

## Texas Association of Community Schools (TACS)

### Legislative Agenda

The Texas Association of Community Schools (TACS) represents school districts with no more than one high school or 12,000 enrolled students, which means our membership consists of Texas's small, mid-sized and rural school districts. Currently, TACS has a membership of more than 600 school districts. The TACS legislative agenda is designed to support our members so they can deliver the best educational programs and services to their students. The following positions comprise the legislative positions for TACS:

- The school finance system of the state of Texas must provide adequate funding to ensure a high quality education for all students. Additionally, it must have the capacity to be dynamic regarding student educational achievement needs, student enrollment, and inflation.
- State funding formulas must include funding so middle/junior high schools can teach the Career and Technology courses required by HB 5 (83<sup>rd</sup>, R), and the formula system must include the necessary funding for the required high school Career and Technology courses.
- The Texas Legislature must use accurate and updated student enrollment projections when it prepares and adopts the biennial state budget.
- The state's school facilities allotment program should be a fully funded system with set, published parameters rather than the current method of selection based on available funds.
- The 20 regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) are critical to the success of our state's schools and school children. ESCs are a cost effective delivery system for services needed by local school districts and a link for schools to TEA regarding policy issues. ESCs should not be required to exercise any regulatory oversight of local schools and districts.
- House Bill 5 (83<sup>rd</sup>, R) should not be substantially modified or rewritten before it is fully implemented so it can improve the quality of education for all Texas school children.
- There are changes; however, needed in the state's assessment system to better align it with the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The state accountability system for rating individual campuses and school districts should only use the ratings of "met requirements" or "needs improvement."
- The Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) should continue as a defined benefit retirement system to help attract and retain quality school district employees in the state of Texas.
- The state should repeal the provision of Senate Bill 1458 (83<sup>rd</sup>, R) that requires school districts beginning in fiscal year 2015, not participating in Social Security for TRS-eligible employees, to contribute to TRS 1.5 percent of the statutory minimum salary for employees whose positions are subject to the state statutory minimum salary schedule in addition to the state contribution amount on compensation paid in excess of the state minimum amount. For school employees not subject to the minimum state salary schedule, school districts are also required to contribute 1.5 percent of the employees' total salary to TRS.
- Any new education mandates adopted by the Legislature must be fully funded through additional state aid.
- The University Interscholastic League (UIL) should remain a voluntary and independent association governed by rules and regulations adopted by the schools that participate in UIL activities.
- Parents have the absolute right to choose the best educational program for their children including choice options within the public school system.
- The use of public funds, including tax credits, shall not be used to pay for any education voucher, private school education or private choice program.