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**AUSTIN DIAPER BANK LAUNCHES PERIOD SUPPLY PROGRAM AT 2 AISD SCHOOLS**  
*1 in 5 students miss school each month due to a lack of period supplies.*

The Austin Diaper Bank on Friday unveiled Bright Spot, a new program to supply period products to students who do not have them, allowing them not only to attend school with dignity, but feel empowered about their bodies and health.

The program was announced at a press conference at Lanier High School, which, along with Burnet Middle School, are the two Austin Independent School District schools participating in Bright Spot and partnering with the Austin Diaper Bank.

Attending the press conference were Holly McDaniel, executive director of the Austin Diaper Bank; Steven Covin, assistant principal of Lanier High School; and State Rep. Donna Howard (D-Austin), who has authored bills to exempt diapers and period products from the state sales tax.

“Bright Spot will give students the period products they need to fully participate in daily life, no matter what time of the month,” McDaniel said. “Shockingly, one in five students miss school each month because they don’t have period supplies. We look forward to partnering with Lanier High School and Burnet Middle School to give their students and their families the supplies they need to keep learning.”

“We are very grateful for the support Lanier High School is receiving from the Austin Diaper Bank,” said Lanier High School Principal Ryan Hopkins. “Period supplies are school supplies – they enable students to attend school and concentrate on learning without worrying about their personal hygiene.”

In addition to assisting the two schools through Bright Spot, the Austin Diaper Bank in 2018 began providing period products to its 35 community partners who already receive diapers.

Still more must be done to make the basic necessities of both period products and diapers more affordable for Texans, said Howard, a former critical care nurse. Howard has introduced legislation to exempt period products and child and adult diapers from the state sales tax.

She noted that a national survey found 1 in 4 individuals struggled to purchase period supplies in the past year due to lack of income.

"Any woman, or parent for that matter, understands that period products and diapers are necessities not luxury items - yet that's not how they are taxed," Howard said. "Eliminating the sales tax not only provides some financial relief, but also sends the message that we know how essential these items are for Texans. In a state that prides itself on tax exemptions, I'm hopeful the Legislature will prioritize these bills which will help hard working Texans and families."

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In addition to being taxed, pads, tampons and diapers are not covered by federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC).

A [2018 survey of women by U by Kotex](#) found that individuals who don't have sufficient period supplies use something else (toilet paper, paper towel, cloth or even socks); borrow money or supplies; stay home from school, work or other appointments; or use nothing at all.

Through Bright Spot, Lanier High School and Burnet Middle School will receive products once a month from the Austin Diaper Bank. Students are provided supplies for the day or longer term; at the same time, they are asked if any other family member is in need of period products.

**Burnet Middle School** expects to serve 100 students per month. Period supplies will be available to students at three locations in the school. Before Bright Spot, teachers were purchasing period products themselves to provide to students.

**Lanier High School** expects to serve 300 students per month. Period supplies will be available to students at 12 locations at the school. Before Bright Spot, teachers were purchasing period products themselves to provide to students, and the AISD provided some period products for emergency use.

The Austin Diaper Bank is accepting donations of period products as well as financial contributions for Bright Spot.

“Our community has been so generous to donate diapers to our Central Texas neighbors who need them,” McDaniel said. “We hope they will be just as supportive of Bright Spot, so that we can expand to additional schools. A \$25 donation will provide period supplies to five individuals.”

*Bright Spot is a program of the Austin Diaper Bank ([www.austindiapers.org](http://www.austindiapers.org)). It is affiliated nationally with the Alliance for Period Supplies ([www.allianceforperiodsupplies.org](http://www.allianceforperiodsupplies.org)), a program of the National Diaper Bank Network, of which the Austin Diaper Bank is a member. The founding sponsor of the Alliance for Period Supplies is U by Kotex®.*