

# 2021 TASA Legislative Positions & Priorities

During the 87th session of the Texas Legislature, TASA will support or initiate legislation that aligns with the association's positions and priorities and work with other associations and groups to advocate for the following.

## Local Control

A cornerstone priority of TASA members is local control and flexibility, as school districts must be able to respond to the differing needs of students, educators, parents, and the communities they serve.

Oppose measures that erode local discretionary money.

Oppose legislation or measures that seek to limit school districts' or administrators' ability to have representation before the Texas Legislature, state agencies, and the executive branch.

Oppose legislation that would implement additional course requirements for high school graduation or reduce the number of elective courses currently available to students to take as part of the Foundation High School Program.

Oppose legislation that would erode flexibility for Districts of Innovation.

Support current state laws relating to superintendent contracts.

## Education Funding

Advocate for an adequate and equitable school finance system that raises per pupil funding to the national average.

Support sustainable state funding for HB 3 (2019).

Advocate for local discretion with spending to ensure that the needs of students, staff, and communities are met.

## Property Value Growth

Oppose any effort to divert local property tax revenues that taxpayers are told will be used to support local public schools to non-public education purposes.

## Foundation School Program (FSP)

Oppose any cuts to school district FSP funding.

Advocate for adequate and equitable formula-based funding that takes into account student and district characteristics to meet state and local standards.

Advocate for funding full-day pre-K programs through the FSP for all students.

## School Safety

Advocate for increased funding of the School Safety Allotment and local flexibility to ensure districts can adequately meet student and staff safety needs.

## Technology and Instructional Materials Allotment (TIMA)

Advocate for increased funding for the TIMA to ensure districts can provide adequate technology and instructional materials to meet higher standards for students. Oppose any carveouts from TIMA that decrease the amount of funds to school districts, including efforts by the state for rating instructional materials. Advocate that funding for "quality" reviews be allocated from a source other than TIMA.

## Facilities Funding

Advocate for additional funding for the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA), Existing Debt Allotment (EDA), and the New Instructional Facilities Allotment (NIFA). Oppose additional funding for charter school facilities until adequate state funding is provided to traditional school districts.

## Accelerated Instruction

Advocate for additional funding with local flexibility for state-required accelerated instruction in grades 3–8, as well as for end-of-course exam remediation.

### Disaster Relief

Advocate for additional funding for resources to assist school districts impacted by events, such as hurricanes or tornadoes, which result in portions of the state being declared natural disaster areas.

### Charter Schools

Oppose the further expansion of publicly funded charter schools, including increases in the number of campuses under existing charters, unless charter schools are subject to the same accountability and transparency laws and regulations as traditional public schools, including those related to: special education requirements, public notices, school discipline, financial dealings (leases, mortgages, bond debt, contracts) transportation, bilingual programs, policy notices, employment contract policies, parental rights, lobbying and political expenditure restrictions, student data privacy, efficiency audits, lunch programs, and nepotism.

Advocate to improve transparency, notice, input, and consideration of the state and local district impact before a charter can be approved or expanded.

Advocate for tying charter school "small and midsize allotment" to the same 5,000-student cap as the district small and midsize adjustment.

Support legislation that increases local community involvement in the charter approval and expansion process similar to those required of traditional public school districts in bond and tax ratification elections.

### Special Education

Advocate for increased state funding for special education students, especially for those with the greatest needs.

### Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS)

#### TRS Pension Program

Advocate for the continuation of the current defined benefit pension program for TRS members.

#### TRS-ActiveCare

Advocate for increased state funding to assist with increased healthcare costs associated with TRS-ActiveCare and TRS-Care. Advocate for alternatives to TRS-ActiveCare that would provide additional options to districts while sustaining the current system for those districts that remain in the system.

### Vouchers, Taxpayer Savings Grants, Virtual Vouchers

Oppose any state plan that would use vouchers, tax credits, taxpayer savings grants, tuition reimbursements, or any other means to divert public tax dollars to private entities, homeschooled students, or parents, with no academic or financial accountability or transparency to the state, taxpayers, or local communities.

### Assessment & Accountability

Advocate for the establishment of a comprehensive accountability system that looks beyond high-stakes, multiple-choice exams to meaningful assessments that have value for students, parents, and teachers, as well as flexible measures that local communities value.

Oppose A–F campus and district ratings that oversimplify the complex work of schools and incentivize teaching to the test.

Advocate for an accountability system that does not apply the same sanctions to campuses and districts that receive a D-rating over two consecutive years as the sanctions applied to F-rated campuses. Support allowing D-rated campuses and districts time to fully implement their targeted improvement plans.

Advocate for an accountability system that does not automatically lower a district's overall or domain performance rating of "A" to a rating of "B" if the district has even one campus with an overall or domain performance rating of "D" or "F."

Advocate that the state student assessment program be limited to only those assessments required to meet ESSA (federal) requirements.

Advocate for the removal of grade advancement requirements that are tied to the state standardized assessments in reading and math for grades 5 and 8.

Advocate for the continuation of Individual Graduation Committees whose members have authority to allow a student to graduate when the student has successfully completed all curriculum requirements for high school graduation and have failed no more than two end-of-course exams.