

LEWISVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



2019

Legislative Priorities

For the 86th Session of the Texas Legislature





THE LEWISVILLE ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES unanimously adopted a comprehensive legislative agenda in support of LISD students and their families during its regular meeting on Sept. 10, 2018.

From the Board:

Our promise to our 52,000 students and the staff, parents and community who support them is simple: All of our students will enjoy thriving, productive lives in a future *they* create.

Our vision is built on Four Cornerstones: Student Learning, Student Experience, Community Engagement, and Resource Stewardship. These guiding principles underscore our commitment to real innovation and limitless opportunity for each of our students. We will advocate for policies in the 86th Legislative Session that align with these Cornerstones under four areas of priority:

 **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Prioritize learning standards
- Value students as more than a test score

 **EDUCATIONAL EQUITY**

- Create consistent requirements

 **SCHOOL FINANCE**

- Build equity and transparency
- Revise funding formulas

 **LOCAL CONTROL**

- Respect community values
- Support local decision-making



ANGIE COX
President

KRONDA THIMESCH
Vice President

KATHERINE SELLS
Secretary

KRISTI HASSETT
Member

TRACY SCOTT MILLER
Member

JENNY PROZNIK
Member

ALLISON LASSAHN
Member

PRIORITY 1
REDUCE THE NUMBER OF REQUIRED TEKS



In some courses, teachers must teach multiple standards per day with no opportunity to revisit areas of concern.

We are grateful for the State Board of Education's work to streamline the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) teaching standards, but its work is incomplete and unproven.

The current streamlining of the TEKS does not go far enough to prioritize the most important TEKS that students should learn and master deeply.

Evidence needs to be provided to show when the content areas are addressed during the school year, and that teachers are able to meaningfully implement all of the required TEKS during the year.

Multiple pieces of legislation have been drafted to assist in addressing the issue of high-stakes testing. These include allowing a portfolio assignment rather than the writing examination and the recent local accountability system as prescribed in House Bill 22.

A version of state-mandated "high-stakes testing" was introduced in 1980, and SAT/ACT scores still remain remarkably similar, thus demonstrating little gains due to the policy of implanting such exams.

PRIORITY 1
EXPAND SCHOOL RATING CRITERIA



LISD supports a comprehensive system of accountability that includes locally designed metrics in conjunction with state accountability measures. A multi-faceted and comprehensive system would better measure students' learning than a one-time exam.

There is a lack of empirical evidence to suggest that the current system is effective in turnaround of low performing schools.

At the same time that the Texas Legislature was passing HB 2804, the measure initially responsible for A-F, Virginia was repealing its version of the law. The repeal was led by a Republican who initially voted for the measure. There is little research to support the A-F system. In fact, a 2013 report from the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University found many faults with the system.

LISD does not believe the stigmatization brought on by the current A-F system provides an effective solution to the academic issues that some schools face. The A-F system is not a quality metric and does not explain how and why a school is low performing. It does have a disparate impact upon low income schools.

Recognizing that teachers are closing gaps in student knowledge, providing enrichment, and working to provide authentic real-world learning experiences for students, the number of standards at each grade level impact a teacher's ability to provide for this.

Assigning letter grades and singular titles oversimplifies all that schools do for communities and leads to erroneous assumptions.

Ultimately, the series of STAAR exams should not be the tool utilized for this form of accountability. The STAAR series focuses solely on college readiness and is insufficient for measuring student learning; yet, it will be the source of data for 99% of the indicators for elementary and middle school campuses in the proposed accountability system. It is akin to utilizing the SAT for campus and

Priority One

ACCOUNTABILITY

PROBLEM: TEKS

The TEKS are "a mile wide and an inch deep" due to the level of detail specified in each subject or content area.

SOLUTION

Reduce the number of required TEKS. Prioritize the most important learning standards to ensure teachers are able to provide meaningful instruction each school year so students can learn concepts deeply and not at a superficial level.



