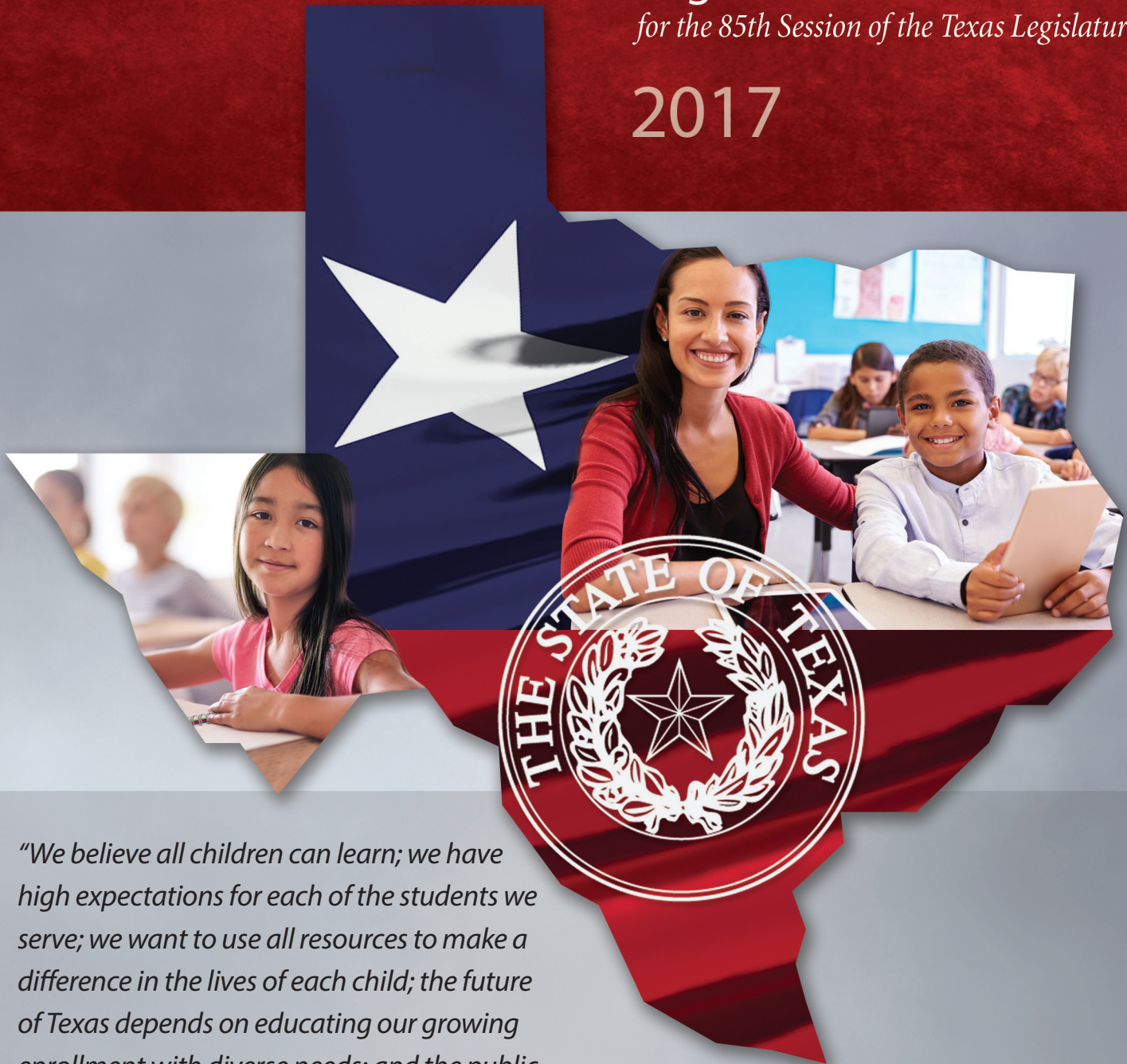


## Legislative Priorities

*for the 85th Session of the Texas Legislature*

# 2017



*"We believe all children can learn; we have high expectations for each of the students we serve; we want to use all resources to make a difference in the lives of each child; the future of Texas depends on educating our growing enrollment with diverse needs; and the public schools are charged by the Texas Constitution with this great mission for Texas."*

# 2017 Legislative Priorities

for the 85th Session of the Texas Legislature



## Message from the Fort Bend ISD Board President

As elected Trustees in FBISD, the community has entrusted us with governing and overseeing management of the District as well as advocating for education laws and policies that benefit FBISD students. We take seriously our job and our role as advocates at the local, state and national level. In preparation for our advocacy work in the upcoming legislative session, the FBISD Board adopted the enclosed Legislative Priorities, which we have shared with our state legislators. The Priorities reflect the impact of several current state laws on our students and offer practical solutions to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public schools. As board members, we feel it is important to remind legislators of the state's constitutional responsibility to provide adequate resources to educate all public education students.



As one of the most diverse school districts in the nation, FBISD students represent the face of public education in the future. While fully embracing the challenges of today's society, the Board wants to shape public education policy and be leaders when it comes to advocating for FBISD students, as well as all children attending public schools.

Within the guidelines of state and federal law, local school districts have a significant responsibility in shaping education policy and programs. The FBISD Board's approach to governance and advocacy is guided by keeping the interests of the parent and child at the forefront. The District Core Beliefs and Commitments were created with this in mind, and we are deliberate in our planning and in taking actions to ensure the District operates within this framework. These are the same principles that guide our advocacy efforts as well.

