

TASB Advocacy Agenda Principles 2012-2014

The following Cornerstone Principles guide TASB's Advocacy Agenda and organizational conduct:

Excellence in student achievement for all Texas students

Locally governed and locally controlled public schools

Rigorous accountability for academic progress

Adequate and equitable funding levels to provide an exceptional education

Efficient and effective school management

Strong family and community engagement to create optimal opportunities for each child

Opposition to the use of public funds for vouchers, tax credits, and other mechanisms to privatize public education

TASB 2012-14 Advocacy Agenda Priorities

As Amended September 28, 2013

The Texas Constitution mandates that the Legislature establish and make suitable provision for a system of public free schools. Thus, the State's first priority must be to adequately fund our Texas public schools so that all students have access to an education that prepares them for both citizenship and success in life. School districts most effectively and efficiently serve students and their local communities when locally elected school boards have flexibility to manage their resources and operations to address student, staff and community needs.

TASB supports a state revenue system for public education that, without regard to short-term economic trends:

allocates additional funding for public schools from multiple, sustainable state revenue sources;

reduces overreliance on property taxes; and

provides school districts with substantially equal access to similar amounts of revenue for the same tax effort, after acknowledging legitimate student and district cost differences.

TASB supports a simpler, equitable school finance system that provides:

school districts with adequate funding to prepare students to realize their full potential;

support for cost increases resulting from factors beyond the control of school districts, including enrollment growth, family poverty, demographic shifts, inflation, transportation requirements, and state and federal mandates; and

additional funding to support:

career and technical education programs;

full-day prekindergarten for all students, at local district option;

programs that meet the needs of at-risk students starting in prekindergarten;

the Instructional Materials Allotment;

Instructional Facilities Allotment, New Instructional Facilities Allotment and Existing Debt Allotment school facilities programs; and

Education Service Centers.

TASB supports assessment and accountability systems that:

allow school boards to ensure that students are prepared for college or the workforce when they graduate from high school;

protect the school board's authority to determine which factors impact student course grades; and

focus primarily on measuring and rewarding student growth rather than punitive sanctions.

TASB supports a renewed focus on the importance of career and technical education that includes: an academically rigorous career and technical education graduation plan; flexibility for teacher certification; and promotion of multi-district cooperatives reflective of the local workforce.

TASB continues to oppose vouchers, tax credits, tuition reimbursements, and any other program that diverts public tax dollars to privately run schools, which are exempt from state and federal accountability requirements.

TASB supports public schools governed by locally elected school board members entrusted to oversee the management of Texas' public schools. TASB opposes initiatives to remove public schools from governance by elected trustees who are accountable to local voters.

TASB 2012-14 Advocacy Agenda Resolutions

As Amended September 28, 2013

SCHOOL FINANCE

TASB opposes cuts to the state general revenue public education budget.

TASB opposes increasing standards on any accountability system without corresponding increases in funding.

TASB shall support a school finance system that calculates district revenue based on prior year values and fully funds current law provisions protecting districts that experience a rapid decline in property values.

TASB supports full funding for all state and federal mandates.

TASB supports legislation that provides funding for a fast growth adjustment (FGA).

TASB opposes the use of state funds to provide for or to subsidize facilities for charter schools.

TASB supports increased funding for emphasis in the areas of science and math, to include: qualified teachers; instructional materials; and professional development for all grade levels and student populations.

***TASB** supports the restoration of funding that was removed from public schools in 2011.

***TASB** supports legislation that improves funding for and access to digital learning materials.

***TASB** supports action that keeps the benefits of property value increases earmarked for public education.

INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT ISSUES

TASB supports a reduced emphasis on state-standardized, high-stakes testing.

TASB supports a call upon the Texas Legislature to develop an accountability system that more accurately reflects what students know, appreciate, and can do in terms of the rigorous standards essential to their success; enhances the role of teachers as designers, guides to instruction, and leaders; and nurtures the sense of inquiry and love of learning in all students.

TASB supports legislation to waive the state-mandated end-of-course exam upon successful completion of an appropriate Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit course.

TASB supports equitable and consistent discipline enforcement and reporting that is not biased or disadvantageous of one or more student ethnic groups.

TASB supports a rigorous curriculum provided by a high quality staff for students that are placed in any school disciplinary setting.

TASB shall support legislation to adopt a visionary framework for creating a world-class education system of student-centered schools with future-ready students.

TASB supports the enforcement of compulsory attendance for students who enroll in public schools through the last calendar day of instruction in the year in which they turn 18 years of age.

TASB supports curriculum standards developed by professional educators that are absent of political ideology or religious influence.

***TASB** supports limitation of University Interscholastic League (UIL) participation to public schools and already approved private schools.

***TASB** supports additional information in history books about the impact of Mexican Americans and other American ethnic groups in the development of the State of Texas and the United States.

***TASB** supports legislation that extends to three years the minimum enrollment in which a Limited English Proficient out-of-country transfer into Texas public schools will be exempted from the state accountability rating process.

***TASB** shall oppose Texas Education Agency, State Board of Education or legislative interference in teachers' development of daily lessons and activities for their classroom with oversight from each district.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

TASB supports less intrusive government by leaving authority and meaningful discretion (other than overarching standards) to the locally elected school board of trustees.

TASB supports legislation that allows school districts to set maintenance and operations tax rates without an election.

TASB opposes any legislation that limits a district's ability to maintain a healthy fund balance, penalizes districts with healthy fund balances, or dictates the use of fund balances.

TASB supports legislation that returns full control over calendars to local boards.

TASB opposes consolidation of small, rural school districts.

TASB supports the elimination of the 50-cent debt test.

TASB supports the representation of local independent school districts on the Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) boards.

TASB supports legislation to enhance the Texas Education Agency's investigative authority and resources.

TASB supports measures to maintain a defined benefit plan for the Teacher Retirement System.

***TASB** supports legislation that authorizes school districts to hold an authorization election rather than a rollback election to obtain voter approval for the future assessment of the remaining maintenance and operations pennies authorized by law.

***TASB** opposes personal financial statements made public by school board members.

***TASB** supports legislation clarifying the role of the school board in the evaluation and employment matters related to the internal auditor.

***TASB** supports legislation that leaves decisions about school consolidation to local boards of trustees.

***TASB** supports development of legislation and administrative policy recommendations to relieve district employees and taxpayers from the increasing cost of TRS ActiveCare and allow districts to opt out of the program.

***TASB** opposes any proposed legislation creating voter-initiated recall elections.

*Indicates newly adopted Advocacy Resolution