PROBLEM: SCHOOL RATINGS

Rating schools' performance with A-F grades is misleading. It does not present a true assessment of a school's performance. This measurement does not explain why a school is low performing.

SOLUTION

Create a comprehensive accountability system that includes local metrics along with state accountability measures.



2019 Legislative Priorities

For the 86th Session of the Texas Legislature

district ratings. The SAT serves to inform colleges about readiness, but STAAR is supposed to inform about readiness as well as academic needs.

Based on the Texas Education Agency's Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessment and Accountability analysis, a student's math test could count a minimum number of 19 times or up to a maximum of 34 times depending on all the different student groups the student is counted in under the current system.

Out of a district of more than 52,000 students, approximately 31,000 students determined LISD's accountability rating.

Students must earn 26 credits in high school to graduate on the Foundation High School Program with an endorsement. With only five tests in high school determining an overall rating for a campus, there is a disconnect from the number of credits students are required to earn to graduate.

Considerations:

- Alternatives to the current testing system could utilize the Texas Success Initiative, SAT, or ACT and Advanced Placement courses.
- We request Domain 1 include only "Approaches" and "Meets Standards" as required by statute. The "Masters" level can be part of the badge system or remain part of the distinction system.
- We would like to have the district graduation rate count in the elementary school and middle school Domain 1 calculations. Elementary and middle schools are foundational in ensuring students eventually graduate high school. If mobility is a concern, you could create a scale that accounts for a percentage of non-mobile students.

Who represents us?

Legislators who represent the communities Lewisville ISD serves. To look up information on the legislator who serves you, visit <https://fyi.capitol.texas.gov>.

State Legislators

Texas State Senate District 12
JANE NELSON (R)
Austin phone: 512-463-0112
P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711

Texas State Senate District 16
NATHAN JOHNSON (D)
Austin phone: 512-463-0116
P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711

Texas State House District 63
TAN PARKER (R)
Austin phone: 512-463-0688
Capitol address: P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Texas State House District 65
MICHELLE BECKLEY (D)
Austin phone: 512-463-0478
Capitol address: P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768
Texas State House District 98

GIOVANNI CAPRIGLIONE (R)

Austin phone: 512-463-0690
Capitol address: P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Texas State House District 106
JARED PATTERSON (R)
Austin phone: 512-463-0694
Capitol address: P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

State Public Education Committee Chairs

Senate Chair
LARRY TAYLOR (R)
Austin phone: 512-463-0111
Capitol address: P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711

House Chair
DAN HUBERTY (R)
Austin phone: 512-463-0520
Capitol address: P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Federal Legislators

US Senate
JOHN CORNYN (R)
Washington phone: 202-224-2934
517 Hart Senate Office
Washington, D.C. 20510

US Senate
TED CRUZ (R)
Washington phone: 202-224-5922
404 Russell
Washington, D.C. 20510

US Congressional District 24
KENNY MARCHANT (R)
Washington phone: 202-225-6605
2369 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

US Congressional District 26
MICHAEL C. BURGESS (R)
Washington phone: 202-225-7772
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

State Board of Education Members

District 11
PATRICIA "PAT" HARDY (R)
900 N. Elm
Weatherford, TX 76086
Phone: 817-598-2968

District 12
PAM LITTLE (R)
632 Merlot
Fairview, TX 75069
Phone: 972-342-6697

District 14
SUE MELTON-MALONE (R)
125 E. Dawn
Robinson, TX 76706
Phone: 254-749-0415

Priority Two

SCHOOL FINANCE

PROBLEM

The current state funding formula is inadequate and causes schools to suffer. Funding formulas for basic allotment, transportation, Cost-of-Education Index, and special education are outdated.

SOLUTION

Increase the basic allotment. Revise the Cost-of-Education Index and funding weights to today's standards. Simplify and build transparency into the current complex funding system. Re-examine Recapture and let taxpayers know where their money is being spent since it is no longer going to their local schools.

PRIORITY 2 CREATE AN EQUITABLE AND TRANSPARENT PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE SYSTEM



In the interest of transparency, the legislature should capture the true cost of public education to ensure voting legislators understand the budgetary impact it has on local school districts.