The Board has been and will continue to be a voice for our students in every arena. We want to be leaders for the District and public education in Texas and our nation to effectively meet the diverse needs of each student and ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The Board has been intentional in engaging our students, parents and the community to partner with us and provide feedback in all aspects of education in FBISD. We ask you to partner with us again as we communicate our Legislative Priorities to our state leaders.

As the 85th Legislative Session convenes on January 10, 2017, we invite you to be informed about our Legislative Priorities and join us in asking state legislators to uphold their constitutional "duty ... to make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools." Make your voice heard as we work together to ensure that all of our students have opportunities to receive an education that meets their unique needs to be inspired and equipped to pursue futures beyond what they can imagine.

Kristin Tassin



**Kristin Tassin**  
President



**Jason Burdine**  
Vice President



**Addie Heyliger**  
Secretary



**KP George**  
Member



**Grayle James**  
Member



**Jim Rice**  
Member



**Dave Rosenthal**  
Member



**Dr. Charles E. Dupre**  
Superintendent



## The Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees

developed a comprehensive legislative agenda in five key areas in support of the 74,000 students who attend Fort Bend ISD schools and of the 10,000 employees who work on behalf of these students to help meet their education needs, while allowing for efficient and effective operation of schools.

On October 17, 2016, in a Regular Board Meeting, the FBISD Board unanimously adopted five resolutions with specific details of each of the legislative priorities, sharing the following unified message to all involved:

*"We believe all children can learn; we have high expectations for each of the students we serve; we want to use all resources to make a difference in the lives of each child; the future of Texas depends on educating our growing enrollment with diverse needs; and the public schools are charged by the Texas Constitution with this great mission for Texas."*

### The five resolutions as adopted by the FBISD Board of Trustees are:

1. Making School Finance a Legislative Priority
2. Making Support for Uniformed Standards and Requirements for all State-Funded School Systems a Legislative Priority
3. Making Accountability and Assessment a Legislative Priority
4. Making Streamlining the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) a Legislative Priority
5. Making a Funding Amendment to Senate Bill 507 a Legislative Priority

"It is very important that the community hears the voice of this Board loud and clear, which is unanimous in the adoption of all five of these resolutions," said Kristin Tassin, Board President. "I am grateful to the Board members for reading each of these complete resolutions into the record, before we voted on them. The resolutions include our legislative priorities and include practical solutions for our legislators to support when they convene in January 2017."

## PRIORITY ONE SCHOOL FINANCE

As the 85th Legislative Session convenes on January 10, 2017, FBISD asks that legislators 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.

- Update outdated formula elements like the cost-of-education index (CEI) and transportation allotment. Simplify the formula by moving to a single-tier system.
- Tie property value increases state-wide and recapture payments to the State to an increase in the basic allotment.
- Adequately fund the Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA) to ensure districts can provide adequate technology and instructional materials to meet increased standards for students.

## PRIORITY TWO SCHOOL CHOICE

As the 85th Legislative Session convenes on January 10, 2017, FBISD asks that legislators uphold their constitutional "duty...to make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools" and focus on supporting the public schools that, by their own laws, have been created to be available to and accessible by all children. All students receiving tax dollars should be held to the same accountability standards and entrance requirements.

- Oppose traditional vouchers, tax credit scholarships, ESAs and other programs that divert tax dollars away from the more than 90 percent of the students in public education.

Ensure the quality of virtual school options for students by limiting the expansion to only high-quality virtual school providers.





## **PRIORITY THREE** **ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT**

Support an overhaul of the current accountability and assessment system in Texas to align with federal requirements and reduce the number of high-stakes tests students are required to take; limit testing to readiness standards to allow for more focus on deeper student outcomes and content mastery; and ensure college and career readiness by including post-secondary readiness assessments to the indicators of the State's accountability system in Domain IV.

- Repeal the A-F Accountability Ratings for districts and campuses and restore meaningfulness and utility to the state's accountability system.
- Align the state and federal accountability systems to eliminate confusion and ensure transparency at the campus and district levels.
- Streamline state academic assessments to what is federally required: Reading/English Language Arts and Math in grades 3-8; and Science in the specified grade spans.
- Ensure adequate resources (time, funding, staffing levels) to support full implementation of House Bill 5 to achieve college readiness goals.
- Develop reasonable assessment options that are sensitive to diversity, special education, accelerated learners, English Language Learners (ELL), and others that are critical to meet the needs of all students.
- Include post-secondary readiness assessments, such as ACT, SAT, AP, IB, Aspire, etc., to the indicators of the State's accountability system in Domain IV.



## **PRIORITY FOUR** **STREAMLINE THE TEKS**

Support streamlining of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum standards to align with college readiness standards.

- Require the Texas Education Agency to conduct a comprehensive study of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to ensure a multifaceted approach to the written and taught curriculum.
- Streamline the content and scope of the TEKS of each foundation curriculum subject that our teachers and students must cover with emphasis on college readiness standards at secondary levels.
- Provide aligned support and training for all, including educator professional development, access to instructional resources, reducing the number of TEKS and limiting testing to readiness standards.

## **PRIORITY FIVE** **SENATE BILL 507 FUNDING AMENDMENT**

(Cameras in special education classrooms)

Support adequate funding of SB 507, which will promote student safety in special education settings and help prevent any intentional abuse of students with special needs, including some who are non-verbal.

