

SAM LETT
PRESENTATION TO THE TEXAS SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
March 22, 2011

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee. My name is Sam Lett and I am here today representing SeptStart, Inc. in **opposition** to S.B. 949 (the companion bill to H.B. 1555).

While we have the utmost respect for Sen. Ellis and his sincere concern for his constituents, other students and family in the Houston ISD (HISD), we feel that HISD has brought him legislation that is flawed and not needed. S.B. 949's proposed change to current Uniform School Start Date law is bad public policy.

HISD in fact can meet its policy objectives locally without amending the first day of instruction.

CALENDAR

Houston ISD can achieve its goals of providing additional days under current Uniform School Start Date law of 4th Monday in August

HISD's policy goals as it relates to days of instruction according to the Apollo 20 Project Fact Sheet are:

1. Add 5 additional days in 2010-2011 and 10 additional days in 2011-12
2. Increase the length of the day from on average 7 hours to 9 hours; from on average 8am to 3pm to 7:30am to 4:30pm M-Th; 7:30am to 3:30pm Fri

As illustrated herein, under current school start law (4th Monday in August) HISD can obtain between 46 and 54 additional equivalent days of instruction.

HOW CAN APOLLO OBTAIN 46 TO 54 DAYS OF INSTRUCTION?

- Under current Uniform School Start Law
 - Apollo's lengthening of school day , to 7:30am to 4:30pm M-Th; 7:30am to 3:30pm on Fri, is equivalent to adding 33 to 40 days of instruction
 - Ending Apollo Fridays at 4:30pm (1 hour later, the same time as M-Th) offers HISD the opportunity to add 4 days of instruction
 - Example Calendar shows how HISD can add up to 9 days of instruction
 - HISD/Apollo has the local flexibility to achieve between current 174 days and total equivalent days of instruction of 220 to 228 days
- This calendar flexibility to add days of instruction via calendar days and length of day illustrates how HISD has the *flexibility* under Current State Law *to use its local authority* to achieve its own education policy goals AND still comply with the State's Uniform School Start law

Equivalent Additional Calendar Days from Lengthening the Day

	Apollo Day		Incr Days		HISD		Total Potential		# of Days
	in	If Apollo Ends School at	Alternative Calendar	Current	Current	Days Under	Current Law	Incr	
Elementary	38.8	4.7	43.5	9.0	174.0	226.5	52.50		
Middle School	40.6	4.8	45.4	9.0	174.0	228.4	54.36		
High School	33.0	4.6	37.6	9.0	174.0	220.6	46.61		
Equiv Days		4:30pm on Fri (1 add'l Hr)	Subtotal	Calendar	11-12 Days				

	Start Time	End Time	Hours in Day			Avg Total Student Hrs per Yr	F	Total
			M-Th	Fri	M-Th			
HISD* (current)								
Elementary	7:45 AM	2:57 PM	7.2	7.2	1,008.0	244.8	1,252.8	
Middle School	8:20 AM	3:48 PM	7.1	7.1	999.4	242.7	1,242.2	
High School	8:21 AM	3:39 PM	7.4	7.4	1,033.7	252.7	1,286.4	
			140			34	174	

HISD (Apollo)								
Elementary	7:30 AM	M-Th 4:30pm F 3:30pm	9.0	8.0	1,260.0	272.0	1,532.0	
Middle School	7:30 AM	M-Th 4:30pm F 3:30pm	9.0	8.0	1,260.0	272.0	1,532.0	
High School	7:30 AM	M-Th 4:30pm F 3:30pm	9.0	8.0	1,260.0	272.0	1,532.0	

*Based on sample of HISD start and end times.

ALTERNATIVE Calendar for 2011-2012 Houston ISD

School Year - August 29th through June 8th

Students get a total of 22 vacation days (4 weeks) in this school calendar and 2.6 full months of summer

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JANUARY -'12						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

2nd semester

93
183

TOTAL Student days

- first day of school
- student / staff holiday
- semester exams
- semester end
- bad weather days
- staff development/teacher workday
- semester exams

CURRENT 2011-2012 Houston ISD School Year Calendar

School Year - August 29th through May 31st

Students get a total of 25 vacation days (5 weeks) in this school calendar and 2.9 full months of summer

JULY							AUGUST							SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER									
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31	25	26	27	28	29	30	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
31																			30	31										

NOVEMBER							DECEMBER							JANUARY-'12							FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
													1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31	26	27	28	29							

MARCH							APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	27	28	29	30	24	25	26	27	28	29	30								

2nd semester 100
174 TOTAL Student days

- first day of school
- student / staff holiday
- staff development/teacher workday
- semester exams
- semester end
- bad weather days

Source: HISD website.

