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ATPE Applauds Thursday's Pro-Public Education Budget Votes by the Texas House
Educators hope the House's amendments to the budget will accelerate getting federal relief funds to school districts.

AUSTIN, Texas—Shannon Holmes, Executive Director of the [Association of Texas Professional Educators](http://atpe.org) (ATPE) shared the following statement regarding the budget bill passed April 22 by the Texas House:

After more than 12 hours spent debating 100-plus amendments to the proposed State of Texas budget for the next biennium, ATPE is pleased the Texas House has added several key school-related provisions to its budget bill, **SB 1**. Some of these provisions were specifically requested by our association and align with our [2021 legislative priorities](#).

As the leading public educators' association in Texas, ATPE applauds the Texas House for once again voting to prohibit state-appropriated money from being used to fund private school vouchers, as well as for adopting amendments to SB 1 we hope will expedite Texas' allocation of the nearly \$18 billion in federal stimulus funding earmarked for public education.

By ensuring taxpayer dollars in the budget will not be diverted unnecessarily toward private school voucher programs, Texas can focus on preserving the funding gains made last session and getting federal COVID-19 relief funds into the hands of school districts, as the U.S. Congress intended.

ATPE is lobbying for the swift release of funds to school districts at the federal level, too. ATPE has asked U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. **Miguel Cardona** to provide additional guidance to help Texas and other states utilize the relief funds Congress intended for school districts but have yet to reach them.

State officials have cited unclear Maintenance of Effort requirements in the federal relief legislation as one reason for delaying distribution of the emergency funds to schools. ATPE requested further clarity on this requirement in a letter to Secretary Cardona this week.

Another issue has been the question of which entity should determine how funds will be allocated in Texas. ATPE believes those decisions should remain under the purview of the Legislature, and we appreciate the House's budget amendments designed to help ensure proper oversight and stakeholder input.

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SB 1 will now head back to the Texas Senate and then presumably on to a conference committee for final negotiations.

ATPE urges educators to contact their legislators, especially in the Texas Senate, and ask them to keep the Texas House's improvements to the budget in SB 1. It is also vital that educators continue to push for rapid distribution of federal COVID-19 relief funds to the districts that need them.

[Download a copy of ATPE's priorities for the 87th Texas Legislature.](#)

About the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)

Founded in 1980, ATPE is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, and future, retired, and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for Texas' five million public school students. | atpe.org

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