

# **2021 Legislative Topics to be Considered**

## **COVID-19 Pandemic Support**

Midlothian ISD supports our Texas legislature to continue to work with school districts to identify and address student needs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and other disasters, such as access to technology and broadband/utility services, mental health resources, meals, social services, personal protective equipment, additional support for economically disadvantaged children, and remediation for students, while maintaining local control. The state should suspend accountability ratings during disasters that severely impact school operations, such as the current pandemic, enact a temporary moratorium on the expansion or creation of new charter schools, not supplant state education funding with federal funds provided for disaster recovery, and fund schools based on student enrollment to ensure adequate instructional continuity.

## **Social, Emotional & Mental Health**

Midlothian ISD supports increased state funding for access to proactive mental health services and support in public schools to improve the physical safety and psychological well-being of our students and staff, especially to cope with additional anxiety related to COVID-19. This includes access to services for all students in a school-setting; the ability for districts to provide students with targeted interventions; and the establishment of a collaborative network of school and mental health professionals to better identify and meet the needs of students and their caregivers.

Midlothian ISD supports the locally elected trustees to enhance school safety measures, including increased funding for school safety audits, the school safety allotment, and other measures that ensure the safety of students and staff.

## **Public School Funding**

Midlothian ISD calls upon the Texas Legislature to aggressively commit to maintain the promises and dedication of funding made in the new school finance system implemented under House Bill 3 (86th Session) and to equitably share the cost of education with local school districts. Furthermore, the state should implement a funding structure that recognizes the flexibility needed by and the additional costs incurred by school districts amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Recruitment and retention of high quality teachers: Teacher retirement system of texas (TRS) and TRS pension program**

Midlothian ISD supports the continuation of the current defined benefit pension program for teacher retirement system members. The state, as promised, should provide financial stability for future, current and retired educators by adequately funding the TRS pension and insurance programs to promote recruitment and retention of high quality teachers.

## **High Stakes Testing**

Midlothian ISD supports the reduction of state assessments by eliminating those not required by federal law, removing the high-stakes aspect of the system, reducing testing time, and prohibiting standardized tests from serving as the primary indicator of school and student

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performance. MISD also supports non-high-stakes, diagnostic assessment alternatives, such as writing portfolios and adaptive exams.

### **Vouchers, taxpayer saving grants, out-of-state corporations/entities**

With little or no academic or financial accountability to the state, taxpayers, or local communities, Midlothian ISD does not support any state voucher plan, tax credits, taxpayer savings grants, tuition reimbursements, out-of-state entities including unfettered instruction by corporations or any program that diverts public tax dollars to private school entities.

### **Charter Schools**

Midlothian ISD advocates for legislation that prohibits the expansion of charter schools, to reduce the impact charter schools have on the state budget and local public schools and to increase the transparency of charter schools and expenditures. The state should require charters to have publicly elected board members who are accountable to the communities they serve.

### **Diversity & Cultural Awareness**

Midlothian ISD supports the Texas Legislature to support diversity and cultural awareness initiatives throughout the districts through staff and student education and restorative teaching and disciplinary practices that treat all student equality. We also support the State Board of Education to evaluate the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for accurate and complete education as it pertains to all cultures that have contributed to the rich history of Texas and the United States.

### **Governance**

Midlothian ISD supports, recognizes and preserves the right of public school boards to associate and collaborate with each other and to communicate the needs of their students and schools, both directly and through representative organizations, with lawmakers.

*Approved 2/22/2021 by the MISD Board of Trustees*