WHAT DOES THE STATE CONSTITUTION SAY ABOUT EDUCATION?

“Section 1. . . . duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an **efficient system** of public free schools.”

“Section 3.(e).The Legislature shall be authorized to pass laws for the assessment and collection of taxes in all school districts **and for the management and control of the public school or schools of such districts. . .**”

WHY UNIFORM SCHOOL START DATE IS GOOD PUBLIC POLICY?

- Uniform School Start Date reflects the State’s balance of maximizing economic activity to generate state and local tax revenue with responsibility to fund a system of public free schools
- A Uniform school start date is equitable to all students in Texas
 - It prevents the “arms race” from starting early for athletics or to gain advantage over other districts or schools in teaching to the TAKs test
 - It provides a uniform basis for measuring district and campus level performance across the state adding to comparability
 - District and campus cost/academic achievement comparison allows the legislature to determine if the issue is with the administration, teachers or the students
 - It establishes the basis for determining what policies / “best practices” are really working which in turn provides the information you, Members of the legislature, need to run an **efficient system of public free schools**
 - A uniform end date would enhance the state’s ability to establish comparability among schools
- Uniform School Start Date (4th Monday in August) is good Public Policy
- Again, UNDER CURRENT Uniform School Start LAW HISD has the Local Control / flexibility to achieve total **equivalent days of instruction of 220 to 228 days**

UNIFORM SCHOOL START SAVES THE STATE MONEY

In spite of the current fiscal note on S.B. 949 and H.B. 1555, there can be **no question that this bill(s) will cost both the state and the district tax revenue.**

Comptroller of Public Accounts – March 2, 2005 Fiscal Note Estimate for CSHB 2

Excerpt on Uniform School Start Date

The bill would require school districts to begin classes on the Tuesday after Labor Day. According to the Comptroller of Public Accounts Special Report, *Saving Summer: Lessons Learned*, the total estimated economic gain from compressing the school year into this period is \$790 million. This includes lost personal income, losses in Texas tourist economies, as well as costs to parents and school districts.

The dynamic economic impacts of compressing the school year were estimated by inputting these estimated savings into the Regional Economic Models, Incorporated (REM) Texas-specific general equilibrium model. The resulting state and local revenue gains were subsequently calculated using the historical relationship between state tax revenues and associated economic factors.

Fiscal Impact, 2006-2010

- State and local gains/(losses) from compressing the school year:

Fiscal Year	Gain/(Loss) in State Revenues	Gain/(Loss) in Local Property Tax Revenues
2006	\$8,222,000	\$0
2007	9,362,000	1,000,000
2008	10,201,000	2,600,000
2009	11,883,000	4,400,000
2010	13,982,000	6,300,000

Cash Flow Effects

- This bill would have a positive impact on state and local cash flow.

- Following the economic reasoning found in the Comptroller's September 2004 "Saving Summers: Lessons Learned" report and the 2005 Comptroller /LBB fiscal note -- starting HISD schools earlier than current Uniform School Start Date of 4th Monday in August would:
 - Reduce Travel and Tourism in the Houston area which reduces State and Local Tax Receipts and jobs

