

Legislative Update

May 26 2015



DISD Legislative Priorities

- The Denton ISD supports legislation making public education funding a priority –
 - Provide Adequate Funding for Early Childhood Programs
 - Provide Adequate State Funding for Programs Positively Impacting Student Achievement
 - Review and Upwardly Adjust Weighted Funding for Special Programs
 - Provide Adequate Funds for Texas Public Schools



DISD Legislative Priorities

- Increase Transportation Allotment
- The Denton ISD supports the efforts of the Fast Growth Schools Coalition by advocating for legislation to
 - 50 cent Debt Test
 - IFA/NIFA
 - EDA
- The Denton ISD supports modifications to improve the Assessment and Accountability system.



DISD Legislative Priorities

- The Denton ISD supports legislation providing affordable, quality, healthcare for all current and future retirees, as well as a healthy pension fund for all 1.3 million TRS participants.
- The Denton ISD supports legislation permitting trained personnel to administer and maintain a supply of “undesigned” auto-injectable epinephrine.



Funding for Early Childhood Programs

- Governor Abbott finally gets to sign his much-touted pre-kindergarten improvement bill into law.
- The Texas House voted unanimously to accept all the changes the Senate made to House Bill 4, including a cap on funding for the legislation at \$130 million.
- That is something the Texas House originally declined to do when it debated the bill back in April, leaving the possibility that budget negotiators could inject more money into a program that Democrats, school officials and education advocacy groups have all said does not go far enough.
- The soon-to-be-law will distribute up to \$130 million worth of grants to school districts, as long as they meet certain quality requirements like having certified teachers and using a state-approved curriculum. Districts also would have to report certain data about their pre-K programs to the state for the first time.
- “HB 4 will establish a high-quality, accountable Pre-K program in TX & is now on its way to my desk,” Governor Abbott tweeted, after the House cast a 146-0 vote. “I look forward to signing it into law!”



Education Reform

- Procedural rules, especially in the Texas House, are now restricting the bills that committees can consider, and those that can be debated on the floor. With a week remaining in the legislative session, most of Governor Patrick's "education reform" bills are dead in the House:
- Senate Bill 4, extending state tax credits for students to attend private and parochial schools, dead in House Ways & Means Committee
- Senate Bill 14, the so-called "Parent Trigger Bill," dead in House Public Education Committee
- Senate Bill 669, establishing an "Opportunity School District," dead in House Public Education Committee
- Senate Bill 893, tying teacher appraisals and compensation to student test scores, dead in House Public Education Committee;



Education Reform

- Senate Bill 894, the “Virtual Voucher” proposal, is yet to reach the Senate floor
- House Bill 1798, creating “Local Control” school districts, died on the House floor
- The A-F ratings proposal is contained in House Bill 2804, authored by House Public Education Committee Chair Jimmie Don Aycok, R-Killeen, which overhauls the state’s school accountability system.



Fast Growth Schools

- **Capital Appreciation Bonds** - [House Bill 114](#) by Representative [Flynn](#) has passed out of the full House and the Senate Finance Committee. The committee made one change from the House version that reduces CABs to 20 years instead of 25 years. (The senate version retains the 25% language.) The bill will now be voted out of the Senate on the Local & Uncontested Calendar. If it passes, Representative Flynn will have to decide whether to concur with the Senate's change or go to conference committee.

[Senate Bill 573](#) by Campbell was an additional CAB bill we were monitoring. As a stand alone bill, it is dead.

- **Ballot bills** - The main ballot bill we've been watching, [Bettencourt's Senate Bill 1041](#), is dead because it wasn't set on the House calendar by the Sunday deadline. We will continue to watch for ballot-related amendments on the House and Senate floor.



Fast Growth Schools

- **Transparency** - [House Bill 1378](#) by Flynn is the transparency bill most likely to pass and will require additional reporting language for your district. The House and Senate versions do not match and we are hearing the House version will be the version to pass.
- **NIFA/IFA** - There are currently NIFA/IFA funds in [House Bill 1](#) in the amount of \$45.5 million for New Instructional Facilities Allotment (NIFA) and \$55.5 million for new awards of Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA). Despite the relatively modest amounts, we consider this a major victory for FGSC.



Accountability

- HB 2804 originally made changes to both the state's student assessment and public school accountability systems, but campus A-F ratings provisions from SB 6 were rolled into HB 2804 while in committee. As amended, student performance on **STAAR would continue to be the primary measure of school performance (55 percent), but other factors, including community engagement, AP course enrollment, attendance, and dropout rates, would account for 45 percent of a school's A-F rating.**
 - Amendments adopted on the House floor:
 - require a report on how the new accountability system is working
 - grant credit for students completing AP courses, not just enrolling in them



Accountability

- require the commissioner to consult with a performance rating workgroup consisting of trustees, superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents before adopting rules to evaluate campuses under this legislation
- provide that “C” and “acceptable performance” are considered acceptable ratings when referenced in law
- mandate that only students continuously enrolled in a dropout recovery school for 90 or more days may be considered for accountability purposes
- require consideration of the percentage of elementary students assigned for two consecutive years to a teacher with less than one year of experience or who is not appropriately certified for accountability purposes



EpiPen Legislation

- **SB 66** by Chuy Hinojosa would allow schools to adopt and implement policies for the maintenance and administration of epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens) at each campus and would allow authorized and trained personnel to administer them to those experiencing anaphylaxis on campus or at a school event. The bill would provide immunity from civil or criminal liability or disciplinary action for a person who in good faith takes, or fails to take, specified actions with regard to EpiPens. *(The Senate concurred with House amendments, sending this bill to the governor.)*

