

As adopted September 28, 2024, by the TASB Delegate Assembly

TASB Advocacy Agenda Cornerstone Principles

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

- Excellence in student achievement for all Texas students and effective accountability.
- Locally elected nonpartisan trustees who govern public schools committed to efficient, effective, and student-focused school governance
- Safe and secure schools that foster the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students and staff
- Fulfillment of public schools' unique constitutional duty to educate every child with sufficient and equitable funding to provide an exceptional education
- Strong family and community engagement to create optimal opportunities for each child
- Preventing the diversion of public funds through vouchers, tax credits, education savings accounts, and other mechanisms
- Promotion of equity, intentional eradication of systemic racism, and the recognition of all cultures and races that have contributed to the rich history of Texas and the United States to include support for diversity and cultural awareness initiatives throughout the state*

**Suspended and deactivated by the Board of Directors contingent upon action of legal authority.*

TASB Advocacy Agenda Priorities

TASB values the students, parents, legal guardians, teachers, staff, taxpayers, and locally elected trustees who form the public education community in Texas. We support the continuous improvement of public schools and believe decisions related to education should be made through the lens of educational opportunity, meaningful accountability, and clear expectations.

By partnering with legislators and other key decision-makers on the following priorities, we will enhance educational outcomes and experiences for students, continue to provide an educated workforce, and, in turn, bolster the economic prosperity of our state.

Invest in Students

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to fulfill its constitutional obligation to invest in students. The state of Texas will:

- Support students and properly resource all public school classrooms by increasing the basic allotment, biennially adjusting it for inflation, moving to an enrollment-based funding model, and ensuring all state requirements are completely funded.
- Invest in teacher recruitment and retention.
- Ensure all schools that receive state funding are held to the same transparency requirements, accountability standards, and enrollment practices as public schools.
- Create transparency in the recapture system to ensure local tax dollars intended for public schools are used for public schools.

Empower Local Communities

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to empower communities to govern their schools by removing barriers that limit school board members from fulfilling their duties. Also, locally elected trustees must have the authority and flexibility to:

- Access and review updates — in a timely manner — to manage a meaningful, consistent, and transparent state accountability system.
- Protect students and staff by implementing safety measures — completely supported by state funding — that meet the unique needs of their campuses and communities, including flexibility to address mental health needs and student behavior.
- Advocate for their students and schools.

TASB Advocacy Agenda Resolutions

Accountability and Assessment

TASB advocates for the Texas Legislature to direct the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to cease making changes to STAAR tests and cut scores to allow districts to use the data to determine growth. In addition, TASB advocates for the Legislature to direct TEA to cease making changes to the accountability standards for a minimum of five years.

TASB advocates for opposition to any efforts by the Texas Education Agency to escalate from a monitor or conservator to a state takeover by establishing a board of managers that does not clearly set goals and a path to return local governance back to the community as quickly as possible. TASB urges the Texas Legislature and/or the governor to require the commissioner of education to add transparency to these state measures; hold the agency accountable to the students, parents, and local community; and add language that returns governance to a locally elected board of trustees, accountable to voters and the community, as quickly as possible.

TASB advocates for creating college, career, and military readiness-like accountability indicators for middle schools.

TASB advocates for a grace period of at least one year in the assignment of campus and district ratings following significant changes to STAAR/end-of-course exams and/or the state accountability system.

TASB advocates for state policy to match federal regulations regarding students' ability to test in their native language.

TASB advocates for an accountability system that does not apply the same sanctions to campuses and districts that receive a D rating over three consecutive years as the sanctions applied to F-rated campuses.

TASB advocates for reforms to the state's accountability system to reduce the overreliance on standardized testing, incorporate a broader range of student performance indicators, and release the state accountability manual in a reasonable amount of time before the school year begins to ensure districts can adequately prepare and comply with new standards.

TASB advocates for a repeal of the A-F accountability system and supports the creation of an accountability system that incorporates fair measures of achievement based on state and local standards and reduces testing to those required by federal law.

TASB advocates for a more targeted approach to interventions by the Texas Education Agency.

TASB advocates for a statewide workgroup to develop a new accountability system that appropriately measures all factors of an effective education and makes use of the options and flexibility offered by the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Charter Schools and Privatization of Public Education

TASB advocates for a moratorium on charter expansion to avoid cuts to public school districts.

TASB opposes legislation that marries teacher pay, public education funding, accountability, or assessments to vouchers, education savings accounts, or any such diversion of state funding in any form from public schools, which serve all students and are held to rigorous state and federal standards, to private entities.

TASB advocates for legislation aligning the charter expansion process to the initial authorization process. Likewise, TASB advocates for detailed processes and procedures; effective, open communication, such as notice requirements in charter applications and amendment requests, including specific locations of proposed new campuses, sufficient notice, and opportunity for analysis and public comment; and a fiscal note including a charter's cost to the state, impact on local districts, and cost of anticipated enrollment growth over 10 years.

TASB advocates for legislation that mandates charter schools adopt enrollment practices that encourage them to serve a population of students similar to the area in which the school is located and to comply with the elements of Texas Education Code Chapter 37. Likewise, legislation should be explored that would require charter schools to accept students regardless of documented histories of special education and behavioral or attendance concerns.

Governance

TASB advocates for the Texas Legislature to allow school district bond and voter-approval tax ratification propositions to include ballot language that accurately informs voters of what the measure seeks to accomplish.

TASB advocates for the Texas Legislature to limit the ability of other districts to operate in-person educational programs within the boundaries of another district without that district's permission.

