

Board Report Item
Prepared for Board of Trustees Meeting
December 13, 2016

Legislative Update in preparation for the
85th Legislative Session

Board Goals:

Vision – Cultivate a network of professional learning communities addressing the educational needs of every child in our district; develop and maintain a culture where learning remains our first priority; and, remain committed to providing equitable and outstanding opportunities for every student on every campus.

Climate – Celebrate, respect and promote the values of diversity in our Denton ISD Community; and, encourage and nourish a safe learning and compassionate working environment which ensures open and transparent communication and is supportive, cooperative, and ethical.

Parent and Community Involvement – Foster a positive and welcoming environment that encourages parent and community partnerships to achieve success for all our students; utilize citizens’ advisory committees to focus on short and long-term tasks; and, promote child advocacy across the state and nation.

Growth, Change & Fiscal Responsibility – Review and adjust policies and procedures as appropriate to address the challenges of rapid growth and changing demographic characteristics while maintaining and enhancing our strong sense of community; create and continuously modify strategies to mitigate increasing stresses on our children, our schools and our community; work continuously with our community to adjust and enhance district goals as appropriate; demonstrate effective and efficient management of district resources; and, provide leadership and/or oversight to ensure District meets all fiscal, legal, and regulatory requirements.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update the Board of Trustees on our partnership with the State and Federal Joint Commission with Denton County. This report also includes a summary of Lt. Governor Patrick’s legislative priorities for this session.

Objectives:

Denton County Days:

Share Denton County Legislative Days with the Board of Trustees. Encourage the Board to continue our partnership by participating in Denton County Legislative Days scheduled for February 28 – March 1, 2017.

The following participating partners have submitted their joint state legislative position statements to the State and Federal Relations Committee:

- Texas Woman’s University – Amy O’Keefe

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- University of North Texas – Jack Morton
- North Central Texas College – Brent Wallace
- Denton Independent School District – Jamie Wilson, Richard Valenta, and Gwen Perkins
- City of Denton – John Cabrales
- United Way of Denton County – Gary Henderson
- Business Initiatives – Monica Glenn

Joint state legislative position statements have been reviewed and accepted by the committee. The committee will form six teams to prepare and participate in the Denton County Legislative Days in Austin, Texas, on February 28 – March 1, 2016. Committee members were encouraged to share team information in preparation for legislative visits. The six teams are:

1. Higher Education
2. Public Education
3. Local Control
4. Non-Profit
5. Economic Development
6. Small Business

In anticipation of our participation, we will identify the individual Board of Trustees who will be able to participate in this event and the team they would like to join. It is also expected that the Denton ISD legislative advisory committee will prepare and participate in this event as well.

The schedule of events is as follows:

- February 28, 2017 – Legislative Reception from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
- March 1, 2017 – County Delegation Breakfast at 7:00 a.m.
- March 1, 2017 – County Delegation Lunch at 12:00 noon

All events will take place at the Sheraton at the Capitol, located at 701 E. 11th St. in Austin, Texas. A special room rate is available at the Sheraton through January 15, 2017.

Lt. Governor Patrick's legislative priorities:

On November 14, 2016, the Lt. Governor's Office released the following press release:

November 14, 2016

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On first day of filing, legislation will affirm commitment to life, liberty and lean government that promotes prosperity

AUSTIN – On the first day of legislative bill filing, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick released his list of top 10 legislative priorities for the 2017 Legislative Session. The lieutenant governor has reserved a total of thirty low bill numbers for high-priority bills that he is committed to fighting for when the 85th Legislative Session begins in January.

“Starting in 2017, we will have a friend in the White House who was clearly elected because the people of this country believe in the conservative principles that have guided the way we govern in Texas — life, liberty and lean government that promotes prosperity. I remain committed to those principles and the legislative priorities I am announcing today all reflect that commitment.”

SB 1 – 2017 Budget Proposal – the FY 18-19 Budget Estimate is not yet available, but we will pass a balanced budget that will strengthen the Texas economy and assure that it retains its global competitiveness.

SB 2 – Property Tax Reform – Texans pay the sixth highest property taxes in the nation and the high rates are taxing people out of their homes and hampering business growth. This must change.

SB 3 – School Choice – There is broad support for legislation to ensure that every parent has the option to send their child to the school they believe is best for them.

SB 4 – Sanctuary Cities – No city in Texas should be allowed to ignore the law. We will end this practice once and for all this session.

SB 5 – Photo Voter ID – Nothing is more critical to our democracy than the integrity of the voting process. Photo Voter ID is essential.

SB 6 – Women’s Privacy Act – A majority of Texans in both political parties and in every ethnic and demographic group believe that women and girls should have privacy and safety in their restrooms, showers and locker rooms. Unfortunately, legislation is necessary to assure that they do.

SB 7 – Inappropriate Teacher-Student Relationships – “Pass the Trash” – With the rapid increase in the number of inappropriate teacher-student relationships, legislation is needed to strengthen the reporting and training requirements, and establish appropriate penalties. Priority must be given to protecting our students at every level of the school system.

SB 8 – Fetal Tissue/Partial Birth Abortion – We will continue to fight to protect the dignity and sanctity of life by increasing criminal penalties for buying or selling human fetal tissue, among other protections, and we will ban partial birth abortion in Texas.

SB 9 – Spending Cap – We will continue to fight to strengthen the state spending limit so our government lives within its means.

SB 10 – Hailstorm Lawsuit Reform – We will rein in the hailstorm lawsuit abuse that is damaging local economies around our state.

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The lieutenant governor will have a total of 30 low-number, high priority pieces of legislation including reduction of the hand-gun licensing fee, ethics reform, CPS reforms, tuition reforms, continuing to reduce the state franchise tax and prohibiting the government collection of union dues.

Although an additional release was posted from the Lt. Governor's office on November 21, 2016, none of the additional priorities appear to have an impact to public education at this time.

Operational Impact:

Operational impact will include related travel, accommodations, and meal expenses for this event.

Results:

Advantages:

Support our partnership with Denton County as we advocate for legislation, which supports the communities of Denton County and the Denton Independent School District. Staying abreast of legislative proposals and actions, while preparing for conversation and discussion with our legislature may have significant impact to policies directly impacting public education. Sharing information with our Denton ISD community creates a stronger voice and prepares voters as they consider policies impacting public education. Partnering with the State & Federal Relations Committee and other such organizations reflects a strong partnership within the Denton community, which supports public education.

Disadvantages:

None noted.

Other Options:

None noted.