Harris County
Travel Spending Impact

Calendar Year	Total Direct Travel Spending		State Tax Receipts		Local Tax Receipts		Total Direct Employment	
	Million \$	Annual Change	Million \$	Annual Change	Million \$	Annual Change	Thousand Jobs	Annual Change
1994	\$1,852.0	N/A	\$268.9	N/A	\$98.7	N/A	71	N/A
1995	\$1,946.1	5.10%	\$289.1	7.50%	\$104.4	5.80%	72	1.50%
1996	\$2,093.7	7.60%	\$305.6	5.70%	\$113.6	8.80%	75	3.30%
1997	\$2,233.0	6.70%	\$321.9	5.30%	\$123.0	8.30%	78	4.30%
1998	\$2,493.1	11.60%	\$340.5	5.80%	\$136.8	11.20%	82	4.60%
1999	\$2,719.5	9.10%	\$355.9	4.50%	\$141.3	3.30%	84	2.60%
2000	\$2,976.2	9.40%	\$386.7	8.60%	\$152.1	7.60%	88	5.30%
2001	\$3,358.6	12.90%	\$405.5	4.90%	\$164.7	8.30%	92	4.90%
2002	\$3,300.7	-1.70%	\$397.2	-2.10%	\$158.8	-3.60%	87	-5.40%
2003	\$3,166.5	-4.10%	\$396.7	-0.10%	\$153.2	-3.50%	86	-2.00%
2004	\$3,336.2	5.40%	\$422.1	6.40%	\$164.7	7.50%	88	2.40%
2005	\$3,673.3	10.10%	\$473.0	12.00%	\$188.0	14.10%	96	8.90%
2006	\$3,799.4	3.40%	\$494.2	4.50%	\$200.2	6.50%	94	-1.50%
2007	\$4,071.7	7.20%	\$518.2	4.90%	\$215.0	7.40%	96	2.20%
2008	\$4,217.5	3.60%	\$539.7	4.20%	\$233.1	8.40%	98	1.90%
2009	\$3,898.9	-7.60%	\$485.9	-10.00%	\$201.0	-13.80%	93	-5.50%

Source: Dean Runyan & Associates, firm that prepares of the State of Texas Office of the Governor – Economic Development & Tourism, "The Economic Impact of Travel on Texas"

UNIFORM SCHOOL START DATE SAVES TEXAS MONEY

- Yes S.B. 949 (H.B. 1555) received a Fiscal Note: No fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.
- Interesting since the Comptroller's 2005 Fiscal Note clearly states there is a statewide impact
- And, if Houston is the Texas' largest city (Houston-Sugarland-Baytown account for 33% of state GMP) how can there be no impact?
- Total economic activity for 2 weeks in August is now about \$1 billion
- Houston represents roughly 1/3 or \$333 million in economic activity
- I do not know how anyone can say there is no impact

UTILITY SAVINGS

A Houston Chronicle story "Schools' later start is saving big bucks – Since mandate, energy bills have fallen by millions," August 20, 2008

"In the first year, schools statewide appear to have saved millions of dollars in August utility bills. The Houston Independent School District's monthly payment to Reliant Energy, for example, dropped almost \$200,000 between August 2006 and August 2007."

- In today's challenging budget environment, how can HISD turn its back on hundreds of thousands of dollars?
- Wouldn't the savings be better spent on tutors, school books or school supplies?

OTHER BENEFITS FROM UNIFORM SCHOOL START DATE

MILITARY FAMILIES

- The Military Child Education Coalition has stated, a Uniform School Start Date is a very important initiative the State of Texas has provided for military families. With the challenges the nation faces and the sacrifices we are asking of our service men and women, we should not add an additional burden of a shifting landscape of the start of school.

MIGRANT WORKERS

- The later you start school the more students attend the first week of class.
- It is a fact that migrant students are more likely to complete high school with a traditional school year. Migrant students currently make up a large percentage of Texas drop outs.

TEACHER OPPORTUNITIES LOST

- Teachers can add 2-4% to their annual income with the extra 2- 4 weeks of summer that a traditional school year provides. Teachers can take up to 2 summer sessions to advance their education compared to the one summer session they can take currently.

TEACHER AND STUDENT INCOME OPPORTUNITIES LOST

- At a time when families are struggling to earn a living and both teacher and students are holding down jobs, taking away income opportunities from teachers and students is especially unwise at this time.

REFLECTS THE VOICE OF TEXANS

- A Scripps Howard poll conducted statewide in September 2005 found that 64% of Texans support requiring all Texas public schools to start after Labor Day while only 22% opposed such a measure.
- A statewide survey found that 67% of Texas registered voters favor requiring schools to adopt a traditional school year, with the support of 62% in the Houston area.

SAVES FAMILIES MONEY

- Families save \$50 million in child care. It is less expensive to provide child care in large blocks of time than for several small holidays.