

Priority	Denton ISD	Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)	Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)	Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO)
<i>School Funding</i>	<p><b>The Denton ISD supports legislation making public education funding a priority</b></p> <p>For more than 30 years, the Texas school finance formula has remained substantially unchanged. It is the recommendation of the Denton Independent School District that the state make appropriate budget adjustments to the school finance system by developing a simplified and sustainable plan, which provides resources promoting educational excellence for all Texas students.</p>	<p>TASB advocates for a transformational, top-to-bottom reform of the school finance system by developing a simplified and sustainable plan that provides for resources that promote educational excellence for all Texas students.</p> <p>TASB supports a sustainable, equitable school finance system that provides substantially equal access to similar revenue per student at similar tax effort, adjusting for disparate property values throughout Texas.</p>	<p><b>Foundation School Program (FSP)</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA)</b> Advocate for increased funding for the IMA to ensure districts can provide adequate technology and instructional materials to meet increased standards for students.</p>	<p><b>FOCUS ON IMPROVING HOW SCHOOLS AROUND THE STATE ARE FUNDED</b></p> <p>TASBO supports the creation of a dynamic funding model that addresses the needs of Texas' changing student population, changes in economic conditions, and allows Districts and Charter Schools to have greater local control over programs and operations. Furthermore, taxpayers want some relief from Chapter 41 Recapture, which affects more and more communities.</p> <p>The current school finance formula inputs have remained substantially unchanged for more than 30 years. Yet, the student demographics have seen dramatic changes. The number of economically disadvantaged students has increased over the last decade by more than the total increase in student population and demographers are projecting even greater numbers in the future.</p> <p>To address the challenges that lie ahead, TASBO supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating outdated formulas and weights to fund the true cost of education;</li> <li>• Recognizing the funding challenges associated with rapid declines in property and/or student enrollment; and,</li> <li>• Recognizing the economic challenges encountered by small rural and remote districts faced with the ASATR funding cliff.</li> </ul>
<i>Education Programs Outside the FSP</i>	<b>Review and Upwardly Adjust Weighted Funding for Special Programs</b>	TASB advocates for additional support, to include adjustment of weights and	<b>Education Programs Outside the FSP:</b> Advocate for increased funding for	

	<p>The weighted allotment system for Special Education, Bi-lingual, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs is beneficial to eligible school districts. There is a specific need for review and adjustment of the weighted funding for all these special programs. These students are currently served in a variety of settings and programs. Adjustments to weighted funding are necessary due to the population shift of students in our state.</p> <p><b>Provide Adequate Funding for Early Childhood Programs</b>  The need urgently exists for a more comprehensive approach to provide services to prekindergarten students. Eligibility requirements for prekindergarten should be broadened so that more children are eligible for state funding. Funding should be provided to support full day service, including facilities for students with additional developmental need. In order for students to graduate high school post-secondary ready they must first be school ready. As a further consequence, the transportation allotment needs to be adjusted to support student transportation needs.</p>	<p>allotments, for educationally disadvantaged students, English language learners, and other students at risk of dropping out.</p>	<p>programs such as the Student Success Initiative, pre-K grant programs, reading and math academies, compensatory education, and Communities in Schools. Pre-K Funding  Advocate for full funding of pre-K for all students who meet state eligibility requirements</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p><i>SSI</i></p>	<p><b>Provide Adequate State Funding for Programs Positively Impacting Student Achievement</b>  As a result of decreased funding by the State of Texas, funding sources such as the Student Success Initiative (ARI/AMI) were eliminated, without additional funding, the opportunity and achievement gap will only widen for socio-economically disadvantaged students. In addition, additional funds should be allocated to ensure high school graduates are post-secondary ready. The state should</p>	<p>TASB advocates for a study of and funding formula change for the true cost of educating a child to post-secondary readiness that takes into account the geographic, demographic, and size diseconomies of scale among Texas school districts.</p>	<p><b>Student Success Initiative (SSI):</b>  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.</p>	

