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After Aug. 24, parents can log on to a new parent portal at [my.cfisd.net](http://my.cfisd.net).  
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Sign up to become a CFISD Bus Buddy by logging on to [www.cfisd.net](http://www.cfisd.net).  
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## Heading Back to School

Keith Elementary School student Gloria Samoff clutches her backpack as she heads to school.

CFISD students, along with the Cy-Fair community, prepare for the start of school on Aug. 24.

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## CFISD reduces services

### State funds CFISD at lower levels compared to neighboring districts

When the school year begins on Aug. 24, CFISD will greet more than 100,000 students with fewer employees and budget reductions to services totaling more than \$14 million due to the inequity in the new state funding system.

On June 19, Gov. Rick Perry signed HB 3646 into law. On the last day of the 81st Session of the Texas Legislature, lawmakers reached a consensus to pass HB 3646, a finance bill intended to address inequitable funding of a target revenue system that resulted in CFISD's \$27 million budget deficit in 2008-2009. Last year, the district reduced staff by 456 positions and gave no raises in order to balance the budget, and was looking forward to receiving financial relief as a result of the legislative session that began in January 2009.

The legislative session has ended and the new funding system is now law. When the CFISD Board of Trustees met in a special-called meeting on June 25 to adopt the 2009-2010 budget, they faced another budget deficit with no consideration for local raises for all district employees as a result of inequitable state funding.

One of the three principles established by legislators to be addressed by a new school finance system was to eliminate the inequity among school districts created by HB 1 in 2006. Unfortunately, according to Dr. David Anthony, superintendent of schools, HB 3646 failed to eliminate this inequity.

"We continue to have one of the lowest funding rates in the Houston area," he said. "The bill did not eliminate the funding inequity."

The funding gap among school

districts remains the same. Neighboring school districts—Spring Branch, Houston, Katy and Tomball—are still funded at a much higher level per weighted student (WADA) than CFISD. Per-WADA funding levels may seem negligible; however, when the difference is calculated using the weighted student enrollment in CFISD, the result is a multi-million dollar funding discrepancy.

Although HB 3646 provides additional funding for CFISD, a significant difference in the 2009-2010 budget remains between state funding and expenses. When the legislative session closed, Sen. Dan Patrick visited with state officials about providing additional funds for CFISD, because he understood the flaw in the new public school finance system. Through his efforts, working closely with Texas Education Agency Commissioner Robert Scott and Dr. Anthony, the district will receive an additional \$12 million for the 2009-2010 school year.

Despite the negative impact of HB 3646 on CFISD, the district is charged with educating more than 104,000 students. The legislature may not re-examine the public school finance system until 2013. This additional revenue garnered at the state level helped to decrease, but not eliminate, the budget deficit. In order to adopt a balanced budget for the 2009-2010 school year, the Board took action during a special-called meeting on June 25, 2009, to reduce the budget by \$14.2 million assuming a projected I&S Tax Rate increase of 6 cents. This option included the following:

- Retain the 20% Optional Local Homestead Exemption;
- Give no raises to all employees,