

DRAFT - RESOLUTION

2019 DENTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PRIORITIES DURING the 86th SESSION of the TEXAS LEGISLATURE

WHEREAS, the Denton ISD Board of Trustees is committed to the success of every child; and recognizes that the future prosperity of not only Denton, but the entire state, relies on a high-quality education system that prepares students for college and careers; and

WHEREAS, the Denton ISD Board of Trustees is accountable for learning at the student, classroom, school, and district level; and maintains the goal of striving for excellence in student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the Denton ISD Board of Trustees has a Board goal to *“Practice true accountability regardless of external mandates”*; and the Denton ISD Board of Trustees recognizes and embraces that much of the success of the District to continuously achieve said excellence is related to the actions of the 86th Session of the Texas Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the Denton ISD Board of Trustees is accountable to the communities it serves, inclusive of all taxpayers and citizens; and the Denton ISD Board of Trustees values community engagement and local expectations for education all students, the Denton ISD recognizes the significance of local control, locally elected officials, and local governance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Denton Independent School District Board of Trustees, on June 12, 2018, does hereby deem it appropriate, necessary, and beneficial to the educational experience of all students and staff across the State of Texas to submit the following recommendations to the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) for consideration in the development of the TASB 2018 – 2020 Advocacy Agenda Resolution:

Objectives:

- Enhance local control for local elected trustees to their local communities
- Advocate for adequate funding mechanisms for Texas Public Schools
- Advocate for efficiency and transparency at the state and local level
- Communicate the importance of local accountability

School Choice

Adamantly opposes the diversion of public funds for vouchers, tax credits, education savings grants, or any other funding mechanisms diverting funds to private schools. The DISD currently offers many choices for students and parents to consider within the current school choice framework. Students and parents often have the ability to choose among public schools. In addition, Texas should consider public accountability and transparency provisions to charter

schools allowing for a more efficient and equitable public charter school system in compliance with the Texas Constitution.

Assessment and Accountability

Supports an assessment and accountability system that values student growth and achievement over standardized, high-stakes one day testing. A system designed to rank and sort schools is not accountability, nor does it demonstrate growth in student learning. The DISD advocates 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.

School Finance

Supports legislation making public education funding a priority. 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.

Mental Health and School Safety

Support a state-funded organizational framework designed to create a network of effective support in our public schools and community-based services to address the mental health needs and school safety of our children. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), those at greatest risk of serious emotional disturbances and/or mental illness are children and adolescents who have been involved in a traumatic event at their young age. Students must feel safe and be mentally healthy in order to learn and meet their full potential. Students are experiencing greater anxiety, fear, depression and a lack of coping skills. Additionally, school counselors, social workers and school psychologists across the nation are seeing an increase in suicide ideation. The academic needs of students cannot be separated from the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students and vice-versa.

Funding for High-Quality Pre-K Programs

Supports reinstatement of full funding for the High-Quality Pre-K Grant Program. Research indicates the greatest opportunity to impact achievement gaps and improve outcomes for all students over their lifetime is to provide students access to a high-quality Pre-K program.

Facilities Funding

Recognizes the needs of rapidly growing districts and districts in areas of the state with low property values and supports the legislature in designing a school finance system to provide adequate and equitable resources. Specifically, the population of students enrolled in public education has increased by more than two million over the last 20 years. The Denton Independent School District is categorized as a destination, Fast Growth School District. Eighty percent of students new to Texas enroll in approximately 80 school districts across Texas. 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.

Local Control/Governance & Taxation

Supports governance allowing for local control of the school district. Local control allows decision making to occur in collaboration with local communities and constituents. Given the transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act, DISD 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. DISD advocates for innovations in school district taxing authority allowing local school trustees more flexibility to raise and lower taxes within a voter-approved limit.