

Texas Association of School Administrators Legislative Priorities – 2019

The Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) will support or initiate legislation during the 86th Legislative Session that aligns with the association's priorities. TASA will work with other associations and groups in advocating for the following priorities.

Education & School Funding

Advocate for an adequate and equitable school funding system that reduces the state's overreliance on recapture and property value increases. Advocate for local discretion on spending to ensure the needs of students, staff, and communities are met.

Property Value Growth:

Oppose the state benefiting from rising property values that taxpayers assume is benefiting public schools. Advocate that the full value of this funding benefits public education and not be used to fund other state initiatives or decrease the state share of funding public schools. Advocate for the creation of an index that adjusts the Basic Allotment for the biennium based on the percentage increase for the statewide property value per student.

This section was added after comments on the survey and TASA's recent recommendations to the *Texas Commission on Public School Finance*.

Foundation School Program (FSP):

Advocate for adequate and equitable funding and oppose any cuts to the FSP. Support an updated and adequately funded formula-based school finance system, which takes into account student and district characteristics when determining appropriate levels of funding to meet state and local standards. Added language: Advocate for funding of full day pre-K programs for *all* students regardless of eligibility requirements.

School Safety:

Advocate for additional flexible funding for various safety initiatives school districts can utilize to ensure the safety of students and school personnel. Advocate for ensuring school districts have discretion in how this funding is utilized to best meet the needs of their individual campuses and communities.

Technology and Instructional Allotment (TIMA):

Advocate for increased funding for the TIMA to ensure districts can provide adequate technology and instructional materials to meet increased standards for students. Added language: Oppose any carve outs from the TIMA that decrease the amount of funds to school districts. Oppose any state level "quality" tier rating of materials if the rating system restricts a districts use of its TIMA.

Facilities Funding:

Advocate for additional funding for the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA), Existing Debt Allotment (EDA), and the New Instructional Facilities Allotment (NIFA).
Oppose additional funding for charter school facilities unless adequate funding is provided to traditional public schools.

Accelerated Instruction:

Advocate for additional funding for the state-required accelerated instruction in grades 3–8 for all STAAR subject areas that require remediation. Allocate additional funding for end-of-course exam remediation. Advocate for

local flexibility in how districts can utilize these funds and oppose any state-required carve outs for special programs.

Hurricane Harvey:

Advocate for additional funding to assist school districts impacted by events that have occurred in areas of the state declared a natural disaster by the Governor such as Hurricane Harvey. Added this section.

Charter Schools:

Oppose the further expansion of charter schools, including the expansion of campuses under existing charters, unless they are subject to the same accountability and transparency rules as traditional public schools including, but not limited to: public notices, transportation, bilingual programs, policy notices, employment contract polices, special education requirements, lunch programs, and nepotism statutes.

Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS)

TRS Pension Program:

Advocate for the continuation of the current defined benefit pension program for TRS members.

TRS-ActiveCare:

Advocate for increased state funding to assist with increased health care costs associated with TRS–ActiveCare and TRS–Care. Added language: Advocate for alternatives to TRS-ActiveCare that would provide additional options to districts while sustaining the current system for those districts that remain in the system.

Vouchers, Taxpayer Savings Grants, Virtual Vouchers

Oppose any state voucher plan, tax credits, taxpayer savings grants, tuition reimbursements, or any program that diverts public tax dollars to private entities, homeschool students, or parents with no academic or financial accountability or transparency to the state, taxpayers, or local communities.

Assessment & Accountability

Advocate for the establishment of a comprehensive accountability system that looks beyond high-stakes, multiple-choice exams to meaningful assessments that have value for students, parents, and teachers, as well as measures what each community deems important in promoting college and career readiness. Oppose A–F campus and district ratings.

Advocate that the student assessment program be limited to only those assessments required to meet ESSA requirements.

Advocate for the removal of grade advancement requirements that are tied to the state standardized assessments in reading and math for grades 5 and 8.

Advocate for the continuation of Individual Graduation Committees with authority to allow students to graduate when the students have successfully completed all required curriculum requirements but have failed no more than two EOCs.