



Northwest ISD 2021 Legislative Priorities



Fast Growth

Provide considerations, accommodations, and relief for fast-growth school districts.



School Finance

Create an adequate and equitable system with local discretion that accommodates fast growth and ensures the community's needs are met.



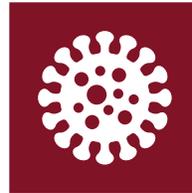
Accountability & Assessment

Establish a system that looks beyond the STAAR exam and measures what the community prioritizes, and oppose A-F ratings.



Transportation Needs

Support efforts and funding to address the expansion and improvement of transportation infrastructure in response to the rapid growth of the North Texas area.



School Safety & Security

Support funding student and school safety initiatives and flexibility in how funds are used to meet the needs of the community.

1,100 more students
+ \$10-15 million less

a budget that
doesn't add up

Northwest ISD's state budget loss tops the district's legislative concerns, but you can help!

Stay informed and let your state legislators know what you think. For more information on Northwest ISD's legislative priorities and contact information for our local legislators, go to www.nisdtx.org/legislative.

State Budget Loss and Fast Growth:

THE CHALLENGE

We are proud of Northwest ISD's reputation that attracts more than 1,100 new students each year. However, with the surge of new families comes a substantial responsibility to meet the needs of our rapidly increasing student body with diminished funding.

The state's complicated school funding formula can have a very different impact on fast growth and Chapter 49 (aka. recapture, Robin Hood) school districts. While the last legislative session and House Bill 3 benefited many, it had an unexpected, negative impact on Northwest ISD and other fast-growth districts. With the unexpected continuation of required recapture (in which NISD has

to send local tax dollars to the state due to our higher "property wealth") and a decrease in state funding of \$10 to \$15 million per year, we simply need the legislature to reverse the cuts made during the last legislative session as a result of House Bill 3.

LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS

Reverse Decrease in Golden Penny Yield

The last legislative session decreased the yield for four of our tax pennies that are not subject to being returned to the state under the Chapter 49 required recapture rate. For NISD, this resulted in a \$4.5 million loss for the 2020-2021 school year. Reverse the rate, known as the "Golden Penny Yield," to its previous value (\$135.92 per penny per WADA) to

allow more local tax dollars to stay in the district to help address our fast growth.

Return to Prior-Year Values

House Bill 3 changed school funding to be based on current-year tax values instead of prior-year values. Since property values typically rise - especially in a fast-growth district - this results in NISD receiving less state funding under HB3. It also means districts are put in a difficult position of using less certain current-year property value estimates to determine their budget. The state should return to using prior-year values to provide predictability, consistency, and support for fast-growth school districts.

Reading Academies:

THE CHALLENGE

Literacy is the foundation of a child's education, and in NISD, literacy has been an annual performance objective for many years. We have invested a significant amount of funding and training to design a strong reading program to meet the needs of our PK-3 students and our results demonstrate

its effectiveness. House Bill 3 instituted required Reading Academies for teachers across the state. While this is admirable and could be a benefit to many, our training model embraces the same concepts in a manner that meets the needs of our teachers and students.

LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS

Northwest ISD and school districts should be allowed to continue successful practices. Districts should have local control over professional development and be allowed to develop and deliver training in a manner that supports local district goals, including how the components of the Reading Academy are presented to staff.

Elections & Ballot Requirements:

THE CHALLENGE - Ballot Requirements

Disturbing feedback following the failure of NISD's Nov. 2020 bond election indicated confusion about the ballot. The legally required statement "THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE" caused uncertainty and distrust among voters who believed this meant the tax rate would increase even though the district had shared that the propositions could be approved with no increase to the tax rate. Also, with the required separation of projects under the current law, voters could unknowingly approve a portion of a comprehensive school project and then not understand why their new school is built without the same practice areas and facilities they expect in our schools.

LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS

Modify Required Ballot Language

Ballot language should not mislead voters. The ballot language "THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE" should not be required for districts whose tax rate is not increasing and should instead provide the factual tax impact to better inform voters.

Modify Separation of Bond Props

The requirement for separate propositions for certain projects should be revised so that a comprehensive school building cannot be divided on the ballot and be unintentionally partially funded by voters.

THE CHALLENGE - Election Date

The Texas Tax Code and Texas Election Code do not coincide, forcing appraisal districts to send a preliminary property tax notice in October before the results of a November election. Depending on the outcome of the election, like a Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election that is required to be held in November, districts can be faced with the burden of mailing a corrected tax notice.

LEGISLATIVE SOLUTION

School districts should have the local discretion to call a Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election, or any election, on either of the two uniform election dates in May or November to best suit their needs and avoid unnecessary expenses.