

July 13, 2020

**To:** Governor Greg Abbott, TEA Commissioner Mike Morath, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, Sen. Charles Schwertner, Sen. Larry Taylor, Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen, Rep. Dan Huberty, Rep. John Bucy, Rep. Vikki Goodwin, Rep. Donna Howard, Rep. James Talarico

**From:** The Leander ISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent of Schools

## Launching the Leander ISD 2020-21 school year

Leander ISD continues to make plans for the reopening of our schools and the educational, social, and emotional well-being of our students. We are committed to implementing comprehensive plans that protect our staff and students while delivering outstanding education – virtually and face-to-face – that our community expects.

Last week's [announcement from the Texas Education Agency \(TEA\)](#) conflicts with the work our teams have been doing over the past month to keep students six feet apart when we launch learning for the 2020-21 school year. It does not provide local school districts the flexibility to make decisions based on local data or community and staff values and expectations. Further, it removes the ability of local school officials to fully address teacher well-being, including space limitations due to social distancing requirements.

Our teachers and campus staff are the heartbeat of our community.

As a state-regulated institution, we will continue to operate within the guidelines set by TEA and Governor Greg Abbott, taking every precaution available to us to operate schools safely and effectively. However, we strongly advocate for the following items:

- suspension of in-person school and allowance for 100% virtual learning until the seven-day hospitalization average is five or less, the threshold set by the [Austin-Travis County public health agency](#) for a stage 2 response;
- flexibility to realistically minimize classroom ratios and provide social distancing;
- the suspension of STAAR and the A-F system for the 2020-21 school year;
- additional funding to supplement costs incurred by districts to provide safe and effective learning; and
- a commitment to allocate current or future federal money specified for schools as a supplement to existing funding commitments by the state.

The future of Texas depends on how well we prepare our children. We believe our families and teachers deserve the best from our state. Federal money for students should go toward the additional materials needed to protect the health of our students and staff or to support high-quality services for student learning. We vehemently disagree with the decision to use the CARES Act to supplant state

commitments for public education, providing limited additional resources to Texas students and educators.

Your support represents:

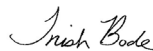
- a civic duty to care for our students and educators' health and safety, and
- an investment in the state's future workforce.

We want to be with our kids, full time, and in our classrooms. We want to support our families with regular schedules and the full complement of high-quality services our community deserves. We cannot jeopardize the health of our teachers in doing so.

Respectfully,



Bruce Gearing, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



Trish Bode  
President, Board of Trustees



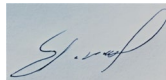
Gloria Gonzales-Dholakia  
Vice President, Board of Trustees



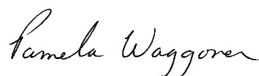
Elexis Grimes  
Secretary, Board of Trustees



Grace Barber-Jordan  
Board Member



Jim McKay  
Board Member



Pamela Waggoner  
Board Member

### About Leander ISD

The teachers, staff, and community of Leander ISD engage and inspire students for lifelong success. We are a fast-growth school district, 1,300 new students per year, serving families in parts of nine municipalities, including the cities of Austin, Cedar Park, and Leander. We are committed to continuing our culture for excellence across our 44 schools and over 42,000 students.

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