



Austin ISD

Priorities for the 86th Legislative Session

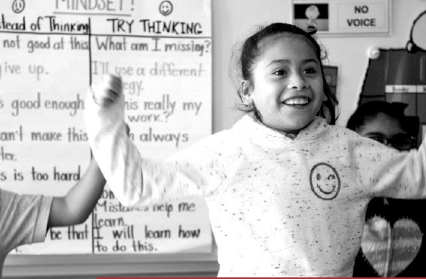
Approved by the Austin ISD Board of Trustees on August 27, 2018

Austin ISD Supports

Public School Finance

A state system of public school finance:

- that provides an adequate and equitable public school finance system, ensuring an excellent education for all Texas students.
- that keeps all local property taxes in public education and a constitutional amendment that allows voters to decide whether to return State funding to at least 50 percent of the cost of maintaining and operating public schools.
- in which the amount of the basic allotment is tied to increases in property tax growth, calculated on, at a minimum, a biennial basis.
- that permits local school districts the flexibility to allocate appropriated funds, specifically bilingual and compensatory education allotments, toward teacher salaries or other uses the district deems necessary to satisfy accountability requirements.
- that increases sustainable state revenue sources, to reduce the current over-reliance on local property taxes as a revenue source.
- that freezes or limits the amount of recapture collected by the state under Chapter 41, Texas Education Code.
- that provides an allotment for districts that are required to participate in the Social Security retirement program, gives credit when determining a Chapter 41 district's recapture payment, or adds the payment of Social Security as a factor in determining a district's cost of education index.
- that accurately reflects the cost of education, in the basic allotment, cost of education index, and funding weights, and that is updated at regular intervals.
- that provides state formula funding for programs in which public school students are enrolled and receive credit in college courses, including dual credit, early college high school, and P-TECH programs.
- that provides more state funding to districts which allow students to earn associate degrees.
- that provides state funding to reward high schools which earn an academic distinction in post-secondary readiness.
- that provides funding for career and technical education for students in 6th through 8th grades.
- that expands the eligible grantees of the Texas Workforce Commission Skills Development Fund to include school districts and an increase in state funding to accommodate such grants.
- that provides weighted career and technical education funding for technology applications.
- that provides a more simple and transparent system of public school finance.



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Austin ISD Supports

Accountability

- A state academic accountability system that evaluates school quality and student performance as fairly and accurately as possible, without penalizing schools for factors outside their control. The accountability system should include multiple measures of student performance and growth, rather than an over-reliance on standardized tests, in order to ensure that students are more fully prepared for college, the workforce, or the military upon graduation.

Safety

- Safe and secure public schools in which all students are welcome and protected.
- Flexibility for districts to select appropriate safety measures for their facilities, and in which safety measures are funded by the State.

Mental Health

- A state system of public education that provides state funded support for campus-based mental and behavioral health services for students.

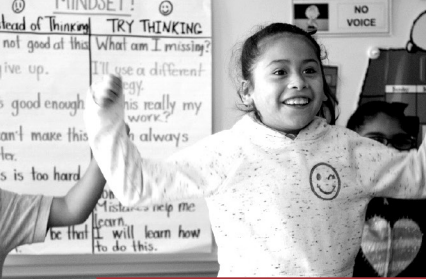
Transportation

- A state system of public school finance that provides adequate transportation funding for all districts, including Chapter 41 districts.

- Exemptions for public school buses from paying tolls for use of toll roads operated by the state and regional mobility authorities, or their contractors.

Local Control & Flexibility

- Public schools governed by locally elected school board members, with recognition by the state that elected board members are responsive to the needs of their local taxpayers and students.
- Flexibility to allow local school districts to lower tax rates with the authority to return to the previously voter-approved rate without an additional election.
- Remove barriers to encourage maximum collaboration among school districts and municipalities, counties, hospital districts and other local governmental entities to encourage efficient use of taxpayer dollars.
- A constitutional amendment to authorize a school district the flexibility to grant a property tax exemption to its teachers and other employees for the amount of ad valorem taxes imposed on a homestead for general elementary and secondary public school purposes.
- Flexibility to allow a school district to comply with public notification requirements by posting such notifications on the district's website.
- Flexibility to allow a school district to partner with a non-profit organization, institution of higher education, or governmental entity to operate a



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district campus pursuant to TEC §11.174 to the same extent and on the same level that it is able to partner with an open-enrollment charter, and to permit the school district board of trustees, the school district superintendent, and/or any school district personnel to participate in the governance of the campus and to receive the same level of funding as it would receive if the district partnered with a charter.

- Flexibility to allow a school district to divest of property in a manner that benefits the district and the local community.

Pre-K

- Funding for full-day pre-kindergarten.

Special Education

- Funding to provide appropriate services to increased numbers of students with special needs and dyslexia.

Charter Schools

- Leveling the playing field between school districts and open-enrollment charter schools by determining the average allotment for charters based on the average allotment received by school districts in the counties where the charter is located.

- Increased transparency requirements in charter application and amendment requests, including specific locations of proposed new campuses, to provide accurate regional impact on existing traditional public schools and open-enrollment charter schools, as well as sufficient notice and opportunity for analysis and public comment.

Austin ISD Opposes

Diversion of State Funding From Public Schools

- Vouchers, tax credits, tax payer savings grants, tuition reimbursements or any other programs that divert public tax dollars to either privately run schools or charter school districts that are exempt from state and federal accountability requirements.

Unfunded Mandates

- Any unfunded mandates and infringements upon local control.

Fund Balances

- Oppose penalties or any adverse actions against school districts that maintain a fund balance.