

# Childress Independent School District

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Mark Dykes, Superintendent

October 5, 2023

Dear CISD Parents,

Governor Abbott announced a special session of the 88th Texas Legislature to begin on October 9 at 1:00 p.m. for the purpose of providing private school subsidies, also known as vouchers or education savings accounts. The legislature has also been told to address potential school funding increases. I don't think I can overstate the importance of this 30-day special session. It is critical that you pay close attention to the actions our lawmakers take and how those actions will impact your public schools.

Schools have been hugely impacted by record inflation over the past few years and need more than \$14 billion just to return to the buying power we had in June 2019. Just as you have all felt the impact of inflation, we are seeing massive increases in the cost of utilities, fuel, insurance, food, and other expenses necessary for operating our school district. Perhaps most importantly, our staff are in the same boat as you and need cost of living adjustments just to keep up with the rising costs of groceries, health care, and gas. Unfortunately, the school finance system does not increase funding when inflation rises, and contrary to common belief, when your property values rise, schools do not receive more money for raises or operating expenses. Instead, the state gets to fund less of the system.

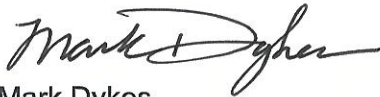
Because of this, the legislature needs to prioritize all available funding for public school students, classrooms, and staff. The legislature only provided about \$2.6 billion in the regular session earlier this year. They set aside \$4.5 billion more for public education that can only be spent if a bill is passed to spend it. Half a billion dollars is set aside specifically for private school subsidies, and the Lieutenant Governor has made it clear that the Senate will not provide the remaining \$4 billion to schools unless the House passes private school subsidies. Our students and staff deserve better.

With significant increases in revenue expected over the next two years, the legislature has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fully fund public education and stabilize our schools by tying funding to inflation. This will allow schools to keep up with rising costs while continuing to raise the bar for student achievement, attract and retain high-quality educators, provide safe and supportive learning environments, and further bolster the economic engine of this state.

We will be watching closely as the legislature considers these important topics, and we want you to follow along as well. We will be posting on district social media about these topics over the next few weeks, and I'll keep you updated as the session progresses. I encourage you to educate yourselves on these issues and stay engaged. Be prepared to contact your lawmakers to talk about what your public schools mean to you and how important it is to support our teachers and staff. You can find out who represents you in the state capitol by going to [Who Represents Me? \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov/who-represents-me) and typing in your address.

Thank you for entrusting us with your students and giving us the opportunity to partner with you in educating the future of our great state. Let's make sure our representatives in Austin know how important our schools are to our community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Dykes", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dykes