TASB advocates for retaining the district of innovation law.

TASB advocates against legislation that allows for the uncontrolled establishment or expansion of virtual education programs in a district without permission.

TASB advocates for a statement of impact describing the effect to state funding of public education for any legislation pertaining to property tax relief, including both immediate and long-term impacts.

TASB advocates for the Legislature to create a statutory discount rate for electricity for school districts.

TASB opposes legislation that increases ballot language requirements, limits dates upon which elections may be held, or creates additional requirements for voter-approved tax rate elections and bond elections, such as voter turnout thresholds.

Instructional Materials and Curriculum

TASB advocates for the Texas Legislature to require that the State Board of Education streamline the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills to limit standards for each subject at each grade level to what can be taught before state-mandated tests within the given school year.

TASB advocates for expansion of materials approved through the new Instructional Materials Review and Approval process and more local decision making and flexibility in the selection of instructional materials that receive funding at the higher level.

School Finance

TASB advocates for amending school finance to increase funding investments to place Texas in the top quartile nationally for its state's per-student allocation for public education in order to compensate teachers and reduce class sizes for optimal instruction and learning.

TASB advocates for an increase in the bilingual education allotment.

TASB advocates for the reimplementation of the Cost of Education Index into school funding formulas.

TASB advocates for legislation that would ensure that all federal funding for Texas schools reaches Texas schools as intended, without interference or delay from the state, and prohibit the use of such funds to supplant state funding obligations.

TASB advocates for legislation requiring examination of student enrollment trends and inflation in order to adjust the basic allotment and Tier-One student-based allotments to adequately fund the educational needs of all students and increase pay for teachers and staff.

TASB advocates for requiring all recapture dollars to be spent on Texas public school districts by establishing a separate, dedicated, transparent fund, ending the practice of the state supplanting its investment in education with recapture dollars and preventing the use of recaptured tax dollars for charter schools, private schools, or any other project that is not related to public school districts.

TASB advocates for providing considerations, accommodations, and relief for fast-growth school districts to include increasing the capacity of the Fast Growth Allotment to acknowledge the growing statewide need and to reduce or eliminate proration.

TASB advocates for the Legislature to assess, analyze, and make recommendations to improve the process and timeline associated with the receipt of certified property values and the mandated approval of school district budgets. Any discrepancies or deficiencies should be covered by the state and not impact school district budgets.

TASB advocates for a study of the recapture system to examine whether the current operation of the system aligns with the original goals when created in 1993.

TASB advocates for a study of the impact of recapture on housing affordability.

TASB supports instituting a formula to determine the amount of recapture paid by districts that takes into account the demographics of the student population.

School Safety

TASB calls upon the Texas Legislature to supplement property insurance for Texas schools to help safeguard our educational institutions from unforeseen damages and disasters, ensuring that funds remain focused on student learning and achievement.

TASB advocates for an increase in the school safety allotment to fully fund the mandates approved under House Bill 3, which include an armed security officer at each campus during the school day.

TASB advocates for updating the Texas Education Code to allow school districts to exercise discretion in making disciplinary decisions regarding vaping-related offenses.

TASB advocates for establishing a criminal offense for openly carrying a firearm on or within 300 feet of district property with the intent or effect of creating a disruption to the educational environment.

TASB advocates for legislation that prohibits a smoke shop being located within 300 feet of a public school or 1,000 feet upon a school board's request to local authorities.

Special Education

TASB advocates for the increase of special education funding at the state level and full funding and modernization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act at the federal level.

TASB advocates for special education funding formula revisions to focus on student needs rather than the amount of time spent in a particular classroom setting.

Students

TASB advocates for increased funding and support for research initiatives aimed at identifying the underlying factors contributing to the persistent underperformance and disparities experienced by certain student groups, particularly those from impoverished areas.

TASB advocates for the Texas Legislature to support the learning of all students — especially early learners — with full funding for statewide, universal, high-quality, full-day prekindergarten programs to include transportation, facilities, and strengthened mixed-delivery programs made in partnership with public school districts for prekindergarten-3 and prekindergarten-4.

TASB advocates that the Texas Legislature support the learning of all students by continued funding of public education for all children living in the state regardless of immigration status.

TASB advocates for adequate funding and support aimed at school districts providing a whole child learning experience for better student educational outcomes. This includes

policies intended to meet the basic needs of children and families with a robust safety net that creates a foundation for student success across the board.

TASB advocates for adequate funding to provide students and staff with more robust mental health support, such as additional counselors, nurses, and psychiatrists; expansion of programs and resources with local mental health authorities; and campus collaborative efforts with nonprofit organizations to provide mental health services to students, staff, and families.

Teachers and Staff

TASB advocates for the development of incentive programs by colleges and universities and grant programs from the Texas Education Agency to facilitate collaboration between school districts and higher education institutions on recruiting and graduating additional licensed professional counselors, preferably bilingual, to meet the needs of students significantly impacted by stressors related to the pandemic.

TASB advocates for increased and sustainable funding to support ongoing teacher residency programs and new/novice teacher induction years support.

TASB advocates for increases in teacher and staff salaries in rural areas to raise the number of highly qualified personnel.

TASB advocates for removing restrictions regarding the use of Teacher Retirement System of Texas retirees to allow districts to address staff shortages by employing retirees without financial penalty.

TASB advocates for increasing the state contribution to healthcare premiums and allowing school systems to select multiple healthcare plans to meet teachers' needs.