Increase outdated funding formulas that include, but are not limited to: basic allotment, transportation, Cost of Education Index (CEI), and the special education funding weight.

Without an adequate funding formula from the state, our schools are suffering. We are doing more with less, and will soon be forced to enact major changes in our programming without changes to school funding. It will eventually take the form of bigger class sizes and reduced funding for programs that make a difference in our students' lives. It means difficult decisions in the face of dwindling resources.

Specific requests:

- Increase the basic allotment, which benefits all school districts.
- The CEI, a measurement that was initially created to assist in portraying an updated cost, has not been updated since 1991. There is no other mechanism built into the formulas to capture inflation or similar unaccounted costs.
- Many of the funding weights have not been adjusted since 1984, yet much of the state, including LISD, has grown both in numbers and diversity since that date.
- A majority of the money for public education comes from local tax dollars and is supported by the Recapture system. The state's obligations are reduced based upon growth in property values and the corresponding increase in property taxes.
- A June 2018 UT/Texas Tribune poll found that 51% of Texans disfavor the State's handling of public education funding.
- Texas currently rates 43rd in per-pupil spending, but 28th in student achievement outcomes.
- Other states spend an average of \$12,526 per student while Texas spends \$8,485.
- The complex system must be simplified for the benefit of the taxpayer. Furthermore, the system is not balanced and must be diversified to take some burden off of LISD property taxpayers.
- Re-examine Recapture. LISD will send 9 cents of every dollar back to the state this year, and the number continues to grow. The money from LISD and other recapture districts goes into the general fund with no accountability for how it is spent. The state must be more transparent with where the tax dollars are going, or better yet, reinvest those dollars back into schools.

PRIORITY 3 ESTABLISH EDUCATIONAL EQUITY



Any educational entity receiving public funds must operate in the same manner as traditional independent school districts and have the same requirements for student data collection and financial transparency.





2019

Legislative Priorities

For the 86th Session of the Texas Legislature

Priority Three

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

PROBLEM: CHARTER SCHOOLS

No checks and balances system exists between traditional public school districts and charter schools operating in their districts.

SOLUTION

Require any educational entity that receives public dollars to report where students go when leaving that school. Distribute funding equally between charter schools and public schools and require uniform reporting across all lines.

PROBLEM: INCREASING TAXES

Discontinuing two funding programs (Existing Debt Allotment and Instructional Facility Allotment) has caused local property taxes to increase to make up for the loss in funding.

SOLUTION

Reinstate facilities funding to a level that benefits local public schools and offers tax reductions for local taxpayers.

Require charter schools to follow traditional reporting practices

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) currently has a data tool which shows students who have departed from traditional school districts and their charter school destination. However, the tool does not show where students go after a similar departure from charter schools.

This tool would be helpful to the district to provide an accurate depiction of areas of concern and planning for where students may return, thus affecting facility capacity.

Other public entities often do not have to abide by the same transparency measures as traditional school districts.

- If an educational entity is receiving public dollars, uniform methods for reporting, as well as equal allocation of these funds should be required. This will create a better system of checks and balances.
- It is important for the parents and community of LISD to understand how their property taxes are being spent on public education. A more transparent funding system is critical to ensure school districts receive the appropriate amount of funding to best serve their student population.
- The existing debt allotment (EDA) and instructional facility allotment (IFA) have historically assisted fast growth districts with costs which would typically necessitate more bond funds. By discontinuing these programs, the state's lack of funding has indirectly contributed to LISD's tax rate and financial burdens. Recapture affects the District's ability to receive Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) and Existing Debt Allotment (EDA) funds. New IFA is a useful tool, but is only funded at \$47.5 million for the entire state for the biennium. Property taxes could be lower if the state funded such programs consistently and fully, as the District would not have as much start-up costs for its new campuses.
- Facilities funding is one of the best tax reduction initiatives the State can offer. The expansion of EDA, IFA, and NIFA would allow LISD to lower its tax rate or allow it to construct buildings with a lesser tax burden. The State must also recognize the disparate impact on traditional school districts when other entities receive state funding for facilities and access to the Permanent School Fund (PSF). LISD's tax base and the nature of unlimited bonds protects the PSF from undue burden.

