



1 Prioritize student safety by providing districts adequate funding and flexibility to address local needs.

School safety is understandably top of mind for parents, teachers, campus staff members and district leaders. The Legislature can help ensure schools are safe places to learn and grow by increasing the School Safety Allotment. Also, districts need the flexibility to leverage those resources to meet the unique needs of their community. This change would allow districts to invest in state-of-the-art tools to enhance security as well as address mental and behavioral needs of students.

2 Protect taxpayer dollars by ensuring the state only funds public schools.

Private schools do not provide the same level of academic and financial transparency as public schools, nor are they held accountable to the state for student outcomes. Public tax dollars should not be diverted to fund private institutions which are not held to the same standards or any level of accountability to taxpayers. Doing so is not only a misuse of public funds, but also drains resources from local public school districts which stand ready to serve every student who resides in their boundaries and are charged with meeting each child's individual academic needs.

3 Make significant investments in public education which reflect the true cost of educating students, and allow districts to increase teacher salaries to recruit and retain highly qualified educators.

- School districts are dealing with rising costs at every turn, from fuel to food expenses, as the need to raise salaries to provide a living wage and remain competitive continues to be critical. Students' needs post-pandemic — academic, emotional and behavioral — have never been greater, yet resources for public schools have not increased with those needs. For example, the Consumer Price Index has risen 12 percent since the last increase in the Basic Allotment. To help public schools adequately provide for students, the Legislature should:
- Increase the Basic Allotment to provide more funding for public schools across the state.
- Base funding on a district's enrollment rather than Average Daily Attendance.
- Index the Basic Allotment to inflation.
- Establish a second PEIMS snapshot later in the school year to provide adequate funding for students who arrive after the last Friday in October.
- Establish a program that returns 10% of recapture payment to the district if the district remits its recapture check to the Texas Education Agency by March 1.

4 Focus on recruiting and retaining highly qualified educators.

The pressure on educators has never been greater as they manage the fallout of the pandemic. Educators are dealing with learning loss, mental and behavioral needs, inflation, and low pay for these education professionals. We must prioritize valuing educators as the highly skilled professionals they are. The Legislature can greatly influence this effort by increasing the Basic Allotment, providing districts with the financial flexibility to address urgent needs, and creating incentives for joining the profession.

5 Modernize the state A-F rating system and accelerated instruction requirements to better measure true school success and reflect parent priorities.

The state's accountability system focuses almost exclusively on one factor — the STAAR test. Texas needs and deserves an accountability system that incorporates diverse factors that parents care about and that truly reflect school performance. Assessments should be used as a diagnostic tool to inform instructional decisions that support individual students. The Legislature should modernize the A-F accountability system to include non test-based factors and more career readiness indicators.