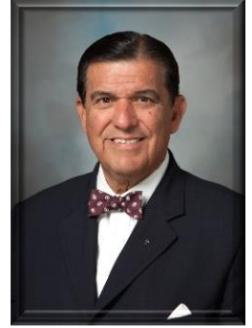




**STATE SENATOR  
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**Sen. Lucio Requests Texas' Governor & Education Commissioner to Respond to the Concerns of Valley Educators**  
*As COVID-19 transforms the Valley into a hotbed of community infections, localized response requested to curtail its spread*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Thursday, July 9, 2020

**Contact:** Daniel Esparza, Legislative Director  
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**AUSTIN, TX** – Today, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) issued the following statement concerning the recently released policies guiding Texas' re-opening of public schools in August.

**Senator Lucio Statement:**

**"As a former educator, I join our Rio Grande Valley public school administrators and school teachers in asking Governor Abbott and Texas Education Commissioner Morath to prioritize the welfare and best interest of everyone involved in the education of our school children as policies governing the re-opening of our public schools are written.**

**The alarming surge of coronavirus patients has stressed our local health care system beyond capacity. The Rio Grande Valley can shoulder no more, and our Valley families need Texas to strengthen and localize its response to contain the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, the coronavirus outbreak has aggressively accelerated in the Rio Grande Valley with alarmingly increasing case counts, making it a hotbed of community infections.**

**I am glad our state is giving families and parents the decision to determine what is in the best interest for their children, to be educated in person or virtually. However, Texas must not stop there; local school administrators and educators in COVID-19 hotbed regions, like the Rio Grande Valley, need greater input and increased control involving the re-opening of their schools.**

**Additionally, teachers deserve the same option of deciding whether to conduct instruction in-person or remotely. Many homes in South Texas are multi-generational, and teachers have families to protect. If it is unsafe for an educator to teach in-person, our state should honor and respect teachers by making options available. Texas needs to enact policies that protect lives, not endanger them.**

**As cases continue to climb at accelerated rates in the Rio Grande Valley, this is a critical time of the pandemic. Texas must strengthen its resolve to help our local leaders to flatten the curve. With the wellbeing of the families that I represent, I respectfully request for Governor Abbott and Commissioner Morath to reevaluate the policies guiding the re-opening of our public schools in communities that are hotbeds of infections. A tailored, localized approach that directly takes into account the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak that communities are presently confronting should be the state's resolve, and not a "one-size fits all" solution. Respectfully, our families and their loved ones deserve more."**

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*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. He is member of the Sunset Advisory Commission and has been an ex-officio member of the DSHS Task Force of Border Public Health Officials since 2017. Elected in 1991, Lucio is third in seniority in the Texas Senate.*