



2021

## Northwest ISD Legislative Concerns

### **Fast Growth**

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

- Support intentional effort to consider the unique impact of legislation on fast-growth school districts.
- Support returning the Golden Penny Yield to the 2018-2019 yield (\$135.92 per penny, per Weighted Average Daily Attendance (WADA)) for each of the four pennies to allow fast-growth, Chapter 49 school districts to retain more of their local tax dollars.
- Support fast-growth school districts' need for flexibility and ability to exceed the \$0.50 debt cap due to rapid enrollment growth and construction needs.
- Support implementation of a Chapter 49 sliding scale that takes into consideration the needs of fast-growth school districts and proportionately decreases recapture obligations, allowing recapture districts to retain more of their local funds to provide for anticipated student growth.
- Support increasing funding for Instructional Materials Allotment proportionately 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.

- Support prioritizing students by maintaining public school funding when making difficult budget decisions in light of the budget shortfall from COVID-19; support the use of the Rainy Day Fund to limit cuts to public education.
- Support evaluation of the impact of House Bill 3 and reconsideration of the school funding system; support returning to prior-year values; support eliminating the Teacher Incentive Allotment (based on the inequity, lack of research, and unsustainability of the system) and allow local-discretion in utilizing the current funds; support continued efforts to reduce the reliance on recapture and property value increases; support reconsideration to provide school districts adequate time to prepare an effective budget.
- Support basing the school funding formula on enrollment instead of Average Daily Attendance (ADA), thereby providing funds for the actual number of students being served and recognizing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public education.
- Oppose unfunded mandates.
- Support educational equity among traditional public schools and charter schools receiving public funds by requiring uniform reporting of finances, distribution of funds, and student data collection. Oppose vouchers, educational savings accounts, tax credits, or other programs that divert taxpayer dollars from public schools.

### **Chapter 49 Recapture**

- Support establishing a maximum entitlement amount of recapture in the state's revenue budget, capping the state's recapture collection for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 to allow local districts to pay the same amount of recapture as paid in 2019-2020.
- Support allowing Chapter 49 school districts to continue to make recapture payments in August.

### **Other Funding Concerns**

- Support full funding and expanded opportunities for virtual education to ensure traditional public schools can serve all students, and apply uniform guidelines equally to virtual charter schools and virtual education programs within the traditional public school system.
- Support affordable, attainable access to higher education by reinstating funding for On-Ramps and allowing Early College High School and P-TECH programs to draw weighted funds for the number of contact hours generated by enrollment.
- Support revising the Special Education funding formula to focus on student needs rather than the amount of time spent in a particular classroom setting by funding programs based on services provided in order to ensure provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- Support funding for the Texas Retirement System (TRS) and TRS-Care (healthcare); support sustaining a defined benefit retirement plan; support necessary state funding for TRS Active Care to ensure retirees' access until they are covered by Medicare.

### **Accountability & Assessment**

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

- Support a state accountability system that evaluates school quality and student performance as fairly and accurately as possible, without penalizing schools for factors outside their control.
- Support removing unnecessary barriers for developing a local accountability system; support a comprehensive accountability system with flexible measures that local communities value.
- Oppose A-F ratings; support reducing the emphasis on state-mandated testing as the primary indicator of school and student performance; support expanding the CTE measure from a single option of Industry-based Certifications to include points for program completion.
- Support limiting the state student assessment program to only those assessments required to meet ESSA (federal) requirements.
- Support separating ESSA (federal) and A-F ratings so that districts are not doubly penalized for the same scoring criteria.
- Support an accountability system in which TEA informs school districts about the accountability standards no later than the beginning of the school year in which the standards are to be applied.
- Support local control in the dissemination of the Science of Teaching Reading training for teachers by providing districts a choice for how they deliver and interact with the content required by the state for K-3 teachers; support allowing school districts to develop and deliver the academies in the manner that supports local district goals.

### **North Texas & NISD Growing 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.

- Support expediting construction of state and county road infrastructure to address the burden of a fast-growth area and public schools.

- Support increasing and enforcing regulations for developments in extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJs) areas that are not heavily regulated.
- Support requirements on developers to accommodate regional infrastructure needs.
- Support efforts and funding to expand road infrastructure needs – especially east/west thoroughfares.

### **School Safety & Security**

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

- Support continued funding for school health and safety initiatives and flexibility in how districts utilize funds to meet local needs.
- Support funding to provide social and emotional health services for students.
- Support increased regulation of e-cigarettes and educational awareness campaigns to stop and prevent use and abuse by Texas youth.

## Other

### **Advocacy**

- Maintain the right of school districts and other entities to interact with legislators in the ways deemed most effective by local communities; support the ability to seek knowledge and advocate for local taxpayers by belonging to organizations and having representative voices in the legislative process.

### **Elections**

- Support removing the Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election (VATRE) from the general election date to a date prior to the annual property tax notification to avoid a conflict with the timing of the required tax notices and the unnecessary expense of mailing corrected tax statements pending the failure or passage of the VATRE.
- Support revising the required ballot language for bonds to eliminate the statement “THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE” for districts whose tax rate is not increasing and better reflect the factual tax impact for each individual school district’s bond proposition. [Education Code Section 45.003, (b-1)]
- Support revising the requirement for certain bond projects to be stated in separate ballot propositions. In particular, the current required separation of “another recreational facility,” “performing arts facility,” and “technology equipment” allows for a comprehensive school building to be divided on the ballot and partially funded. The current requirement could provide for a high school without baseball/softball fields, football/soccer fields, tennis courts, track and field elements, and a performing arts area, or any combination thereof. [Education Code Section 45.003, (g.) and (h.)]
- Support eliminating the requirement for school districts to publish the Notice of Election and required translation (and other required notices) in a newspaper as it is no longer an effective tool in informing the public and is therefore an unnecessary expense.

### **Instructional Materials Allotment**

- Support revising proclamation timelines to eliminate gap years and avoid having two major proclamations in a single biennium.

- Support an increase in funding for bilingual materials to more accurately reflect cost and adequately provide student resources.
- Support eliminating carve-outs specifically for Open Ed resources that are already available at no cost and that do not align with current AP exams or TEKS.

### **Technology, Cybersecurity, and Data Management**

- Support requiring all school districts to annually perform and report baseline risk assessments based on industry standards for hardware and software security policies and to prioritize vulnerabilities; support requiring that the Texas Education Agency create a secure website for districts to report risk assessments and provide vendor recommendations for districts to conduct risk assessments; support adequate funding resources to help districts address cybersecurity vulnerabilities based on risk assessments and best practices.
- Support dedicated funding based on geographic area, location, and student population to ensure appropriate broadband capabilities to allow for instructional needs and requirements of all students; oppose the use of the Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA) for the purpose of connectivity and broadband infrastructure; support continuation of the work started by Operation Connectivity to ensure that all Texas children have long-term access to a device and to reliable and affordable broadband connectivity.
- Support requiring that the Texas Education Agency develop a framework for data management for districts and require districts to establish data governance teams to ensure that the TEA data management framework is followed and all student and staff data is classified and protected based on risk.