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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ATPE Statement on Gov. Greg Abbott's Return-to-Campus Announcement**

*State's largest educator association awaits further guidance from Texas Education Agency*

**AUSTIN, Texas**—Following today's announcement by Gov. Greg Abbott that he anticipates students and school employees will return to campuses this fall, the **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** anxiously awaits next week's announcement from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) regarding health and safety measures, as well as guidelines for students and faculty who do not feel comfortable returning due to health concerns.

In a **recent ATPE survey** about educators' top concerns related to returning to campus during the pandemic, more than 63% of respondents named the health and safety of students as a top concern. Sixty percent of respondents listed their personal health and safety, and more than 45% reported concern about student learning gaps and learning loss.

As included in the ATPE Legislative Program written annually by our members, "ATPE supports measures to ensure all educational settings are safe and secure environments where students, school employees, and volunteers can be productive." ATPE has also had a longstanding tenet supporting local control of public schools through elected school boards and with community involvement.

ATPE hopes the state will entrust each school district to make the best decisions for the welfare of their staff and students when the new school year starts, empowering them to implement health and safety protocols and requirements that meet the needs of their community, and take into consideration the impact of the pandemic in their area and the recommendations of medical experts.

ATPE is committed to ensuring the success of Texas educators and public schools, especially during these uncertain times. In early March, ATPE launched a COVID-19 resource and FAQ page at [www.atpe.org/coronavirus](http://www.atpe.org/coronavirus). The webpage, one of the first COVID-19 resource webpages directed specifically toward Texas educators, lists government resources, breaking news, self-care resources and tips, and a comprehensive FAQ with fact-checked answers to common questions on everything from district requirements, health and employment, and working with students.

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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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