



# Pete's Periódico

## *The Importance of Education in Senate District 19*

by Sen. Pete Flores, Senate District 19

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No doubt this school year looks drastically different than expected. As students and teachers return to the classroom—physically and virtually—I am incredibly proud of the schools in Senate District 19. I am also very proud of the hard work we did last Legislative Session to support Texas public education.

Many called the most recent session the "Education Session" because of our significant work on school finance and property tax reform. The school finance system was in dire need of reform and drastically underfunded. We started with the largest student allotment increase in a decade—from \$5,140 to \$6,160 per student. This money goes straight to students, classrooms, and teachers. I voted for every increase to public education funding. It is a top priority of mine to ensure we maintain this funding during the next Legislative Session.

In addition to increasing the amount schools receive per student, we allocated \$2 billion for dynamic pay raises for teachers, librarians, counselors, and nurses, including \$140 million for a merit pay program to reward good teachers with better pay. As a coauthor of Senate Bill 12, we provided a one-time supplemental check up to \$2,000 for eligible retirees under the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. The Legislature also allocated funds to preserve current health care insurance costs, avoiding a spike in prices for retired educators.

Public education has never been more important. Across Senate District 19, teachers and administrators are selflessly serving our students, upholding the Texas Constitutional mandate to provide an "efficient system of public free schools." As a sibling of six public school teachers, and public school student and parent myself, I voted to support public education at every level.

In Texas, public education is a right. In the United States, voting is a right. The deadline to register to vote in Texas is Monday, October 5. To register to vote in Texas, simply complete a voter registration application and return it to your county election office. A registration application, and more information on registering to vote, can be found at the website below.

Eligible Texans are able to vote early by mail; deadline to apply for a ballot by mail is Friday, October 23. In order to be eligible, a voter must: be 65 years or older; be disabled; be out of the county on election day and during the period for early voting by personal appearance; or be confined in jail, but otherwise eligible. Call 1-800-252-VOTE or visit the following website for more information: [www.votetexas.gov](http://www.votetexas.gov).

In efforts to create more voting opportunities, Governor Greg Abbott signed an executive order to extend the early voting period by six days. Early voting for the November 3 general election now begins on Tuesday, October 13 and ends Friday, October 30. The Governor's goal is give voters greater flexibility and reduce crowding at polls.

I encourage all Senate District 19 constituents to stay safe as we weather this pandemic together. Next time you see a teacher, peace officer, firefighter, military veteran, or other first responder around town, show them gratitude for their service. They need our encouragement more than ever.

*Sen. Pete Flores is a Republican Texas Senator representing Senate District 19.*

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