- Adequately fund SB 507 as it is an unfunded mandate, and school districts face tremendous costs associated with its implementation.
- Clarify SB 507 by amending Section 29.022 to limit the request to a single classroom rather than to "each school" and to "each self-contained classroom or other special education setting."
- Clarify SB 507 by amending Section 29.022 to reflect the true intent of the bill in which a request by a teacher or parent/guardian to install cameras requires installation only in the classroom where the teacher offers instruction or the child attends class.





## Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees 2017 Legislative Priorities

*"Providing Practical Solutions to Support Public Students"*

"It is very important that the community hears the voice of this Board loud and clear, which is unanimous in the adoption of five legislative resolutions," said Kristin Tassin, Board President. "I am grateful to the Board members for supporting each of these legislative priorities and including practical solutions for our legislators to support in the 2017 Legislative Session."



**Reform and Adequately Fund the Texas School Finance System**



**Support Uniformed Standards and Requirements for All State Funded School Systems**



**Overhaul State Accountability and Assessment Systems**



**Streamline the TEKS**



**Fund Senate Bill 507**  
(cameras in special education classrooms)

### PRIORITY 1:

#### Make School Finance a Legislative Priority

FBISD asks legislators to 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.

#### SOLUTION:

- Simplify outdated formula elements and simplify the funding formula (by moving to a single-tier system).
- Tie property value increases statewide and recapture payments to the State to an increase in the basic allotment.
- Adequately fund the Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA) Impact on students.
- Evaluate costs and related benefits of potential legislation to local taxpayers to provide state funding to pay for legislation.

#### IMPACT ON STUDENTS:

- In 2016-17, FBISD is expecting a \$4.4 million decrease in state revenue due to flawed state funding formula.
- State funding reduction occurs even as FBISD adds students and property values increase.
- 2017-18 budget planning will begin with a \$9 million deficit (before raises); lack of compensation increases will affect best-in-class teacher hiring/retention.
- These solutions directly affect classroom instruction: best-in-class teachers, adequate technology and instructional materials.



## RESOLUTION OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

### **Making School Finance a Legislative Priority**

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Supreme Court, despite recognizing the brokenness of the State's system of financing public education, declined to find the system unconstitutional and concluded it was up to the state legislature to fix the many deficits and inequities that plague the school finance system;

**WHEREAS**, Fort Bend ISD is expecting an estimated \$4.4 million decrease in state revenue in the 2016-17 school year due to the flawed state funding formula, and the reduction in state funding is occurring even as the District adds students and local property values are increasing;

**WHEREAS**, when Fort Bend ISD opens three new schools in 2017-18 and budget planning forecasts beginning the school year with a \$9 million deficit before any teacher raises, which directly affects classroom instruction in providing the best-in-class teachers, and adequately funded technology and instructional materials;

**IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees respectfully empower and support our respected state legislators to act on behalf of the District's 74,000 students and 10,000 employees to support an updated and adequately funded formula-based school finance system, which takes into account our District's diverse student characteristics when determining appropriate levels of funding to meet state and local standards;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators update outdated school finance formula elements like the cost-of-education index (CEI) and transportation allotment and simplify the formula by moving to a single tier system, and;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators tie property value increases statewide and recapture payments to the State to an increase in the basic allotment, and;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators adequately fund the Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA) to ensure districts can provide adequate technology and instructional materials to meet increased standards for students; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this priority begins within the leadership of the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees and together, we share one unified message to all involved:

***We believe all children can learn; we have high expectations for each of the students we serve; we want to use all resources to make a difference in the lives of each child; the future of Texas depends on educating our growing enrollment with diverse needs; and the public schools are charged by the Texas Constitution with this great mission for Texas.***

**APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 17th day of October, 2016, by the Board of Trustees.



## Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees 2017 Legislative Priorities

*"Providing Practical Solutions to Support Public Students"*

"It is very important that the community hears the voice of this Board loud and clear, which is unanimous in the adoption of five legislative resolutions," said Kristin Tassin, Board President. "I am grateful to the Board members for supporting each of these legislative priorities and including practical solutions for our legislators to support in the 2017 Legislative Session."



**Reform and Adequately Fund the Texas School Finance System**



**Support Uniformed Standards and Requirements for All State Funded School Systems**



**Overhaul State Accountability and Assessment Systems**



**Streamline the TEKS**



**Fund Senate Bill 507**  
(cameras in special education classrooms)

### PRIORITY 2:

#### Support Uniformed Standards and Requirements for All State Funded School Systems

In simple terms, the traditional voucher plan, tax credits or education savings accounts (ESAs) would divert public tax dollars to private entities, homeschool students or parents with little or no financial accountability to the state, taxpayers or local communities and exemption from state and federal accountability requirements.



#### SOLUTION:

- Oppose traditional vouchers, tax credit scholarships, ESAs and other programs that divert tax dollars away from 90 percent of the Texas students who attend public schools – more than five million.
- Ensure the quality of virtual school options by limiting the expansion to only high-quality virtual school providers.
- All students receiving tax dollars should be held to the same accountability standards and entrance requirements.

#### IMPACT ON STUDENTS:

- Texas Public School Mission: to ensure that all Texas children have access to quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic and educational opportunities of our state and nation (Texas Education Code §4.001).
- Allocate Texas resources efficiently to meet the needs of more than five million public school students; don't divert public education funding to private entities exempt from state accountability standards.

## RESOLUTION OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

### **Making Constitutional Support of Public Schools a Legislative Priority**

**WHEREAS**, the mission of the public education system of this state is to ensure that all Texas children have access to quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic and educational opportunities of our state and nation (Texas Education Code §4.001),

**WHEREAS**, the Lieutenant Governor of Texas gave the Senate Education Committee an interim charge to “study the implementation of school choice in other states, including the impact on student performance and district budgets, to determine the best school choice plan to serve Texas students.”