	financially support effective dropout prevention programs, effective use of virtual coursework, and effective career and technology programs leading to certification.			
<i>Facilities Funding</i>	<p><b>The Denton ISD supports the efforts of the Fast Growth Schools Coalition by advocating for legislation to:</b></p> <p>Modify or eliminate the “50-cent debt test” that is used by the Attorney General to evaluate new bond issues before bonds are approved for issuance. The District supports legislation to amend the “50-Cent Bond Test” to provide the necessary bonding capacity to allow school districts to cost-effectively construct voter-approved school facilities to meet the demands of a growing student population and to address the increasing school construction costs, unfunded facility mandates and declining state funding assistance faced by school districts.</p> <p>Increase the guaranteed yield for the Existing Debt Allotment (EDA) and Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) for rapidly growing schools</p> <p>Restore funding for the New Instructional Facilities Allotment (NIFA) in the 2016-2017 biennium and establish funding levels that maintain the pace of escalating start-up costs.</p>	TASB advocates for the increase of the guaranteed yield for the Existing Debt Allotment and Instructional Facilities Allotment programs and an increase in per-student funding for the New Instructional Facilities Allotment.	<p><b>Facilities Funding</b></p> <p>Advocate for additional funding for the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA), Existing Debt Allotment (EDA), and the New Instructional Facilities Allotment (NIFA).</p> <p>Oppose additional funding for charter school facilities unless adequate funding is provided to traditional public schools.</p>	<p><b>PROVIDE FOR GREATER EQUITY IN SCHOOL FACILITIES FUNDING</b></p> <p>The population of students enrolled in public education has increased by more than two million over the last 20 years. The construction cost index, and state and local building codes have increased significantly during this time; however, the funding formula weights in the Existing Debt Allotment and Instructional Facilities Allotment formulas have remained frozen. Districts have large amounts of deferred maintenance due to the cumulative impact of the inadequate school finance and debt funding formulas. To recognize the needs of rapidly growing districts and districts in areas of the state with low property values TASBO supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating the current EDA and IFA formulas to provide property tax relief for taxpayers and consideration of combining the EDA and IFA programs into one funding stream;</li> <li>• Ensuring the continuation of the New Instructional Facilities Allotment and expanding the allotment to include campuses which are repurposed by the District for another use, such as, the expansion of a Pre-K program or the creation of an alternative high school; and,</li> <li>• A comprehensive study of deferred maintenance needs in Texas public schools to identify the growing deferred maintenance costs.</li> </ul>
<i>Transportation</i>	<b>Increase Transportation Allotment</b>	TASB advocates for an updated transportation funding formula to address		

	<p>Since the funding formula has not changed or increased since 1983, the District supports legislation that updates the transportation funding formula to address the current and increasing costs of transportation and maintaining vehicles to increase student safety. This update would occur each legislative session and reflect actual transportation costs, i.e. include increased allotments and improved means of fund distribution for hazardous routes and special program services (special education, bilingual education, magnet programs, and career and technology programs). This legislation would also change the current two-mile regular education requirement for transportation services to one mile.</p>	<p>the current and increasing costs of transportation and maintaining vehicles to increase student safety.</p>		
<p><i>Assessment &amp; Accountability</i></p>	<p><b>The Denton ISD supports modifications to improve the Assessment and Accountability system.</b></p> <p>The District supports reducing the number of STARR exams in grades 3-8. We support a system that ensures accountability ratings are reflective of overall student achievement at campus and district levels and not limited to the lowest performing students. We support the work of the Texas High Performing Schools Consortium in making recommendations regarding digital learning, learning standards, multiple authentic assessments, and local control.</p>	<p>TASB advocates for an assessment and accountability system that values student growth and achievement over standardized, high-stakes testing. The system should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on measuring and rewarding student growth rather than punitive sanctions;</li> <li>• Reduce the emphasis on high-stakes tests, especially for grades 3–8;</li> <li>• Be developmentally appropriate;</li> <li>• Reduce testing redundancy;</li> <li>• Provide a fair and understandable system for illustrating school performance that does not rely on simple labels such as A through F</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment &amp; Accountability</b></p> <p>Support the reduction of the length of state assessments and of the number of field test items.</p> <p>Oppose measures to increase the number of end-of-course exams (EOCs) required for graduation purposes.</p> <p>Advocate that the student assessment program for grades 3-8 be limited to only those assessments required to meet ESSA requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading in grades 3–8</li> <li>• math in grades 3–8</li> <li>• science in grades 5 and 8</li> </ul> <p>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</p>	

