

COMMITTEES:

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, VICE-CHAIR
AGRICULTURE, WATER & RURAL AFFAIRS
EDUCATION
FINANCE
TRANSPORTATION

THE SENATE OF TEXAS



CAPITOL OFFICE:
3E.2 • P.O. Box 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711
(512) 463-0118

LOIS W. KOLKHORST

STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 18

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2017

Contact: Matthew Russell
512-463-0118

SENATOR KOLKHORST PUSHES SCHOOL FINANCIAL SUPPORT BILL

Works with Local School Boards and Superintendents

Senator Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) proposed new legislation to protect the financial future of nearly two-hundred school districts across Texas.

Working with local superintendents and school boards, Kolkhorst filed Senate Bill 419 to continue a special funding program that benefits two dozen school systems in her Senate district. The program began over a decade ago, when in 2006, the Texas Legislature passed a property tax reduction package that required school districts to reduce their tax rates by one-third. To see that students were not harmed by the reduction, lawmakers created a program known as Additional State Aid for Tax Reduction (ASATR.)

"The end of ASATR could lead to a financial disaster for many rural schools in my area. For example, losing ASATR could cost one district in my area nearly \$4 million from a \$14 million budget, an overnight drop of 30%," Kolkhorst said. "My legislation will simply extend the life of the program by six more years, giving districts more time to adjust."

The amount of funding derived from ASATR varies by school district, and is based on the district's current finances, and is adjusted annually. In the past 10 years, many school districts have seen their ASATR funding phased out, but some smaller districts still have a substantial portion of their budget dependent on ASATR. Overall, the total amount of state aid has decreased over the years from \$2.25 billion to \$251 million.

"All Texas school children must have access to their constitutionally-guaranteed right to a quality education," said Kolkhorst. "This bill is a product of many visits with superintendents and school boards across the twenty-one counties of Senate District 18. We are confident that by extending the funding for six more years, there will be more than enough time to accommodate schools whose funding would otherwise be cut."

###