



# Texas Association of School Administrators LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2019

Founded in 1925, the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) is the largest professional association for Texas school leaders. During the 86th session of the Texas Legislature, TASA will support or initiate legislation that aligns with the association's priorities and work with other associations and groups to advocate for the following priorities. **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 communities they serve.**

## Education & School Funding

Advocate for an adequate and equitable school funding system that reduces the state's overreliance on recapture and property value increases. Advocate for local discretion on spending to ensure that the needs of students, staff, and communities are met.

### *Property Value Growth*

Oppose the state benefiting from rising property values that taxpayers assume is benefiting public schools. Advocate that the full value of this funding benefit public education and not be used to fund other state initiatives or decrease the state share of public school funding. Advocate for the creation of an index that adjusts the Basic Allotment for the biennium based on the percentage increase for the statewide property value per student.

### *Foundation School Program (FSP)*

Advocate for adequate and equitable funding and oppose any cuts to the FSP. Support an updated and adequately funded formula-based school finance system, which takes into account student and district characteristics when determining appropriate levels of funding to meet state and local standards. Advocate for funding full-day pre-K programs for all students regardless of eligibility requirements.

### *School Safety*

Advocate for additional and ongoing funding for school safety initiatives. Advocate for flexibility in how districts utilize these funds to meet the needs of local schools and communities.

### *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. Oppose any state level "quality" tier rating of materials if the rating system restricts a district's use of its 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 unless adequate funding is provided to traditional public schools.

### *Accelerated Instruction*

Advocate for additional funding for the state-required accelerated instruction in grades 3–8 for all STAAR subject areas that require remediation. Allocate additional funding for end-of-course exam remediation. Advocate for local flexibility in how districts can utilize these funds and oppose any state-required carveouts for special programs.

### **Hurricane Harvey**

Advocate for additional funding to assist school districts impacted by events, such as Hurricane Harvey, that have resulted in areas of the state being declared natural disaster areas by the governor.

### **Charter Schools**

Oppose the further expansion of charter schools, including increases in the number of campuses under existing charters, unless they are subject to the same accountability and transparency rules as traditional public schools including, but not limited to: public notices, school discipline, transportation, bilingual programs, policy notices, employment contract polices, special education requirements, lunch programs, and nepotism statutes.

### **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 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 with authority to allow students to graduate when the students have successfully completed all required curriculum requirements but have failed no more than two end-of-course exams.

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 measures what each community deems important in promoting college and career readiness. Oppose A–F campus and district ratings.



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