

Allen Independent School District

AISD Priorities for the 85th Legislative Session

Background:

The 85th Legislature will convene in the winter/spring of 2017. To prepare for this legislative session, we are providing a legislative agenda. These recommendations and priorities will be communicated to community stakeholders and our legislators.

Allen ISD will establish the following recommendations and priorities in preparation for the 2017 legislation session.

Recommendations:

1. The school finance system of the state of Texas must provide adequate and equitable funding to ensure a high quality education for all students. Additionally, it must have the capacity to be dynamic regarding student educational achievement needs, student enrollment and inflation.
2. Any education mandate enacted by the Texas Legislature must be fully funded through additional state aid delivered through appropriate funding formulas.
3. State funding formulas need to be studied and revised as needed by the legislature to ensure school districts receive the level of funding the formulas were designed to deliver so school districts have the resources necessary to provide students with the state-required instructional programs and enrichment education services.
4. The Texas Legislature must use accurate and updated student enrollment projections when it prepares and adopts the biennial state budget.
5. House Bill 5 (83rd Session) should not be substantially modified or rewritten before it is fully implemented so it can improve the quality of education for all Texas school children.
6. The rating system utilizing A through F grades for schools and districts enacted by the Texas Legislature should be repealed. A system of meaningful accountability that guides school administrators toward continuous improvement in student achievement and informs students, parents, teachers and community members about learning needs of each student and each school should be developed.
7. The Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) should continue as a defined benefit retirement system to help attract and retain quality school district employees in the state of Texas (Allen Retired Educators Association - goal).
8. The legislature should increase the state's contribution to the TRS-Active Care insurance program so that the out-of-pocket expenses of school district employees do not continue to significantly increase.
9. Public funds shall not be used to pay for any education voucher, private school education, private choice programs or tax credits for education scholarships to privately run schools, which are exempt from the same state and federal accountability requirements.

Priorities:

- **Accountability**
 - AISD supports an accountability system that empowers school districts to develop their own internal systems of assessment and accountability, that meet state standards while reflecting greater validity.
 - AISD opposes the rating system utilizing A-F grades for schools and districts which includes five domains and numerous unrelated indicators to determine a single grade, leaving the public with an

invalid, disconnected reflection of school quality; and creates a false impression about students, ignores the unique strengths of each school, and unfairly reduces each student's worth to the school's assigned grade.

- AISD supports a reduction in the number of state-standardized tests in grades 3-8, and ending high stakes testing for grade level promotion.

- **Curriculum and Instruction**

- AISD supports narrowing the scope of the grade level TEKS in order to provide ample instructional time for students to learn to the depth and complexity of each student expectation

- **Funding Issues**

- AISD supports revision of the school funding formula that results in increase in the Basic Allotment for the next biennium, to a total of \$5,415, per Weighted Average Daily Attendance (WADA). While local property taxes have risen 44.2% since 2008, state aid for education has increased only 7.4%. We request that lawmakers use funds collected from school district property taxes solely for public education and not for franchise tax relief.

- AISD supports funding for School Facilities to include the Instructional Facilities Allotment, Existing Debt Allotment and New Instructional Facilities Allotment.

- AISD supports continuing state funding for state mandated increase in district's contributions to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and adequate funding for both active and retired teachers' health programs.

- **Vouchers**

- AISD supports legislation that rejects any attempt to establish vouchers or Education Savings Accounts, which are taxpayer-funded subsidies for private schools that are not held to the same standards as public schools.