WHEREAS, the traditional voucher plan, tax credits or education savings accounts (ESAs) would divert public tax dollars to private entities or homeschool students with little or no financial accountability to the state, taxpayers or local communities; with exemption from state and federal accountability requirements; and are free from the burden of many state and federal regulations and mandates;

**IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees respectfully empower and support our respected state legislators to uphold their constitutional “duty . . . to make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools” and focus their efforts on supporting the public schools, which, by their own laws, have been created to be available to and accessible by all children;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators oppose traditional vouchers, tax credit scholarships, ESAs and other programs that divert tax dollars away from the more than 90 percent of the students in public education;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators ensure the quality of virtual school options for students by limiting the expansion to only high quality virtual school providers;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this priority begins within the leadership of the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees and together, we share one unified message to all involved:

***We believe all children can learn; we have high expectations for each of the students we serve; we want to use all resources to make a difference in the lives of each child; the future of Texas depends on educating our growing enrollment with diverse needs; and the public schools are charged by the Texas Constitution with this great mission for Texas.***

**APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 17th day of October, 2016.





## Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees 2017 Legislative Priorities

*"Providing Practical Solutions to Support Public Students"*

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**Reform and Adequately Fund the Texas School Finance System**



**Support Uniformed Standards and Requirements for All State Funded School Systems**



**Overhaul State Accountability and Assessment Systems**



**Streamline the TEKS**



**Fund Senate Bill 507**  
(cameras in special education classrooms)

### PRIORITY 3:

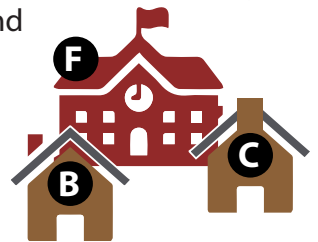
#### Make Accountability and Assessment a Legislative Priority

The purpose of the current state accountability system is not clearly defined. The purpose should be to provide meaningful assessments with actionable information to improve all students' postsecondary readiness, close gaps in readiness, and sustain continuous system improvement.



#### SOLUTION:

- Align the state and federal accountability systems to eliminate confusion, and ensure transparency at the campus/district levels.
- Streamline state academic assessments to federal requirements: Reading/English Language Arts and Math in grades 3-8; and Science in specified grades.
- Ensure adequate resources (time, funding, staffing levels) to support full implementation of HB 5 to achieve college readiness goals.
- Restore meaningfulness and utility of state-administered accountability systems by opposing A-F letter grades as campus and district ratings.
- Develop reasonable assessment options that are sensitive to diversity, special education, accelerated learners, and English Language Learners (ELL).



#### IMPACT ON STUDENTS:

- A comprehensive meaningful accountability system needs to look beyond high-stakes, multiple-choice exams to ensure ratings reflect overall student performance at campus and district levels, as well as measure what each community deems important in promoting college and career readiness.

## RESOLUTION OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

### **Making Accountability and Assessment a Legislative Priority**

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the current state accountability system is not clearly defined and the current assessment system is overly burdensome on students and teachers and does not effectively prepare students for post-secondary education or careers;

**WHEREAS**, studies show and districts experience the negative effects of excessive high stakes testing on students, and in addition, the test-driven curriculum does not allow for creativity and depth of learning in our classrooms, depriving students of a diverse and enriched educational experience;

**WHEREAS**, a high percentage of Texas students are graduating from high school needing remediation in core subjects such as math and English;

**IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees respectfully empower and support our respected state legislators to overhaul the current accountability and assessment system in Texas to align with federal requirements and reduce the number of high stakes tests students are required to take; limit testing to readiness standards to allow for more focus on deeper student outcomes and content mastery; and ensure college and career readiness by including post-secondary readiness assessments to the indicators of the State's accountability system in Domain IV;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators align the state and federal accountability systems to eliminate confusion and ensure transparency at the campus and district levels;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators streamline state academic assessments to what is federally required: Reading/English language Arts and Math in grades 3-8; and Science in the specified grade spans;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators ensure adequate resources (time, funding, staffing levels) to support full implementation of House Bill 5 to achieve college readiness goals;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators restore meaningfulness and utility of state administered accountability systems by opposing A-F letter grades as campus and district ratings;

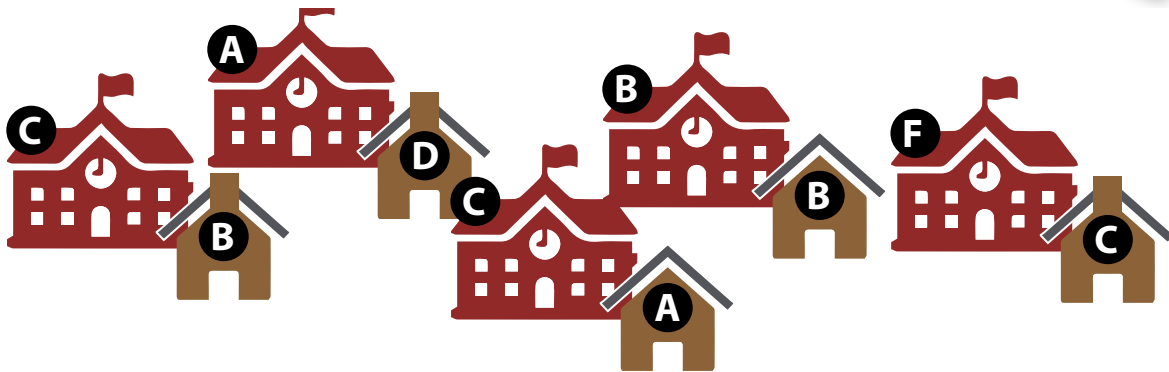
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators develop reasonable assessment options that are sensitive to diversity, special education, accelerated learners, English language learners (ELL), and others that are critical to meet the needs of all students;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators include post-secondary readiness assessments such as ACT, SAT, AP, IB, Aspire, etc., to the indicators of the State's accountability system in Domain IV;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this priority begins within the leadership of the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees and together, we share one unified message to all involved:

