

# DRAFT Celina ISD Proposed Legislative Priorities DRAFT

## School Safety

The safety of students, teachers, and staff is the top priority in Celina ISD. To support fostering a quality education in a safe environment, CISD advocates for increased funding of the School Safety Allotment by **supplementing** existing funding while maintaining **local flexibility** to meet needs of our community.

## Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Celina ISD advocates for State leadership to publicly support the efforts of public educators across Texas and **elevate** the importance of the **teaching profession** to address the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers. Celina ISD supports:

- State funding that provides **additional** and **substantial** teacher and staff **compensation** not tied to incentive programs and continues the **current Teacher Retirement System defined benefit pension** program;
- State funding that **supplements** local district funding to keep pace with ever-increasing costs associated with employee insurance benefits;
- State-provided **financial stability** for future, current, and retired educators that adequately funds the TRS pension and insurance programs;

## Finance and Public School Funding

Texas ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> among all states in per-student funding despite the HB3 (2019) increased investment in public schools, providing Texas school districts per-pupil spending at \$4,000 behind the national average. Celina ISD supports:

- an equitable school finance system that **funds Texas students**—at the least—at the **national average**;
- **increasing** and adjusting the basic **allotment each biennium** based on the **rate of inflation** and funding school districts **based on enrollment**;
- legislation that improves and **protects funding for facilities** for CISD’s continued enrollment growth;
- greater transparency of district tax revenue by creating a **separate line** in each taxpayer’s bill that shows the portion of district maintenance and operations tax revenue recaptured by the State under Chapter 49;
- legislation to ensure that no school district faces a **loss of funding** due to the **expiration** of the Formula Transition Grant.

## Special Education

The number of students receiving special education services continues to increase each year. Since 2015, the student population identified as receiving special education in Texas has grown by 37.3 percent. Celina ISD supports:

- the Texas Commission on Special Education Funding’s recommendations for consideration by the 88th Texas Legislature. We believe it is important that special education students are **given the opportunity to achieve at high levels**, including in the State’s goals for College, Career, and Military Readiness;
- moving from funding special education based on student placement to **funding based on service intensity**.

## Charter Schools and Vouchers

Celina ISD supports keeping education tax dollars in public schools and investing in quality public school choice and innovative programs. CISD **opposes** legislation that transfers public funds in the form of a voucher, tax credit, education savings accounts, scholarships/grants, tuition reimbursement and/or any voucher program by any other name. CISD **opposes** charter school funding that **does not hold** entities receiving taxpayer funds to the same **accountability and transparency** standards as traditional public schools. Celina ISD supports:

- the requirement that charter school board meetings be **conducted in public** and allow for public testimony.

## Accountability

The State's accountability (A-F) system is disproportionately based on a single end-of-year test that does not adequately consider a **student's academic growth**. Additionally, it is the only measure of accountability ratings in grades 3 through 8. Celina ISD supports:

- a **pause** in the accountability ratings to allow one full year for districts to properly implement new STAAR assessment changes;
- **community-based accountability** measures that reflect the vast **array of work** conducted in our schools, including but not limited to assessments; program participation and performance; career training and certification success; student, family, and community engagement; high-quality instructional measures; advanced academics success; post-secondary enrollment;
- the continued **reduction** of state assessments by **eliminating** those tests not required by federal law, and a provision that **allows parents and school staff flexibility** to make decisions regarding best intervention practices of students who do not pass STAAR.

## Governance

Celina ISD believes that decisions about the operations of community public schools should be left to the discretion of parents and citizens of a local community through their **locally-elected boards of trustees**. Celina ISD supports:

- the revision of current requirements for ballot language so that local ballots have increased **clarity and transparency for voters**;
- local discretion and flexibility in instructional planning and implementation for accelerated learning by **revising and/or repealing** the one-size fits all requirements of HB 4545.