students and teachers engaged educationally.

TEA's decision to withhold federal dollars for the agency completely disregards the sacrifices of our community's education leaders, who have worked tirelessly to help students stay connected, educated, and fed, during this unprecedented time.

We ask that TEA reconsider this decision and immediately distribute funds appropriated under the CARES Act directly to Texas local education agencies, as this was what we intended when we voted in Congress in favor of these much-needed funds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sylvia R. Garcia". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sylvia" being more prominent than the last name "Garcia".

SYLVIA R. GARCIA
Member of Congress

SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member of Congress

HENRY CUELLAR
Member of Congress

COLIN ALLRED
Member of Congress

JOAQUIN CASTRO
Member of Congress

VERONICA ESCOBAR
Member of Congress

MARC VEASEY
Member of Congress

AL GREEN
Member of Congress

EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
Member of Congress

FILEMON VELA
Member of Congress

VICENTE GONZALEZ
Member of Congress

LIZZIE FLETCHER
Member of Congress