***We believe all children can learn; we have high expectations for each of the students we serve; we want to use all resources to make a difference in the lives of each child; the future of Texas depends on educating our growing enrollment with diverse needs; and the public schools are charged by the Texas Constitution with this great mission for Texas.***

**APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 17th day of October, 2016, by the Board of Trustees.



## Repeal the A-F School and District Accountability Rating System

Starting with the 2018 school year, the Texas Commissioner of Education will label each public school district and campus with a rating in the form of an A-F letter grade to comply with House Bill 2804, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature in 2015.

Fort Bend ISD is preparing for the new statewide accountability system that is set to go into effect by August 15, 2018, even as FBISD trustees and administrators ask legislators to implement a more meaningful accountability system as part of the Board's Legislative Priorities.

### Upcoming House Bill 2804 Dates

- Beginning in 2018, the state will transition from a four index system to a five domain system, with each campus and the District receiving six A-F letter grades: one grade in the five domains, as well as an overall grade.
- On January 5, 2017, TEA released reports showing the ratings to the public that each district and campus would have received in Domains I-IV for the 2015-16 school year, if the A-F rating system had been in place. Overall campus grades or district ratings will not be released at this time.
- By summer 2017, districts and campuses will report to TEA which three indicators will be used for Domain V, and the criteria that will be used to measure performance in those indicators.
- By spring 2018, districts and campuses will assign to themselves an overall rating of A, B, C, D, or F for Domain V and a rating for each of the three indicators used for Domain V.
- By August 15, 2018, TEA will assign each district and campus an overall rating of A, B, C, D, or F and a rating for each domain.

## RESOLUTION OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

### **Making Repealing the A-F Accountability Rating System for Texas Public Schools a Legislative Priority**

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Legislature has enacted legislation that requires the Commissioner of Education to implement a public school rating system that would assign A through F grades to schools and districts beginning with the 2017-18 school year; and

**WHEREAS**, at least 16 states have implemented a similar rating system utilizing A through F grades for schools and districts and, to date, there is no definitive research that suggests these ratings have improved student or school performance; and

**WHEREAS**, in a recent statewide survey conducted by the State Board of Education, an overwhelming majority of Texans said they do not want standardized test scores to serve as the primary basis for a public school rating system; and

**WHEREAS**, the majority (55%) of the A through F grades will be based on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR), a high-stakes, standardized test that does not accurately measure student learning; and

**WHEREAS**, the STAAR provides little meaningful information to guide student learning, inform teachers or report academic progress to parents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commissioner's proposed rating system utilizing A through F grades for schools and districts includes five domains and twenty-three unrelated indicators to determine a single grade, leaving the public with an invalid, disconnected reflection of school quality; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commissioner's proposed rating system utilizing A through F grades for schools and districts creates a false impression about students, ignoring the unique strengths of each school and unfairly reduces each student's worth to the school's assigned grade; and,

**WHEREAS**, Fort Bend ISD takes actions to ensure the District operates within the framework of District Core Beliefs and Commitments and its mission to transform teaching and learning by inspiring and equipping all students to pursue futures beyond what they can imagine; and

**WHEREAS**, we embrace meaningful accountability that informs students, parents, and teachers about the learning needs of each student and each school; and

**WHEREAS**, we believe our state's future prosperity relies on a high-quality education system that prepares students for college and careers, and without such a system Texas' economic competitiveness and ability to attract new business will falter; and now,

**IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees respectfully calls on the Texas Legislature to repeal the rating system utilizing A through F grades for schools and districts and develop a community-based accountability system that empowers school districts to design their own internal systems of assessment and accountability that, while meeting general state standards, allows districts to innovate and customize curriculum and instruction to meet the needs and interests of each student and their communities; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this new system should encompass multiple considerations, reflect greater validity, and, more accurately reflect what students know and can do in terms of the rigorous standards.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this priority begins within the leadership of the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees and together, we share one unified message to all involved:

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**APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 12th day of December, 2016, by the Board of Trustees.



## Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees 2017 Legislative Priorities

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**Reform and Adequately Fund the Texas School Finance System**



**Support Uniformed Standards and Requirements for All State Funded School Systems**



**Overhaul State Accountability and Assessment Systems**



**Streamline the TEKS**



**Fund Senate Bill 507**  
(cameras in special education classrooms)

### PRIORITY 4:

#### Streamline the TEKS

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum standards that ensure all state-mandated content standards for a particular grade level are currently too broad and need to be streamlined and better aligned with college readiness standards.

#### SOLUTION:

- Require the Texas Education Agency to conduct a comprehensive study of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- Streamline the content and scope of the TEKS of each foundation curriculum subject that our teachers and students must cover with emphasis on college readiness standards at secondary levels.
- Provide aligned support and training for all, including educator professional development, access to instructional resources, reducing the number of TEKS and limiting testing to readiness standards.

