

Discussion TASB Advocacy Agenda

JUNE 9, 2020

Purpose

*“Many voices, a common good,
a consistent message”*

TASB Advocacy Agenda Draft Priorities – Staff Recommendations

School Finance

Mental Health

School Safety

School District Lobbying

School Vouchers

Staff Recruitment and Retention

Reduced Testing

Charter Schools

Disaster Response

Funding School Finance

Advocates for improved and sustainable funding of the school finance system/maintenance or increase of state share.

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to maintain the promises and dedication of funding made in the new school finance system implemented under House Bill 3 (86th Session) and to equitably share the cost of education with local school districts.



Mental Health Resources for Students

Advocates for improved mental health resources for students:

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to fund increased access to mental health services and support in public schools to improve the physical safety and psychological well-being of our students and schools. Primarily, a universal level of support in which all students have access to mental health services in a school setting, followed by targeted interventions identified for students who need additional services to eliminate barriers that affect them academically, followed by a comprehensive and sustainable process in which the student's parents, teachers, counselors, campus administrators, and local mental health agencies collaborate and strategize about the needs of students.

School Security and Student Safety

Advocates for providing additional resources for school security and student safety:

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to work with public school districts and their locally elected trustees to enhance school safety measures, including funding for school safety audits, the school safety allotment, and other measures that ensure the safety of students and staff.

School District Lobbying

Advocates for the continued ability for school districts to lobby on behalf of constituents, parents, and students:

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to recognize and preserve the right of public school boards to associate and collaborate with each other and to communicate the needs of their students and schools, either directly or through representative organizations, with lawmakers. Specifically, TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to preserve the right of local elected officials to advocate on behalf of the constituents, students and parents they represent, thereby ensuring state elected officials are provided information directly from constituents and not solely from special interest groups.

Opposition to Vouchers

Advocates for legislation which opposes vouchers and privatization vouchers:

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to prevent any transfer of public funds through the use of vouchers to private entities that do not follow the same transparency and accountability requirements governing independent school districts, including prohibitions on tax credits, education savings accounts, and other privatization measures.

Staff Recruitment and Retention

Advocates for support and solutions for staff recruitment and retention:

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to support adaptive and creative local solutions for recruiting and retaining high quality educators in our independent school districts and to help elevate the teaching profession by incentivizing education degrees and providing additional funding for TRS Care and ActiveCare, along with insuring defined retirement benefits for teachers through TRS.

Reduced Testing

Advocates for reduced testing:

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to continue to reduce state assessments by eliminating those not required by federal law and to prohibit standardized tests from serving as the primary indicator of school and student performance. TASB advocates for additional support for non-high-stakes assessment alternatives, such as writing portfolios and adaptive exams.

Charter Transparency Limiting Expansion of Charters

Advocates for charter transparency and limiting expansion of charters:

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to evaluate the impact that new and expanding charter schools have on the state budget and on local public schools and to increase the transparency of charter schools and their operators, especially with regard to enrollment and expulsion practices, business operations, and expenditures. The Texas Legislature must prohibit the wasteful use of tax dollars caused by funding two school systems through charter school expansion, particularly in areas in which traditional public schools are already successful.

Disaster Response

Advocates for disaster response:

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to continue working with local school districts to identify and address student needs during and after disasters, such as access to technology and broadband service, mental health resources, meals, social services, and remediation upon returning to school.

Questions, Thoughts, Clarifications

TASB Advocacy Agenda items
are to be submitted to TASB
no later than 11:59 p.m. on July 15, 2020