

# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 87<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

Adopted by the Spring Branch ISD Board of Trustees on December 4, 2020

*The district will pursue the **SBISD T-2-4 goal** by increasing the number of students who complete a technical certificate, military training, a two-year degree or four-year degree from 44% to 72% by 2022.*

## FINANCE

Reform the current funding system, which is inadequate to meet state and community expectations. SBISD advocates the following:

- Hold school districts harmless from the negative enrollment due to COVID-19 for the current and upcoming biennium.
- Preserve the basic allotment and protect HB3 funding.
- Fund distance learning the same as in-person learning.
- Direct all education-focused Federal COVID-19 stimulus money to local districts. Important that funds be used for the purpose that fed govt intended to mitigate additional costs incurred supporting local school operations during the pandemic.
- Delay the implementation of HB3 reforms, deferring the additional costs in HB3 until the next biennium.
- Allow school districts to retain 100% discretion to manage the local fund balance, which is comprised of local tax dollars. Do not tie fund balance levels to state or federal funding or any, which would be another form of recapture.
- Change the recapture system, which the state uses to reduce its share of public education funding, ensuring that recaptured local school tax dollars are used to meet student needs:
  - Don't balance the state budget shortfall on the backs of local taxpayers through the pandemic-induced increase in recapture due lowered enrollment statewide.
  - At a minimum, freeze recapture at current levels and phase in additional recapture relief over time.
  - Keep all school tax dollars from property value growth in public education, and do not use revenue increases generated by local property valuation growth to lower the State's share of education funding.
    - Eliminate recapture on any new tax revenue generated.
- Increase the multiplier for CTE for grades 6-12.
- Allow districts discretion to prioritize health and safety dollars to address mental health support.
- Eliminate incentive-based funding tied to state-mandated or alternative assessment results.
- Eliminate unfunded mandates.
- Preserve 2117 funding for district-charter partnerships.

## SCHOOL SAFETY

- Broaden school safety statutes to address health-related emergencies in addition to current categories.
- Support programs and funding that respond to mental health issues in schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other stressors.

## **TECHNOLOGY/DIGITAL-LEARNING**

- Provide funding to achieve broadband equity to ensure every student has access and support to participate in distance/digital learning.
- Provide districts local control over instructional model and technology used for digital learning.
- Do not mandate that school districts provide digital instruction through state-determined instruction models or programs.
- Eliminate unnecessary and/or excessive reporting requirements.
- Retain local/district control for choosing learning environments that best serve students.

## **LOCAL CONTROL**

- Protect the local control provided to Boards of Trustees under Districts of Innovation in HB 1842 so that districts can fully implement their local innovation plans.
- Preserve districts freedom to choose instructional materials, tools and supports.
- Seek maximum State and local school district flexibility under federal law, especially regarding Title funds, assessments and accountability.
- Restore authority to call elections four times a year. Do not limit school district election dates to one day per year, such as the November regular election day. (Note the impact that Harris County Appraisal District's delayed valuation dates have on ISD elections.)
- Enable Bond Election items to be bundled at the discretion of local district leaders to best serve the district.
- Oppose any limitations to the ability of the school district to advocate on behalf of the students, educators and taxpayers of SBISD.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT**

- Ensure the State's rating system is meaningful and not misleading by using adequate descriptive terms for district and campus performance.
- Ensure state assessments are age appropriate in terms of testing time and number of days tested, especially in elementary school.
- Continue to allow districts to provide an alternative path to graduation for students who cannot pass an End of Course exam after multiple administrations; continue Individual Graduation Committees (IGCs).
- Do not increase the number of End of Course exams.
- Allow alternative assessments for schools, such as MAP in elementary and middle school, and SAT or ACT in high school.
- Allow districts to use multiple-measure assessment systems in place of the current, limited single-assessment data A-F system.
- Support meaningful assessments that reduce the emphasis on high-stakes standardized testing and free up instructional time, especially for elementary and middle school students.
- Allow districts the discretion to select the best assessment vehicle to meet the unique needs of special education students.

## **PRE-KINDERGARTEN**

- Preserve full-day Pre-K funding authorized in HB3.
- Provide adequate full-day state funding for eligible students in district Pre-Kindergarten programs, and do not require departure from SBISD's successful model.
- Eliminate the mandate of a single assessment of Pre-Kindergarten students; allow alternative assessments or review of Pre-Kindergarten programs.

## **TEACHER COMPENSATION & BENEFITS**

- Preserve TRS Active Care unless there is a sustainable and well-funded replacement.