			<p>standards could be used on an interim basis).</p> <p>Advocate for the development of high-priority learning standards by the State Board of Education.</p> <p>Advocate for eliminating the requirement that students enrolled in dual-credit courses must take and pass comparable EOCs.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
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<p><i>TRS/TRS-Care</i></p>	<p><b>The Denton ISD supports legislation providing affordable, quality, healthcare for all current and future retirees, as well as a healthy pension fund for all 1.3 million TRS participants.</b></p> <p>This past summer, TRS updated a study created in 2012 regarding TRS-Care in an effort to research better ways to protect the current plan from a pending shortfall. The final study will be presented to the legislative Budget Board in the fall of 2014. The study will consist of nine options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-fund the long-term liability</li> <li>Fund on a pay-as-you-go basis for the biennium</li> <li>Fund for 10-year solvency</li> <li>Retiree pays full cost for optional coverage</li> <li>Mandatory participation in the Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D plans</li> <li>Defined contribution: Establish a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) for non-Medicare retirees. Retirees would shop for coverage in either the public exchange or a private exchange provided by TRS</li> <li>Modify eligibility for TRS-Care 3 standard plan</li> <li>Steerage plan design for the non-Medicare population</li> <li>Combine TRS-Care and TRS-ActiveCare</li> </ul> <p>While the Denton ISD believes all viable options should be considered, TRS retirees should not have to shoulder the burden of larger premium increases while living on stagnant incomes. Denton ISD supports a funding allocation increase to TRS-care, including paying for the expected shortfall. More funds should be allocated to this vital program to create sustainability now and into the future</p>	<p>TASB advocates for increased state support of or flexibility in selecting active and retired teacher healthcare programs.</p>	<p><b>Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS):</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>ATTRACT &amp; RETAIN TALENT THROUGH COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION</b></p> <p>Public education in Texas is one of the largest business enterprises in the State. Public Schools employ more than 670,000 employees with varying roles and responsibilities across more than 8,600 campuses. School officials are also tasked with addressing the needs of an increasingly complex student demographic. To get better outcomes, Texas needs to support the workforce. TASBO supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A school funding model which allows Districts and Charter Schools to provide competitive wages and benefits to its workers; and,</li> <li>• Actuarially sound retirement and benefit programs through the Teacher Retirement System.</li> </ul>
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	without diverting funds form the TRS pension fund.			
<i>Vouchers/Tax Credits</i>	<p><b>Provide Adequate Funds for Texas Public Schools</b> The Denton ISD supports additional allocations to Texas public schools including innovative school choice within the local school district. The DISD opposes the diversion of public funds for vouchers, tax credits, or the expansion of charters</p>	<p>TASB advocates for strict adherence to the Texas Constitution's mandate for a system of public free schools, which precludes the funneling of public tax dollars to private institutions or individuals by means of vouchers, tax credits, education savings accounts, and/or any other mechanism.</p>	<p><b>Vouchers, Taxpayer Savings Grants, Virtual Vouchers:</b> 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.</p>	
<i>Local Control/Governance &amp; Taxes</i>		<p>Given the transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act, TASB advocates for increased opportunities for school districts to implement local initiatives, such as Districts of Innovation, and prevention of measures that reduce or remove governance of districts from locally elected school boards.</p> <p>TASB advocates for innovations in school district taxing authority that allow school boards more flexibility to raise and lower taxes within a voter-approved limit.</p>	<p><b>Teacher and Principal Evaluations:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Achievement School Districts:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Parent Trigger:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Local Debt (ballot language):</b> Oppose any legislation that expands ballot language, does not provide accurate information, or that seeks to confuse voters and is inconsistent with ballot</p>	

			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.	
<i>Mandates</i>		TASB advocates for a comprehensive evaluation of the costs and related benefits of potential legislation that identifies the total cost burden on local taxpayers and state funding to fully support mandates.		<b>REDUCE THE LEVEL OF UNFUNDED MANDATES</b> Reducing the level of unfunded mandates would redirect activities from compliance to outcomes thereby freeing up time and resources for value-added activities. Recent laws, rules and regulations have had significant unintended financial and personnel costs to Districts. TASBO supports: • A system that fully analyzes, discloses and funds the true cost of implementation for new and changed requirements in laws, rules, and regulations.
<i>Charter Schools</i>			<b>Charter Schools:</b> 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.	
<i>Graduation Requirements</i>			<b>Foundation High School Program &amp; Endorsements:</b> 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.	
<i>Miscellaneous</i>				<b>FOCUS ON MEANINGFUL TRANSPARENCY IN TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>



				<p>Texas Public Schools provide transparency to their local constituency, taxpayers, and leaders at the state level, on a daily basis. TASBO supports a system of meaningful transparency that serves to increase the knowledge and state leadership's public policy goals for academic outcomes and performance levels through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimizing duplicative reporting requirements by the Texas Education Agency through the meaningful use of existing PEIMS data;</li><li>• Modernization of practices for posting public notices to reach a higher number of constituents and to reduce costs, such as posting on the District's website; and,</li><li>• The use of automated financial and academic reporting and forecasting tools, such as Forecast5 that highlight a district's academic and financial performance.</li></ul>
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