

TEXAS URBAN COUNCIL OF SUPERINTENDENTS

Education Committee Testimony | May 11, 2026

Dr. Anthony Mays

Superintendent, Alief ISD
TUC Chair

Alief ISD at a Glance

Nearly 38,000 students served across 49 campuses in the Houston region.

WHO TUC IS AND WHO WE SERVE

TUC represents 11 of the largest urban school districts in Texas, collectively serving nearly **770,000 students** — approximately 14% of all Texas public school students. Our districts are among the most economically and linguistically diverse in the state.

~770,000

Students Across TUC

11

Member Districts

78.5%

Economically Disadvantaged

40%

Emergent Bilingual

District	City / Region	Students	Who They Serve
Houston ISD	Houston	~177,000	Harris County's largest district, serving one of the most diverse urban communities in the nation.
Dallas ISD	Dallas	~135,000	One of the largest urban districts in Texas, serving students across Dallas County.
Fort Worth ISD	Fort Worth	~73,000	Serving students across Tarrant County in one of the fastest-growing metro areas in the state.
Austin ISD	Austin	~70,000	Serving the capital city's urban core, with a strong focus on college and career readiness.
Aldine ISD	North Houston	~63,000	Serving a highly diverse community in North Harris County with a predominantly Hispanic student population.
El Paso ISD	El Paso	~52,000	Serving the heart of El Paso, a border community with a majority emergent bilingual student population.
San Antonio ISD	San Antonio	~47,000	Serving the urban core of San Antonio, one of Texas' most historic and economically diverse cities.
Brownsville ISD	Rio Grande Valley	~44,000	Serving students in the southernmost tip of Texas along the US-Mexico border.
Alief ISD	Southwest Houston	~38,000	Dr. Mays' district — 49 campuses serving one of Houston's most economically and linguistically diverse communities.
Ysleta ISD	East El Paso	~37,000	Serving the eastern El Paso community, with strong bilingual programming along the international border.
Corpus Christi ISD	Corpus Christi	~35,000	Serving students along the Texas Gulf Coast, with a focus on STEM and workforce readiness pathways.

- TUC's 2030 goal is clear: every TUC student will attend an A, B, or C-rated campus. Districts are tracking progress through benchmarks in 3rd grade reading and math, 6th and 8th grade reading, and college and career readiness.

WHAT'S WORKING — LEGISLATIVE INVESTMENTS ARE PAYING OFF



3rd Grade Reading — 2025 vs. Pre-Pandemic

43% at Grade Level (+4 pts)



3rd Grade Math Recovery Since 2021

41% at Grade Level (+21 pts)



Seniors on Track to Graduate College-Ready

More Than 5% Increase — Class of 2026



TIA-Designated Educators Across TUC

10 of 11 districts are currently implementing TIA.

7,800 Teachers



TIA Funding Drawn in 2025

Dallas, Garland, and Houston have applied for Enhanced TIA under HB 2.

\$95M (90% Direct to Salaries)



Districts Using SBOE-Approved HQIM

6 of 11 TUC Districts



Districts That Have Adopted ADSY Calendars

Dallas, Aldine, Fort Worth, Austin, and Houston are providing additional instructional time.

5 of 11 TUC Districts

CCMR STANDOUTS — CLASS OF 2024

Thirty-one percent of TUC graduates met CCMR Outcomes Bonus Funding (OBF) criteria — an improvement of 3 percentage points over the Class of 2023. Brownsville, Dallas, and Garland ISDs each had more than one-third of their graduates meet CCMR OBF criteria.

TUC Total

\$36M

CCMR OBF drawdown for the Class of 2024 — the highest in TUC history. The council improved 3 percentage points from the Class of 2023.

Austin ISD

50%+

More than half of Austin ISD's Class of 2024 met CCMR criteria. Their SPED graduates met criteria at 14% — nearly triple the state average.

Dallas ISD

2×

Dallas ISD has nearly doubled its CCMR OBF drawdown since 2021. More than one-third of Dallas's Class of 2024 graduates met CCMR criteria.

Aldine ISD

3×

Aldine ISD has nearly tripled its CCMR OBF drawdown from the Class of 2021 to the Class of 2024.

