

Anderson County Education Priorities
86th Legislative Session in Texas
January 2019

Respectfully sent to:

Representative Cody Harris

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Anderson County School Districts

Cayuga – Student Enrollment: 568	District Staff: 109
Dr. Rick Webb, Superintendent	Mr. Tim West, Board President
Elkhart – Student Enrollment: 1,242	District Staff: 202
Dr. Lamont Smith, Superintendent	Mr. Kevin Bush, Board President
Frankston – Student Enrollment: 841	District Staff: 117
Mr. John Allen, Superintendent	Mr. Jerry Jones, Board President
Neches – Student Enrollment: 378,	District Staff: 66
Mr. Randy Snider, Superintendent	Mr. Van Brown, Board President
Palestine – Student Enrollment: 3,354	District Staff: 487
Mr. Jason Marshall, Superintendent	Mrs. Dyna Tutt, Board President
Slocum – Student Enrollment: 414	District Staff: 69
Mr. Cliff Lasiter, Superintendent	Mr. Daniel Bailey, Board President
Westwood – Student Enrollment: 1,594	District Staff: 257
Mr. Wade Stanford, Superintendent	Dr. Don Rice, Board President

PRIORITIZED

1. **Funding** – increase in the state’s portion of public education
2. **Pay/Health Insurance Benefits for School Employees** – an increase of \$5,000/year for teachers and/or the equivalent of that amount in health insurance assistance
3. **School Safety** – for the state to pay for any mandates and to provide assistance for innovative approaches to school safety plans
4. **Testing and Accountability** – provide greater accountability merits for those schools with higher populations of socio-economically disadvantaged, SPED, bilingual, etc students
5. **Prekindergarten** – fully fund all-day preK programs for all Texas children
6. **Career and College Readiness** – require the Commissioner of Education to expand the list of CTE certifications for A-F Accountability purposes
7. **No Vouchers** – no use of public tax dollars to support private education
8. **School Governance** – return a greater percentage of educational decision making to local school boards

IN FULL

1. **Funding** – We support additional state funding (via Average Daily Enrollment) for public school students to ensure an appropriate, modern-day education for all students. Additionally, we do not support a reduction in funding for some schools in order to provide extra money for other schools. Specific needs include:
 - a. An increase in the Basic Allotment
 - b. No significant change to the Mid-Size Schools Allotment and keeping the Small-Schools Adjustment in tact
 - c. An increase in the state’s share of public education (50% minimum)
 - d. Property tax relief at the local level
 - e. Increasing technology funding and flexible use of Instructional Materials Allotment

2. **Teacher Recruitment and Retention** – State leaders needs to recognize the chronic teacher shortage situation, adopt an attitude of support for teachers, and support a plan to address this major problem. Specifics include:
 - a. Increasing pay and benefits for teachers in order to improve the quality and longevity of Texas teachers
 - b. Assistance in TRS-Active Care and TRS-Care health insurance
 - c. Maintaining the defined benefit Teacher Retirement System plan
 - d. Developing a Public Relations campaign geared at promoting the value of public education, public school teachers, and encouraging young students and adult students to become a Texas teacher
 - e. Expanding the Grow Your Own grant and/or developing new partnerships to assist rural and low socioeconomic schools in attracting teachers

3. **School Safety** – We request additional state funding and support for security, safety, and mental health needs of students, staff – including training for counselors.

4. **Testing and Accountability** – We support eliminating the A-F School Rating System, returning to a more simple system such as Met Standard, and allowing for further local accountability system development. Specifics include:
 - a. An assessment program in grades 3-8 that aligns with federal testing
 - b. Removing all high school tests with the exception of the TSI at 10th grade
 - c. Developing a local Writing Assessment in grades 4 and 7
 - d. Providing greater accountability considerations for schools who have higher populations of SPED, EcoDis, Bilingual, etc students
 - e. Require the SBOE to streamline TEKS and limiting standards to each subject and grade level that can be effectively taught prior to yearly state assessments (STAAR tests)

5. **Full Day PreK** – We support complete funding for full-day PreK.
6. **College and Career Readiness** – We support a plan to further improve and expand college and career initiatives not one that restricts students to limited opportunities. Specifics include:
 - a. Continue supporting dual credit programs funding both the school district and college to finance those programs
 - b. Supporting the local determination of appropriate industry certifications for state accountability purposes
 - c. Allowing the completion of career pathways (coherent sequences) to be recognized as a component of college/career readiness
 - d. Funding 8th grade career and technology classes
7. **Vouchers, Student Savings Scholarships, Etc** – We do not support vouchers or any form of public/taxpayer dollars being redistributed to private schools/education. We also do not support an expansion of charters unless they have same accountability and transparency rules as traditional public schools.
8. **School Governance** – We support legislation that provides greater control of school district at the local level. Specifics include:
 - a. Furthering the use of Districts of Innovation and allowing for an expansion of ideas under the DOI designation
 - b. Continuing the components of HB 2610 which provides local control and reasonable flexibility of our yearly school calendars

Other Organizational Platforms Supported

Texas Association of School Boards
Texas Association of Community Schools
Texas Association of Mid-Size Schools
Friends of Texas Public Schools

Texas Association of School Administrators
Texas Rural Education Association
Texas Association of Rural Schools
Texas Parent PAC