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**Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Patrick, Speaker Phelan Announce \$11.2 Billion In New Funding For Texas Public Schools**

*Supplemental funds build upon funding previously provided to address pandemic educational challenges*

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, and Speaker Dade Phelan today announced the release of \$11.2 billion in new federal funds to help public schools address student learning loss and costs incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These one-time funds are intended to support a comprehensive learning recovery effort in Texas over the next three years. Due to federal requirements, two-thirds of the funds are available immediately under grants administered by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), with the final one-third to be distributed contingent upon approval by the U.S. Department of Education.

Given the complicated nature of the federal maintenance of effort requirements and the enormity of the education challenge ahead, the decision to release these new funds was reached with the important input of Senate Finance Chair Jane Nelson, House Appropriations Chair Greg Bonnen, Senate Education Chair Larry Taylor, and House Public Education Chair Harold Dutton.

This funding builds upon the roughly \$2.2 billion in federal funding already allocated to Texas to help public schools respond to COVID-19 and comes on the heels of the largest single-year increase in funding for Texas public education in the history of the state. The Texas Legislature passed the transformative legislation House Bill 3 in 2019, and during the 2019-20 school year, state funding for public education increased by more than \$5 billion from the year prior.

"The State of Texas is ensuring that our public schools have the necessary resources to help Texas students recover from learning loss related to COVID-19," said Governor Abbott.

"Two years ago, the Legislature passed, and I signed historic school finance legislation to ensure education funding was more equitable and that we fund schools in part on their ability to ensure students are ready for higher education or a career. To ensure this pandemic does not become a generational education crisis, we expect, and students deserve, for this funding to be used to remediate the progress lost due to the pandemic. This will ensure that Texas students will be ready to fill the jobs created in and attracted to this state."

"Throughout the challenges of the pandemic over the last year, I have worked to ensure the state maintains the funding commitment we made to our schools in HB3 in 2019, including teacher pay raises and the school finance reforms. These additional federal funds now will allow educators to help our students recover from the negative impact of long months out

of the classroom. My goal is to ensure that Texas schools — like the rest of our state — come back stronger than ever," said Lt. Governor Patrick.

"These resources will help close the gap for our students who have fallen behind as a result of COVID-19," said Speaker Dade Phelan. "Now more than ever, our state must work in unison to ensure our students remain competitive and have the tools they need to succeed. Texas is committed to our children and our public education system, and these funds and our efforts this session will underscore that commitment."

More funds for Texas public schools will be coming soon. As part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation (CRRSA) Act, Texas was allotted more than \$5 billion in funds for public education. However, both CRRSA and other legislation passed by Congress came with significant strings attached. As the Texas Education Agency is working through these issues with the Department of Education, the State will continue to support school districts as they have over the past year. That includes holding the districts harmless for decreases in enrollment, funding learning devices through Operation Connectivity, and reimbursing school districts for their COVID-19 related costs during the spring 2020 semester.

Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Speaker Phelan, Senators Jane Nelson and Larry Taylor, and Representatives Greg Bonnen and Harold Dutton will continue to work alongside the TEA to ensure that all outstanding questions on CRRSA funds are resolved by the end of the 87th Legislative Session so schools have clarity on the final round of supplemental funds they will receive.

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