**PRIORITY 4
LOCAL CONTROL IS NECESSARY
FOR SCHOOL SAFETY**



Lewisville ISD serves 52,000 students from 13 municipalities. Our district is represented by locally elected trustees who know what is best for the needs of our students, staff, parents, community members, and the communities we serve.

LISD believes the school district should have the flexibility to determine policies that address campus safety and security and mental health partnerships.

Policies created locally ensure safe schools

LISD trustees and staff leadership are very accessible to the community. They are attuned to the desires and goals of local taxpayers and stakeholders. They certainly have a better understanding of their local needs and methods than elected officials and bureaucrats from Austin.

We appreciate Governor Abbott's work regarding school safety, but we sincerely hope state leaders recognize the security needs in Muleshoe ISD are different than Lewisville ISD, are different than Dallas ISD, etc.

In LISD, we have created a safety and security task force comprised of law enforcement experts, mental health experts, staff members, parents and community members to determine what our community expects and supports to continuously improve safety at our schools.

Priority Four

LOCAL CONTROL

PROBLEM

One-size-fits-all public school safety mandates will not ensure school safety.

SOLUTION

Create policies that give local school districts the flexibility to determine and meet their local community's unique mental health needs. School districts should have the flexibility to create their own policies to address campus safety and security issues.

Be heard in Austin

DIRECTIVE TO AUSTIN: PRIORITIZE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING

The Texas Legislature formed the House Select Committee on Economic Competitiveness during the last legislative session. Comprised of civic and business leaders from throughout Texas, the committee's top recommendation is to prioritize public school funding, adjusting it to account for growth and inflation. Read the full Interim Report to the 86th Texas Legislature online at house.texas.gov. Search keywords: House Select Committee on Economic Competitiveness.

YOUR VOICE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

When the 86th Legislative Session convenes in Austin on Jan. 8, 2019, Texas lawmakers will have until May 27 (just 20 weeks) to make laws that will impact local public schools. During this upcoming session, let your legislators know what you want for LISD and Texas public schools.

Stay informed

Choose an issue that affects LISD schools and learn about it. Attend a school board meeting, read local, state and national publications and websites. Develop three or four talking points on that issue to call up during conversations.

Talk to your representative

It's not only your right to communicate your opinions to the people who have been elected to serve you in Austin, it's valued information. Legislators want to know your thoughts. Sometimes they won't act on an issue because too few people spoke to them about it.

Write your representative

It's best to send a one-page personal letter, even one that's hand-written, to let your representative know how strongly you feel about this issue. Let him or her know how this issue impacts your family and neighbors. Then, follow up with a phone call.



Ask the Experts

Those in the know at Lewisville ISD

AREA

- Fast growth schools
- School leadership
- Texas public education



Kevin Rogers, Ed.D.
 Superintendent of Schools
 superintendent@lisd.net
 469-948-8022

AREA

- Learning standards
- Curriculum
- Instruction



Lori Rapp, Ed.D.
 Deputy Superintendent of Schools
 rappl@lisd.net
 469-948-8115

AREA

- School finance
- Recapture
- Bonds



Mike Ball, MBA
 Chief Financial Officer
 ballm@lisd.net
 972-350-4733

AREA

- School safety
- School resource officers



Matt Garrett
 Director of Safety and Security
 garrettms@lisd.net
 972-350-4728

AREA

- Assessment
- Accountability



Sarah Fitzhugh, Ph.D.
 Executive Director of Assessment
 fitzhughsr@lisd.net
 972-350-0960

AREA

- Mental health
- Crisis intervention
- Guidance counseling



Monya Crow
 Director of Guidance and Counseling
 crowm@lisd.net
 972-350-4768