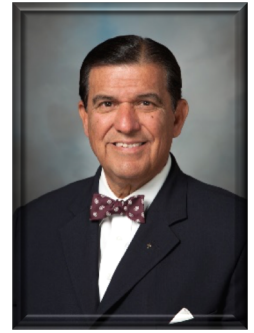




**STATE SENATOR
EDDIE LUCIO, JR.
DISTRICT 27**



Austin Capitol Office
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711
512-463-0127

Cameron District Office
800 N. Interstate 69E, Ste. 7
Brownsville, TX 78521
956-548-0227

Hidalgo District Office
1210 W Interstate 2, Ste. 10
Pharr, Texas 78577
956-787-5227

Senate Education Vice-Chair Lucio requests Governor and Education Commissioner to help Valley Schools impacted by health-concerned absences

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, March 13, 2020

Contact: Chris LeSuer, Senior Policy Analyst
(512) 463-0127

AUSTIN, TX – Today, the Vice-Chairman of the influential Senate Education Committee, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville), requested Texas Governor Greg Abbott and Education Commissioner Mike Morath to help Valley School Districts negatively impacted by lower attendance caused by Coronavirus concerns.

"Superintendents from Valley school districts have asked that while Texas contemplates its response to this challenge, the state take into account the unique circumstance faced by districts along the international boundary line with Mexico," said Vice-Chairman Lucio.

On Thursday, March 12, Brownsville Independent School District (BISD) Superintendent Dr. René Gutiérrez informed Senator Lucio that BISD "is located less than 5 miles from the border of Mexico with many students traveling to and from school daily. As a result, BISD is experiencing a decrease in attendance due to fears of the Coronavirus." Superintendent Gutiérrez went on to report that BISD "will continue proactive efforts to maintain average daily attendance. Nevertheless, the administration is concerned with the financial impact of the decrease in the average daily attendance."

A school district's level of funding from the state is based on the districts' average daily attendance (ADA). In correspondence to Commissioner Morath, Vice-Chairman Lucio echoed the views of concerned superintendents. "I respectfully ask that you issue an emergency adjustment of average daily attendance figures to all school districts within five miles of the US-Mexico border that freezes ADA at no lower than 95% starting on March 2, 2020," Lucio wrote.

Vice-Chair Lucio concluded by joining his superintendents in stating, "Adjusting the ADA will protect impacted school districts from losing greatly needed state funding which has potentially devastating effects."

NOTE: 03/12/2020 BISD Correspondence included as associated background

###

Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D – Brownsville) represents Cameron, Hidalgo, Kenedy, Kleberg, and Willacy Counties. He is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations; Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education; Member of the Senate Committees on State Affairs; Veteran Affairs & Border Security; and of the Select Committees on Redistricting; and, Texas Ports. Elected in 1991, Lucio is third in seniority in the Texas Senate.