

BAHEP – Texas House Public Education Committee input on Charge 3

School Finance specific to Special Education/Other Special Education

a. Dickinson ISD –

1. The attendance method of calculating funding using attendance rather than by student counts is antiquated and blatantly unfair. If a student with special needs enrolls, we have to be ready, willing, and able to provide FAPE, whether the student attends one day a week or five days a week. For students with significant disabilities, this means we need to have the staffing, supplies, and curriculum available. These are fixed expenses that do not vary just because a student's attendance varies. Furthermore, the way the 2 hour/4 hour rule works for Average Daily Attendance for our 18+ students, it does not work for helping our older students develop an appropriate adult schedule that provides for instruction in unique settings (e.g. on the job, on the weekend or outside typical school hours.) We have to provide a job coach, but we get zero reimbursement if it is outside school hours. Finally, the weights for ADA have not been adjusted since the early 1980s and completely fail to account for the focus on inclusive instructional practices or for students who have more intense instructional or medical needs that must be provided during the school day.
2. Students in Life Skills classes, whose parents have chosen virtual learning due to concerns about their child's health, are not getting "enough" virtual instruction or they cannot access it at all due to their disability. We did not budget for extra staff to provide at-home instruction. We are being creative, but like other teachers, special education teachers feel they have TWO full time jobs – teaching their Face-to-Face students and trying to create viable learning opportunities for remote instruction students.