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Increase the awards under the NIFA program for campus start-up costs from \$250 to \$1,000 per ADA for traditional schools and charter schools.

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE?**

Rapidly growing school districts and charter schools incur significant costs related to opening a new campus. The New Instructional Facilities Allotment (NIFA) was created in 1999 to assist with operating costs, was defunded in 2011, and then reinstated in 2015. While the capital expenditure costs of opening new campuses are commonly addressed through local bond funds (Interest & Sinking funds), there are associated operating costs (Maintenance & Operations funds) that are not addressed through the normal formula adjustments for new students. NIFA has helped close this gap for more than a decade.

**WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND?**

- NIFA was first funded in 1999 through Senate Bill 4 (Bivens/Sadler) and received state funds through the 2010-11 school year. It was reinstated during the 2015 session.
- The provision calls for \$250 per ADA the first year a new campus opens and an additional \$250 for new students in the second year of campus operation. This amount has not changed since 1999 despite rising operations costs.
- The total is capped at \$26 million per year or a greater amount by appropriation.
- Overall, almost 500 districts have benefited from NIFA funding at least once over the history of the program. All school districts or charters that open new campuses are eligible for NIFA, without any enrollment growth qualification.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Support the Texas Education Agency’s 2018-19 Legislative Appropriations Request which contains the following on 3.B Page 3: “Out of amounts appropriated above and allocated by this rider to the Foundation School Program, \$23,750,000 in each fiscal year of the biennium is appropriated for the New Instructional Facilities Allotment under 42.158 of the Texas Education Code.”
- Increase the per student amount from \$250 to \$1000 to account for rising costs.
- Increase the overall program cap from \$26 million per year to \$100 million per year in anticipation of continued student enrollment growth.
- Allow NIFA funds to be used for repurposed buildings (example: a closed store converted into a school).