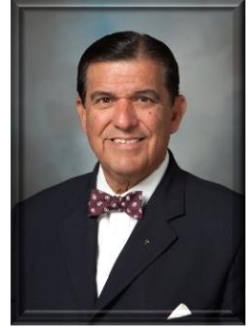




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Sen. Lucio Requests Support for Valley School Feeding Programs during Distance Learning

Education vice chair releases letter asking Texas to help Valley Schools feed all students while learning from home

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, July 23, 2020

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AUSTIN, TX – Today, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville), vice chair of the Senate Education Committee, released his July 17 letter to Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath requesting assistance for Rio Grande Valley School Districts to ensure all students receive meals while learning from home. Sen. Lucio, a long-time advocate for school meals, specifically requested that Texas provide districts the necessary authority to help low-income children who are dependent on reduced- or free-school meals amid the surging COVID-19 pandemic.

"As school administrators across Texas plan for the upcoming school year, I seek your assistance to maximize our schools' limited resources to ensure all public school students have access to greatly needed school meals," Sen. Lucio wrote. "With the best interest of the low-income families in my district, I respectfully request your leadership in having the Texas Education Agency work with the necessary federal, state, and local officials to provide school districts the necessary authority to use their school buses and associated personnel to deliver school meals to students in communities within their jurisdictions."

In his letter, Sen. Lucio highlighted the successful meal delivery programs implemented in the Valley, like those of Los Fresnos CISD and McAllen ISD. Texas could achieve greater success in providing meals to all children if our state provided stronger support and assistance to these meal delivery programs.

"During the last several months, Valley school districts have shared their success stories of the creative strategies they used to feed their children while they were at home," Sen. Lucio commented today. "With the right support from Texas, our local feeding programs can become even more effective, and be replicated in other parts of the state where low-income students may not have the means to pick up meals from their schools."

Sen. Lucio's district is home to many students who are food-insecure (without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food), and must rely on school meals as their only source of nutritious meals. The Valley's successful efforts at meal delivery are effective, innovative ways to help low-income children meet their vital need for nutritious meals.

In his July 17 letter, Sen. Lucio reported, "greatly improving the delivery of needed meals to low-income children by maximizing the use of existing resources, as demonstrated by our Valley districts, is a perfect example of leveraging the strengths of local schools and creatively addressing problems brought on by the pandemic." Sen. Lucio went on to implore Commissioner Morath, "it is my hope that with your leadership, our state will establish greater mobile feeding programs that harness existing district transportation systems and better meet the needs of low-income children in our public school system throughout Texas."

Sen. Lucio concluded today by stating, "low-income families across our state could greatly benefit by the innovative solutions our local districts have implemented that maximize their limited resources. I respectfully call upon Commissioner Morath to provide our school districts the needed support to ensure that no child goes hungry during this difficult time."

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Enclosure:

- **2020.07.16 Lucio Letter to Commissioner Morath on School Meal Distribution (PDF)**

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.