

June 8, 2017

Dear Alief Staff Members,

I am sure that many of you have questions about potential pay raises for the 2017-18 school year. As I have explained in past letters, Alief ISD has a long history of ensuring that employees take home more money per paycheck than in any other district in the greater Houston area. This is made possible by keeping salaries at or near the top of all school districts in the greater Houston area while maintaining exceptionally low health insurance premiums. In fact, let me direct you to a chart that shows the differences in take-home pay between school districts. You may find that chart here - [Comparison to surrounding districts](#).

I want you to know that your Board of Trustees and I are committed to ensure that you bring home more money than your counterparts in surrounding districts. I was in favor of asking the Board of Trustees to approve a 2% raise for all employees during the Board Workshop on June 7. These plans changed when Governor Abbott announced late that afternoon that he was calling a special session of the Legislature to begin on July 18. If you remember, the State Legislature did not pass a school funding bill during the regular Legislative session, and school funding is on the Governor's agenda for the special session which begins in July.

Despite the fact that there is no additional funding coming to school districts in Texas, the Governor has also proposed a \$1,000 pay increase for every teacher in the state. The Governor says that the pay raise can be accomplished if school districts "spend smarter." He also said that "pay increases can be achieved by passing laws that reprioritize how schools spend money." While we do agree in a pay increase for our staff, this mandated pay raise does not include any additional funding and will cost Texas school districts more than \$1 billion for 2017-18. It would cost Alief ISD an additional \$3.6 million.

Due to the Governor's actions, the Board of Trustees and I agreed to take a look and see just how Legislative action, if any, will further affect school districts' budgets. Even though we are delaying this pay increase at this time, the intent is to approve a pay increase before the 2017-18 school year begins. Alief has long been a good steward of taxpayers' dollars, and I think taking a good, long look at the situation before we approve a pay raise is in everyone's best interest. I share your frustration with the situation, but I can assure you that Alief ISD will remain extremely competitive in salaries while also keeping the cost for health care premiums the lowest in the Houston area. These delays in finalizing starting salaries fall directly on the Governor, Lt. Governor and Legislature's unwillingness to listen to voters to make funding education a priority.

I will be sending more communication as these Legislative issues, hopefully, become clearer. Please visit www.aliefisd.net frequently for updates and ways to voice your opinion to our state elected officials.

Thank you for what you do for Alief ISD. Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,



HD Chambers
Superintendent