#### IMPACT ON STUDENTS:

- Streamlining the TEKS to align with college readiness standards will ensure all content standards are taught in a single school year— with less homework!

## RESOLUTION OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

### **Making Streamlining the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) a Legislative Priority**

**WHEREAS**, The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum standards that ensure all state-mandated content standards for a particular grade level are currently too broad and need to be streamlined and better aligned with college readiness standards;

**WHEREAS**, students and teachers are overworked due to the extreme number of curriculum standards required to be taught in a school year, and the volume of standards necessitates a fast pace in the classroom causing many students to fall behind without hope of gaining the foundational knowledge required to be proficient in the core subjects and ready for post-secondary education and careers;

**WHEREAS**, streamlining the TEKS curriculum standards to better align with college readiness standards will ensure all state-mandated content standards for a particular grade level can be reasonably expected to be taught in a single school year without inundating students and teachers with unreasonable homework assignments and causing students who cannot keep up with the pacing to be left behind;

**IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees respectfully empower and support our respected state legislators to streamline the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum standards to align with college readiness standards;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators require the Texas Education Agency to conduct a comprehensive study of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to ensure a multifaceted approach to the written and taught curriculum;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators streamline the content and scope of the TEKS of each foundation curriculum subject that our teachers and students must cover with emphasis on college readiness standards at secondary levels;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that state legislators provide aligned support and training for all, including educator professional development, access to instructional resources, reducing the number of TEKS and limiting testing to readiness standards;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this priority begins within the leadership of the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees and together, we share one unified message to all involved:

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**APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 17th day of October, 2016.



## Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees 2017 Legislative Priorities

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**Reform and Adequately Fund the Texas School Finance System**



**Support Uniformed Standards and Requirements for All State Funded School Systems**



**Overhaul State Accountability and Assessment Systems**



**Streamline the TEKS**



**Fund Senate Bill 507**  
(cameras in special education classrooms)

### PRIORITY 5:

#### **Senate Bill 507 Funding Amendment (for cameras in special education classrooms)**

Senate Bill 507 is an unfunded mandate that provides video surveillance for the purpose of promoting student safety in certain self-contained classrooms and other special education settings. In March 2016, the Texas Education Commissioner requested an expedited opinion from the Attorney General seeking clarification as to the scope of a single request and the AG expressed his inability to re-write legislation.



#### **SOLUTION:**

- Adequately fund SB 507 as it is an unfunded mandate, and school districts face tremendous costs associated with its implementation.
- Clarify SB 507 by amending Section 29.022 to limit the request to a single classroom rather than to "each school" and to "each self-contained classroom or other special education setting."
- Clarify SB 507 by amending Section 29.022 to reflect the true intent of the bill in which a request by a teacher or parent/guardian to install cameras requires installation only in the classroom where the teacher offers instruction or the child attends class.

#### **IMPACT ON STUDENTS:**

- Adequate funding of SB 507 will promote student safety in special education settings.
- SB 507 will help prevent any intentional abuse of students with special needs, including some who are non-communicative.
- These solutions directly affect classroom instruction: best-in-class teachers, adequate technology and instructional materials.

#FundSB507

## RESOLUTION OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

### **Making a Funding Amendment to Senate Bill 507 a Legislative Priority**

**WHEREAS**, Senate Bill 507 is an unfunded mandate that provides video surveillance for the purpose of promoting student safety in certain self-contained classrooms and other special education settings, and in March 2015, the Texas Education Commissioner requested an expedited opinion from the Attorney General seeking clarification as to the scope of a single request and the AG expressed his inability to re-write legislation;

**WHEREAS**, unfunded legislative mandates, including Senate Bill 507, require districts to divert funds from other needed educational programs or from teacher salaries in order to fund the mandate;

**WHEREAS**, Fort Bend ISD estimates spending approximately \$5 million to fund Senate Bill 507, all of which must be taken from other programs that benefit students;

**IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees respectfully empower state legislators to amend Senate Bill 507, which will promote student safety in special education settings and help prevent any intentional abuse of students with special needs, including some who are non-verbal ;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators adequately fund Senate Bill 507 as it is an unfunded mandate, and school districts face tremendous costs associated with its implementation;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators clarify Senate Bill 507 by amending Section 29.022 to limit the request to a single classroom rather than to "each school" and to "each self-contained classroom or other special education setting;"

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that state legislators clarify Senate Bill 507 by amending Section 29.022 to reflect the true intent of the bill in which a request by a teacher or parent/guardian to install cameras requires installation only in the classroom where the teacher offers instruction or the child attends class;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this priority begins within the leadership of the Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees and together, we share one unified message to all involved:

***We believe all children can learn; we have high expectations for each of the students we serve; we want to use all resources to make a difference in the lives of each child; the future of Texas depends on educating our growing enrollment with diverse needs; and the public schools are charged by the Texas Constitution with this great mission for Texas.***

**APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 17th day of October, 2016.



## Texas School Alliance CFO School Finance Plan

**The Texas public school finance system needs reform. TSA proposes four primary principles that guide the recommendation to begin the process of finance reform.**

- Use growth in property tax base of school districts to increase support for public education, not to reduce state support as the current formula operates.
- Enhance inadequate school funding levels immediately.
- Simplify the school finance system, whenever possible.
- The Legislative Budget Board should fulfill its obligation to study and report on a biennial basis the equalized funding elements that should be used for public school finance, as stated in the Texas Education Code §42.007.

