



## GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

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### **Governor Abbott, TEA Establish Targeted Education Funds for Families Of Students With Cognitive Disabilities**

*Program provides up to \$1,500 dollars per eligible student for Texas families to purchase supplementary special education services*

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) today announced the establishment of the Supplementary Special Education Services (SSES) program to connect eligible students with severe cognitive disabilities with additional support for the critical services they require. This student-centered SSES program will help connect Texas families to high-quality, personalized services through a one-time funding allocation that aims to help offset learning disruptions related to COVID-19. Qualifying families will gain access to a targeted spending account to purchase services costing up to \$1,500 dollars per eligible student.

Through this funding source, Texas families can purchase supplemental supports such as tutoring, therapy, and digital resources through vendors approved and vetted by TEA. The purchased services are intended to be supplementary and do not remove responsibility from Texas public school systems to provide the educational services outlined in each eligible student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) plan.

Families of students enrolled in public school during the 2020-2021 school year that were enrolled during the initial COVID-19 closures in Spring 2020 and have been identified as having a low incidence disability will qualify. Nearly 59,000 students statewide are eligible to benefit from this new program. Participation priority will be given to families receiving income assistance and/or families that have documented financial need.

"This program is a win for Texas families and children with special education needs, many of whom have endured education disruptions due to COVID-19," said Governor Abbott. "Education is vital to the future of every Texas child, and every student is entitled to a high-quality education. The SSES program further advances Texas' mission to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. This innovative initiative builds on the services that students are already receiving at school, and provides additional resources and support at a pivotal moment in the lives of Texas families and their children."

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