



Brownsville Independent School District

Agenda Category: General Function Board of Education Meeting: 12/10/2024

Item Title: Legislative Priorities for the 89th Legislative X Action
Session as presented. Information
Discussion

BACKGROUND:

As the largest district in the Rio Grande Valley, Brownsville is a leader in advocacy for equitable and adequate school district funding. With a strong history of legislative involvement, the district aims to maintain this commitment. Therefore, the Brownsville ISD Board of Trustees intends to establish legislative priorities for the 89th Texas Legislative Session. The priorities document will be used to convey the district's funding needs to local and state legislators, both prior to and during the upcoming Legislative Session.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion, consideration and possible action for approval of Brownsville Independent School District priorities for the 89th Texas Legislative Session.

Approved for Submission to Board of Education:

Dr. Jesus H. Chavez

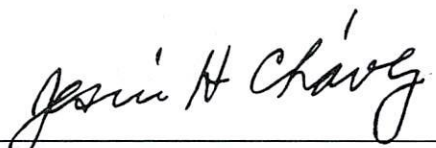
Submitted by: Superintendent

Dr. Jesus H. Chavez

Recommended by: Superintendent

Dr. Jesus H. Chavez

Approved by: Superintendent


Dr. Jesus H. Chavez, Superintendent

When Necessary, Additional Background May Follow This.

Brownsville Independent School District

Legislative Priorities for the 89th Legislative Session

The Brownsville Independent School District is comprised of 50 campuses serving 36,151 students. Eighty-eight point seven percent (87.6%) of our students are economically disadvantaged, seventy three point five percent (73.5%) are identified as at risk, and thirty-nine point five percent (39.5%) are English language learners. In addition, the great ninety-eight point three percent (98.3%) of our students are Hispanic.

Several essential elements must be part of the school finance system/foundation school program. These include 1) an adequate basic allotment, 2) student weights including appropriate special education funding, 3) adequate transportation funding, and 5) adequate facility funding. Some of these elements need to be updated to represent the actual cost of student services.

Weights – Career and technology education, compensatory education, and bilingual weights must be kept. In addition, special education and technology education weights (allotments) need to be updated.

The following are the Brownsville Independent School District priorities for the 89th Legislative Session:

Increase the Basic Allotment – Brownsville ISD suggests increasing the basic allotment by at least \$1,232 (20% inflation) to a total of \$7392 per weighted student (WADA) to satisfy student instructional and mental health needs and address the significant inflation losses districts have experienced. In addition, include an adjustment to match inflation for future years.

Change ADA to Enrollment – Brownsville ISD supports changing the ADA funding system to an enrollment funding system.

Safety and Security Allotment – Create a school safety and security allotment with appropriate funding, allowing flexibility to address individual district needs. Funding needs to match districts' spending, including police and mental health professionals.

Teacher Salary Increase – Brownsville ISD supports increasing the state teacher, nurse, and counselor salary scale and a guaranteed \$5,000 increase for each position with specific state funds allocated for this purpose.

Separate PreK Funding - Provide separate full-day PreK funding.

Special Education - Update special education formulas to provide adequate funding to match actual educational costs. Increase dyslexia funding; fund incentives for teachers with autism training; increase funding for professional development. At a minimum, a 25% increase in funding is necessary as a first step.

A New Property Casualty Insurance Allotment - Create a separate allotment for districts along the Texas cost to cover the increased cost of the property and casualty insurance. Brownsville ISD's cost has more than double over the last few years and insurance companies are providing less coverage even with this increased cost.

Transportation - Increase transportation funding to match actual costs.

Facility Funding - Increase state share of facility funding (EDA and IFA) by \$350 million (\$10 Yield Increase) annually. The State should build an inflation factor into the state aid formulas for future funding to help reduce the loss of current buying power for districts.