

## TASB 2014–16 ADVOCACY AGENDA

TASB's Advocacy Agenda is developed through a comprehensive grassroots process and adopted by the Association's Delegate Assembly. Cornerstone Principles have uniform support of school board members. Advocacy Priorities are a defined set of high-profile, high-commitment legislative objectives arising from TASB's grassroots process. Advocacy Resolutions are stances guiding TASB's response to other issues that might arise before the Legislature and other governmental entities.

### CORNERSTONE PRINCIPLES



*As adopted by the TASB Delegate Assembly on September 27, 2014*

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

- Excellence in student achievement for all Texas students
- Locally elected trustees and locally governed and 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

### ADVOCACY PRIORITIES



*As adopted by the TASB Delegate Assembly on September 27, 2014*

#### FUNDING ADEQUACY

TASB supports adequate funding for Texas public schools to ensure all students have access to an education that prepares them for postsecondary success. This includes funding to support:

- Implementation of new graduation plans and other requirements of House Bill 5 (83rd session);
- Programs that meet the needs of at-risk students;
- Full-day prekindergarten;
- Career and technical education programs;
- The Instructional Materials Allotment;
- School facilities, to include the Instructional Facilities Allotment, Existing Debt Allotment, and New Instructional Facilities Allotment;
- Transportation;
- Teacher salaries;
- TRS ActiveCare, or the flexibility to opt out; and
- Education service centers.

#### FUNDING EQUITY

TASB supports a sustainable, equitable school finance system that provides substantially equal access to similar revenue per student at similar tax effort.

## **INSTRUCTION**

TASB supports a rigorous and relevant educational program for all students to promote:

- Opportunities for all students to select graduation programs that meet their needs and interests;
- More time to master essential elements and integrate enrichment activities;
- Career and technical education; and
- Virtual instruction.

## **LOCAL CONTROL**

TASB advocates for less intrusive state government through the recognition that the best outcomes occur when the state partners with locally elected boards. This includes school board authority over:

- School calendars;
- Evaluating teacher performance;
- Greater flexibility in setting tax rates; and
- Compensatory education funds.

## **ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

TASB supports an assessment and accountability system that values student growth and achievement over standardized, high-stakes testing. The system should:

- Focus on measuring and rewarding student growth rather than punitive sanctions and labels;
- Reduce the emphasis on high-stakes tests, especially for grades 3–8;
- Be developmentally appropriate; and
- Reduce testing redundancy.

## **ADVOCACY RESOLUTIONS**



*As adopted by the TASB Delegate Assembly on September 27, 2014*

### **SCHOOL FINANCE**

- TASB opposes cuts to the state general revenue public education budget.
- TASB supports state funding to accompany state mandates.
- TASB supports updating the cost of education index and tying it to a self-adjusting value.
- TASB supports changing the funding formulas to allow all districts to have the same basic allotment for all children.
- TASB supports a transportation allotment for intradistrict public schools of choice.
- TASB supports requiring excess proceeds to the Economic Stabilization Fund to be dedicated to public education.
- TASB supports a funding stream to support collaborative efforts between institutions of higher education and prekindergarten–12 public schools.
- TASB supports restoring technology funding to provide for continued innovation including curriculum delivery and online assessments.
- TASB supports full funding of the Texas Success Initiative College Readiness Program.
- TASB supports legislation that increases Chapter 313 pilot payments to small school districts.
- TASB supports a flexible funding methodology that provides reimbursement at a rate comparable to the regular Foundation School Program for districts implementing flexible school schedules.

- TASB supports legislation that provides for funding for prekindergarten facilities.
- TASB supports the protection of additional state aid for tax reduction (ASATR) funding for those districts that receive it.
- TASB supports the repeal of the biennial tax rate limit on existing debt in Texas Education Code § 46.034(b) (Existing Debt Allotment).
- TASB supports marketable products and byproducts of pollution control mechanisms to be considered when calculating tax evaluations as opposed to using marketed products only.
- TASB supports additional funding and waivers to accommodate the fiscal and accountability impact from the recent surge of immigrant children.

#### **LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

- TASB supports legislation that would grant equal accountability and flexibility for traditional public schools, giving them the freedom from certain unfunded mandates and regulations afforded to charter schools.
- TASB supports legislation that encourages collaborative partnerships between school districts, the Texas Education Agency, and school improvement organizations to reinforce community pride and continuity while improving educational opportunities for students in schools labeled “low performing.”
- TASB supports the ability for school districts to immediately terminate the Chapter 21 contract of an employee upon conviction of a felony.
- TASB supports legislation that holds open-enrollment charter schools to the same transparency standards to which traditional public schools are held.
- TASB opposes the use of an A–F grading scale for rating Texas public schools and/or districts.

- TASB supports legislation that leaves decisions about school consolidation to local boards of trustees.
- TASB supports legislation that requires politically active organizations in school district elections to disclose their donors.
- TASB supports legislation clarifying the role of the school board in the evaluation and employment matters related to the internal auditor and audit staff as determined by the local district.
- TASB opposes the requirement for elected school board officials to file personal financial statements.

#### **INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT ISSUES**

- TASB supports expanding student participation of off-campus online instruction in the calculation of a school district’s weighted average daily attendance.
- TASB supports adding attendance as an at-risk factor.
- TASB supports clarification on parents’ rights to “opt out” children from taking STAAR exams and the effects of “opt outs” on campus/district accountability measures, students, and teacher appraisals.
- TASB supports narrowing the scope of grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to provide ample instructional time for students to learn to the depth and complexity of each student’s expectation.
- TASB supports legislative and regulatory oversight of charter schools to ensure adoption of true open-enrollment practices, provide academic services to students with special needs, embrace community standards to support economically disadvantaged students, and comply with student disciplinary elements of Texas Education Code Chapter 37.
- TASB supports legislation that increases from 60 to 120 the minimum number of days that a refugee/asylee must be enrolled in a US school before that enrollment year can count as “year one” in their progress toward meeting state testing standards.

## ABOUT TASB

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) is a voluntary, nonprofit, statewide educational association that serves and represents local Texas school districts. The Association's mission is to promote educational excellence for Texas schoolchildren through advocacy, visionary leadership, and high-quality services to school districts.

TASB's membership includes all 1,029 school districts, 50 community colleges, 21 tax appraisal districts, 135 shared service arrangements, and 20 education service centers. The Association represents the largest group of publicly elected officials in the state that serves more than 4.9 million students.

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