

Texas Association of School Administrators

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2017

Education & School Funding

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.

Education Programs Outside the FSP:

Advocate for increased funding for programs such as the Student Success Initiative, pre-K grant programs, reading and math academies, compensatory education, and Communities in Schools.

Student Success Initiative (SSI):

Advocate for additional funding for the SSI in grades 3–8 for all grades and subjects that require remediation. Allocate additional SSI funding for end-of-course exam remediation. Advocate for local flexibility in how districts can utilize SSI funds and oppose any carve outs for special programs.

Education Service Centers (ESCs):

Advocate for the restoration of cuts to ESCs from the 2011 legislative session. Funding was reduced from \$40.7 million to \$25 million.

Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA):

Advocate for increased funding for the IMA to ensure districts can provide adequate technology and instructional materials to meet increased standards for students.

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.

Minutes of Instruction:

Advocate for aligning state statutes to ensure full funding for districts that provide dropout prevention/recovery programs, pre-K programs, and other programs that are fewer than 420 minutes per day.

Charter Schools:

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

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 little or no academic or financial accountability to the state, taxpayers, or local communities.

Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS):

Advocate for the continuation of the current defined benefit pension program for TRS members. Advocate for increased state funding to assist with increased health care costs associated with TRS-ActiveCare and TRS-Care.

Pre-K Funding

Advocate for full funding of pre-K for all students who meet state eligibility requirements.

Graduation Requirements

Foundation High School Program & Endorsements:

Advocate for maintaining the current Foundation High School Program statutory requirements. Support maintaining the current statutory requirements for the endorsements and oppose any measure that adds Algebra II for an endorsement other than STEM.



Assessment & Accountability

Support the reduction of the length of state assessments and of the number of field test items.

Oppose measures to increase the number of end-of-course exams (EOCs) required for graduation purposes.

Advocate that the student assessment program for grades 3–8 be limited to only those assessments required to meet ESSA requirements:

- reading in grades 3–8
- math in grades 3–8
- science in grades 5 and 8

Advocate for the restructuring of the statewide student assessment program for grades 3–8 and the high school EOC exams so that it assesses only high-priority learning standards (readiness standards could be used on an interim basis).

Advocate for the development of high-priority learning standards by the State Board of Education.

Advocate for eliminating the requirement that students enrolled in dual-credit courses must take and pass comparable EOCs.

Advocate for extending the number of days used to determine school year enrollment for English Language Learners who are unschooled asylees or refugees from 60 to 120 consecutive days.

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.

Advocate for a public school accountability system that ensures ratings are reflective of overall student performance at campus and district levels and not limited to the lowest performing students.

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.

Local Control / Governance

Teacher and Principal Evaluations:

Oppose state-required teacher and principal evaluations being tied to student scores on high-stakes standardized tests. Whether student test scores are factored into a teacher's/principal's evaluation should be a local decision.

Achievement School Districts:

Oppose the creation of Achievement School Districts. Such interventions should not be considered until the state has an assessment system that is valid and reliable and an accountability system that uses factors other than standardized test scores to determine if a school is failing.

Parent Trigger:

Oppose any parent trigger or similar legislation that removes authority from locally elected school board members who are directly accountable to *all* students, parents, local taxpayers, and local businesses.

Local Debt (ballot language):

Oppose any legislation that expands ballot language, does not provide accurate information, or that seeks to confuse voters and is inconsistent with ballot language required of other local subdivisions and the state. School districts communicate, seek input, and educate local communities on bond information extensively prior to elections.



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