**To that end, the TSA recommends that the 85th Texas Legislature take the following actions for the 2017-18/2018-19 biennium:**

- Increase the basic allotment to at least \$5,455.
- Increase the equalized wealth level applicable to the compressed tax rate to at least \$545,500.
- Increase the Tier 2 Level 2 yield to the 88th percentile of property wealth per weighted student.
- Implement an updated Cost of Education Index (TEC §42.102)
- Expand the number of cents of tax rate in Tier 2 to which the Austin yield applies from six to eight, and allow districts to reach those pennies without a tax ratification election.
- Simplify the formula system by repealing the funding for gifted/talented (TEC §42.156), high school (TEC §42.160), and additional state aid for staff salaries increases (TEC §42.2513), and increasing the basic allotment.
- Repeal 1992-93 hold harmless provisions for Chapter 41 districts (§42.002(e)), and maintain the repeal of ASATR (§42.2516).
- Provide for a credit against recapture for the transportation allotment in the same manner as the new instructional facilities allotment.

Additionally, affirmative steps should be taken to phase in the revision of other funding elements of the school finance system, including weights for special programs, the yields for the Chapter 46 allotments (Instructional Facilities Allotment, Existing Debt Allotment) in future biennia, and adjustments for reasonable annual increases in the cost of services brought about by inflationary pressures outside the control of school districts.

## Your voice can make a difference ...

As the 85th Legislative Session convenes on January 10, 2017, make sure you are informed about three legislative priorities that impact all students in Texas Public Schools. During the session, let your legislators know what you think.

### How can you help?

Concerned citizens often ask what they can do specifically to help students. Complete one or more of the enclosed items and encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same!

### Empower yourself

- Choose an issue affecting Fort Bend ISD schools and learn about that issue. Attend a school board meeting, read local and statewide education publications, and/or review the information about Legislative Priorities.
- Develop a short, focused message or an “elevator talk” (1-2 minutes) about the issue you choose. The short talk should briefly identify a problem, present a solution and issue a call to action. It is a very useful tool when you have only a minute or two of someone’s attention and you want to get a point across.

### Tell your legislators what you think

- Follow legislators’ social media accounts and feel free to reach out to them using these communication tools.
- Send a letter or email to your local legislators.
- Call local legislators and schedule face-to-face meetings.
- Establish a relationship with the aides in legislator’s local office.
- Attend and ask questions at town meetings hosted by local legislators.

- Invite a local legislator to be your guest at a (district school) special event.
- Ask local legislators to agree to take a leadership role on your selected issue.

### Tell the media what you think

- Write an OpEd or letter to a newspaper editor and send your published letter to local legislators.
- Copy editorials or news articles or send links to these articles to local legislators.

### Tell your community what you think about your important issue and encourage others to do the same

- Use social media and hash tags to spread the work about your issue and your solution.
- Host a discussion about your selected issue with a local group in your community.
- Encourage others to do the same.
- Team up with a school leader to speak to a local community group.
- Participate in a community forum about your selected issue.
- Update your Facebook or Twitter status with a key point from your “elevator talk.”
- Share links to relevant news articles or information from the school district website.
- Invite people to participate in events in your community or online (virtual meetings) that are organized by you, the school district or another community member.

### Tips for writing effective letters and emails

It’s your right to communicate your opinions and knowledge to the people who have been elected to represent you in state government. Legislators want to know what’s important to you, and they value your input. Sadly, they often report that their inaction on an issue is simply because not enough people spoke to them about it. So, remember your advocacy is not just permissible, it’s appreciated.

Some forms of written communication are more effective than others. While emails and form letters may be easiest, personal letters (perhaps even hand-written) convey a stronger message. They demonstrate the importance of your concerns by showing you went out of your way to make them known. Writing a letter and making a follow-up phone call takes a few minutes, but those steps ensure that your legislator knows just how you want to be represented.

When writing a letter, you should keep your letter short; a single page is best. Be concise and specific, but add personal touches on how your selected issue impacts you and your family.

The letter should include the following: introduction, problem statement, proposed solution, conclusion and call to action. Be sure to include all of your contact information (e.g. home address, phone number, email address), so your legislator can reply to you.

# 2017 Legislative Priorities

for the 85th Session of the Texas Legislature



## The truth about public education legislative issues

**MYTH 1** When the property appraisals increase, the school districts are receiving the benefit and the state is “not capping” school district funding.

### Facts:

- School districts receive the benefit of increased property values for one year. After that, the amount of the increase goes to the state and is not required to be used for education at all.
- The state’s contribution to FBISD’s budget has shrunk from 51% in 2007 to 37% in 2017.
- Although local property values rose and the average taxpayer paid more than 8% in property taxes, FBISD’s revenue from the state decreased in 2016-17 by approximately \$4.4 million.

**MYTH 2** School district budgets have increased by 8% to 9% annually.

### Facts:

- FBISD’s budget has experienced an average increase of only 2.56% over the past eight years, including increased enrollment.
- In 2017-18, although property values are expected to increase 9-10%, FBISD’s total revenue per student will decrease for the second consecutive year.

**MYTH 3** The A-F accountability system is “simple,” “clear,” and “transparent,” and will improve student outcomes.

### Facts:

- A-F rating systems stigmatize children without providing meaningful accountability.
- A-F rating systems have not worked in other states, as student performance has actually dropped in those states.
- A-F rating systems rely upon pages of complicated rules and calculations - community members and parents cannot really know what a letter grade means.
- A-F rating systems fail to account for socioeconomic conditions or student abilities, both of which influence performance on the state standardized test – school districts are held accountable for factors they do not control.
- A-F rating systems provide no direction to schools for how to improve – letter grades do not identify best practices used by high-performing schools.
- A-F rating systems create a false impression about an entire neighborhood of children – assignment of a single letter grade unfairly reduces every student to the school’s assigned grade.