- The Class of 2026 is on track for the largest CCMR growth in TUC history.
- One of the most significant remaining barriers is access to high-quality advising. Many TUC students are first-generation college-goers who do not have firsthand exposure to the full range of post-graduation pathways available to them.

OUR ASK

- The Legislature should update the **Basic Allotment** to reflect rising fixed costs such as insurance and utilities. The Basic Allotment is the most appropriate vehicle for cost-of-living adjustments for all employees, separate from performance pay such as TIA and ETIA.
- Continued investment in college and career advising is essential so that every student — not just those with family connections or prior knowledge — has access to the guidance needed to take full advantage of Texas workforce opportunities.
- The Legislature should close safety funding gaps that are currently forcing districts to absorb millions in unfunded costs simply to keep campuses safe.
- Bus seat belt retrofitting mandates must include dedicated funding. Without it, the full cost of compliance falls on district budgets that are already stretched.

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THE ALLOTMENT FOR BASIC COSTS (ABC) — CREATED THROUGH HB 2

The Allotment for Basic Costs provides school districts with an additional **\$106 per student** to help cover rising day-to-day operational expenses, including utilities, transportation, insurance, and payroll obligations. This funding was designed to keep classroom dollars focused on students rather than on operational overhead.

The Funding Gap at a Glance

\$321M

Total operational cost increase across all 11 TUC districts from 2022 to 2025.

~\$76M

Annual ABC funding provided to TUC districts for the 2025–26 school year.

The ABC currently covers approximately **24%** of the actual cost increase TUC districts have experienced. The remaining **\$245 million or more** must be absorbed by district budgets, pulling resources away from classrooms.

HOW COSTS HAVE RISEN ACROSS ALL 11 TUC DISTRICTS (2021–22 → 2024–25)

Cost Category	2021–22	2024–25	Change
Health Insurance & Employee Benefits	\$543M	\$602M	+11%
Property & Casualty Insurance	\$81M	\$104M	+28%
Utilities	\$218M	\$238M	+9%
Payroll Taxes & TRS Contributions	\$803M	\$975M	+21%
Transportation	\$304M	\$352M	+16%

- Garland ISD's utility costs alone have increased by **28%** since 2022 — a rate that significantly outpaces the support the district receives.

REAL FUNDING GAPS — SAFETY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

The numbers below represent actual dollars that TUC districts spent beyond what the state provided. These are not projections or estimates — they reflect real budget shortfalls that districts absorbed in order to meet their obligations.

Campus Safety Funding Gaps

Alief ISD

Received: \$2.2M

Spent: \$8M+

Gap: -\$5.8M

Alief is still not fully staffed. Urban districts require crossing guards and 24/7 patrol coverage, not only school resource officers.

Aldine ISD

Received: \$3.1M

Spent: \$7M+

Gap: -\$3.9M

Aldine requires 40 additional officers — one for each campus — and those costs alone exceed \$7 million.

Dallas ISD

Received: \$4.7M

Spent: \$44M

Gap: -\$39.3M

Dallas ISD received \$4.7 million from the state but spent \$44 million to ensure that its students are safe.

Garland ISD

Received: —

Spent: —

Gap: ↑28%

Garland's utility spending has increased by 28% since 2022, significantly outpacing the district's available operational support.

Special Education Funding Gaps

Dallas ISD — Special Education

Received: \$126M

Spent: \$158.1M

Gap: -\$31.5M

The state provided \$126 million, but Dallas ISD spent \$158.1 million to meet the needs of its special education students.

Alief ISD — Special Education

Received: \$46.6M

Spent: \$63M

Gap: -\$16.4M

Alief's special education population is one of the fastest-growing in the district. No new funding from SB 568 has yet been discernible.

THE PATH FORWARD

- The Legislature should update the Basic Allotment to reflect real, post-pandemic cost-of-living increases for all district employees. The Basic Allotment is the appropriate vehicle for these adjustments, separate from performance-based pay such as TIA and ETIA.
- If operational costs continue to grow at the current rate without relief, districts will be forced to divert funding away from classrooms in order to cover basic operational needs. That outcome would undermine the very academic gains this committee has worked to produce.
- With targeted and strategic investment, TUC districts are ready to sustain the momentum that is already underway and ensure that strong student outcomes become the standard — not the exception — for every student in Texas.

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