

Urgent: GCISD Needs Your Support, Contact Your Representatives Today!

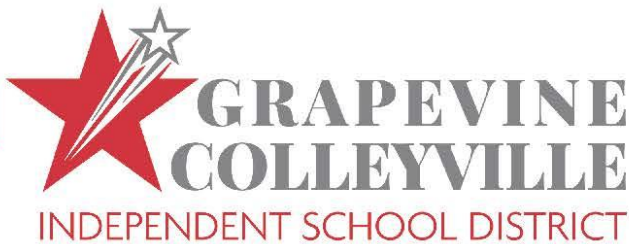
GCISD Community,

On October 5, 2023, Governor Abbott released a proclamation calling for a third special session of the 88th Legislature. This proclamation sets the governor's priorities for the special session, which began on Monday, October 9. We are disappointed to report that school funding was not on the list of the governor's priorities. We need to use our voice as well as our influence and contact our representatives to try and modify the priorities that have been set.

The majority of Texas's school districts funding comes from the collection of local property taxes with the amount capped at \$6,160 per student. This is also known as the basic allotment. Anything that GCISD collects above the basic allotment is returned to the state for them to redistribute as they determine necessary. GCISD returned approximately \$64 million last year (2022-2023). This equates to about a third of our operating budget. All while, the basic allotment hasn't been increased since 2019. The financial crisis that faces our district is a statewide dilemma. It is imperative that we stand together.

Public school funding in Texas ranks 42nd nationally. The state currently has a record surplus of \$33 billion. Over the past two years we have been making considerable strides to balance our budget and cut back on spending while continuing to provide a high-quality education to our students. We have made teacher pay a priority as we have given three years of significant raises to our teachers. Of course, our district hasn't been immune to the high inflation which has impacted our budget significantly, but we have also prioritized using your tax dollars wisely. In the past three years we have returned more than 37 cents back to the taxpayer on the total tax rate. One common misconception about property taxes is that the increases equate to more money for schools. THIS IS NOT THE CASE, but rather, our dollars have left our district to contribute to the \$33 billion surplus that the state has now.

You may have heard that during the regular session, the state did provide \$2.6 billion to Texas schools, but it is important to note that this wasn't for pay raises or an increase to the basic allotment. The increase in funding from the state was offset with reductions to local property taxes. **The school district will not see any additional funds.** We did, however, also receive more unfunded mandates from this recent legislative session. With no increase to the basic allotment, this would continue to have a negative impact on GCISD students, resulting in not only having budget deficits, a dwindling savings account (also known as fund balance), but possible changes in course offerings and staffing reductions, amongst other potential consequences. The legislature has an opportunity to invest in our public schools in a way that enables us to keep up with rising costs, maintain high standards for student achievement, attract and retain high-quality educators, as well as provide safe learning environments.



We are asking that every GCISD family take action now and contact your representatives. It only takes a few minutes to call or email. [Click this link to access a template message you may use.](#) **It is important that they hear from GCISD families and taxpayers.** We are asking for a portion of the surplus dollars to be added to the basic allotment, rather than fund vouchers, to compensate for inflation, which is around a 19 percent increase since 2019.

[Please see the joint letter that was signed by GCISD, Argyle, Keller and Southlake](#) to the Senate Committee on Finance outlining our funding priorities for this special session.

We will continue to keep you informed as more details are known. Again, please contact our representatives. Their contact information is included below.

Senator Kelly Hancock (Dist.9)

Email: kelly.hancock@senate.texas.gov

Phone: 512-463-0109

Senator Tan Parker (Dist. 12)

Email: tan.parker@senate.texas.gov

Phone: 512-463-0112

Representative Giovanni Capriglione (Dist. 98)

Email: giovanni.capriglione@house.texas.gov

Phone: 512-463-0690

Thank you for your partnership and commitment to our vision to Honor our Legacy, Equip for the Future, and Achieve Excellence.

Sincerely,

Shannon Braun
President
GCISD Board of Trustees

Dr. Brad Schnautz
Superintendent
Grapevine-Colleyville ISD