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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **State's Largest Educator Association Urges Texas to Delay In-Classroom Instruction, Waive 2020-21 STAAR Requirements**

*ATPE members adopt official policy statements regarding COVID-19 during annual conference*

**AUSTIN, Texas**—**The Association of Texas Professional Educators** (ATPE) urges **Gov. Greg Abbott** and state officials to delay in-person classroom instruction until Texas has demonstrated a flattened curve in the number of COVID-19 cases, among other requests vital to ensuring a safe teaching environment. The ATPE House of Delegates—a representative body that meets annually to craft the association's legislative platform—voted to take this action Thursday.

"ATPE is made up of the voices of 100,000 educators statewide, and these educators have together chosen to make their voices heard to ensure the safety of their community in the midst of the global pandemic," said **Shannon Holmes**, ATPE Executive Director. "All along, ATPE has said that Texas students, parents, and educators deserve to be safe and have a firm understanding of the steps being taken to provide a safe learning environment, and this vote by our members strongly reaffirms our stance."

Held during the association's annual [ATPE Summit](#), the House of Delegates is a gathering of educators from across Texas during which ATPE members vote on the direction and priorities of the association for the coming year. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 summit was held virtually throughout the week of July 6-10 and had a record number of participants.

ATPE members also approved resolution language urging the state and/or federal government to:

- Require school districts to include educators and parents in the plans for the safe re-entry of students and district employees. As outlined in its [July 2 recommendations and guidelines document](#), ATPE has long advocated for this requirement and was alarmed and dismayed it was not included in Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines released earlier this week.
- Allocate emergency funds for substitutes in case of mandatory quarantine requirements for district personnel.
- Waive requirements for school districts to administer the 2020-21 STAAR and TELPAS. Earlier this year, 2019-20 STAAR requirements were waived due to the myriad complications caused by COVID-19 and lack of in-person instruction.

"ATPE does not make these requests lightly," said Holmes. "Our members tell us repeatedly how much they miss their students and being in the classroom, but it is simply not safe at present given the current public health scenario, particularly in urban areas. The State of Texas must act to ensure the safety of all as we resume the vital education of Texas children."

[Read ATPE's Recommendations for District-Level Guidelines.](#)

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### **About the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)**

Founded in 1980, ATPE is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, and future, retired, and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for Texas' five million public school students. | [atpe.org](http://atpe.org)

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