## SCHOOL CHOICE ISSUES

# MYTHS vs Facts

**MYTH 4** School vouchers or Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) will allow “choice” for students in special education and at-risk students attending failing schools, and will create competition, thereby motivating public schools to improve.

### Facts:

- There are almost no inclusive private schools in Texas that will admit students with disabilities, only schools that exclusively serve students with disabilities. This is not “choice” for those students.
- The amount given to a student under a voucher or ESA plan will not be enough to cover tuition at a private school. Families will either have to make up the difference or the private school will be forced to accept the amount of the voucher as the student’s entire tuition.
- Private schools and homeschoolers who participate in a voucher or ESA program will likely be subject to at least some regulation and state accountability, which actually impedes “choice.” If private schools and homeschoolers are not allowed to offer families an educational environment different from public school, then there are no alternatives from which families can choose.
- If private schools receiving vouchers or ESA money are not required to operate under the same burdensome regulations and state accountability system as public schools, then this is not real competition. This is akin to allowing two businesses to open next door to one another, requiring that one follow all the laws and regulations applicable to that business, but allowing the other to operate without following any. Which business will succeed in operating at a lower cost and will ultimately be successful? Vouchers do not produce free-market competition.
- Private schools may turn away any child at any time for almost any reason. Private schools do not and are not likely to, even with a voucher, educate students who struggle academically, have behavioral problems, have a disability, or do not speak English. Public schools must educate all students, regardless of ability, performance, behaviors or language barriers.

# Fort Bend Independent School District

**You can be a part of the solution on legislation concerning state and national issues.**

Contact your congressional and state legislators to voice your opinions. To view the constituency websites for your elected representatives in Washington, D. C. and Austin, visit the following websites:

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)   [www.senate.state.tx.us](http://www.senate.state.tx.us)   [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)   [www.house.state.tx.us/members/welcome](http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/welcome)

## [www.fortbendisd.com/legislativepriorities](http://www.fortbendisd.com/legislativepriorities)

Listed below are state legislators who represent residents in Fort Bend ISD.

### **UNITED STATES CONGRESSMEN**

#### **9TH DISTRICT**

##### **Congressman Al Green**

3003 South Loop West, Suite 460  
Houston, Texas 77054  
(713) 383-9234  
Fax (281) 383-9202  
(Washington, D. C.)  
(202) 225-7508  
[www.algreen.house.gov@RepAlGreen](http://www.algreen.house.gov@RepAlGreen)

#### **22ND DISTRICT**

##### **Congressman Pete Olson**

1650 Highway 6, Suite 150  
Sugar Land, Texas 77478  
(281) 494-2690  
Fax (281) 494-2649  
(Washington, D.C.)  
(202) 225-5951  
[www.olson.house.gov@PeteOlson](http://www.olson.house.gov@PeteOlson)

### **UNITED STATES SENATORS**

#### **Senator John Cornyn**

Chase Tower  
221 W. Sixth Street  
Suite 1530  
Austin, Texas 78701  
(512) 469-6034  
Fax: (512) 469-6020  
(Washington, D. C.)  
[www.cornyn.senate.gov@JohnCornyn](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov@JohnCornyn)

#### **Senator Ted Cruz**

Dirksen Senate  
Office Bldg.  
Suite 185  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-5922  
(Washington, D. C.)  
[www.cruz.senate.gov@SenTedCruz](http://www.cruz.senate.gov@SenTedCruz)

### **STATE SENATORS**

#### **SENATE DISTRICT 13**

**The Honorable  
Borris Miles**  
Room 3E.6  
P. O. Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711  
(512) 463-0113  
Fax: (512) 463-0006  
[borris.miles@senate.texas.gov](mailto:borris.miles@senate.texas.gov)  
[@BorrisLMiles](https://twitter.com/BorrisLMiles)

#### **District Address**

5302 Alameda, Suite A  
Houston, Texas 77004  
(713) 665-8322  
Fax: (713) 665-0009

#### **SENATE DISTRICT 17**

**The Honorable  
Joan Huffman**  
P. O. Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711  
(512) 463-0117  
Fax: (512) 463-0639  
[joan.huffman@senate.texas.gov](mailto:joan.huffman@senate.texas.gov)  
[@JoanHuffman](https://twitter.com/JoanHuffman)

#### **District Address**

P.O. Box 541774  
Houston, Texas 77254  
(281) 980-3500  
Fax: (281) 980-3555

#### **SENATE DISTRICT 18**

**The Honorable  
Lois Kolkhorst**  
Room 3E.2  
P. O. Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711  
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Fax: (512) 475-3736  
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[@LoisKolkhorst](https://twitter.com/LoisKolkhorst)

#### **District Address**

2000 South Market, #101  
Brenham, Texas 77833  
(979) 251-7888

### **STATE REPRESENTATIVES**

#### **HOUSE DISTRICT 26**

**The Honorable  
Rick Miller**  
Texas House of  
Representatives  
Room E2.312, Capitol Ext.  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, Texas 78768  
(512) 463-0710  
Fax: (512) 463-0711  
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[@Vote4Rick](https://twitter.com/Vote4Rick)

#### **District Address**

130 Industrial Blvd.,  
Ste. 126  
Sugar Land, Texas 77478  
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#### **HOUSE DISTRICT 27**

**The Honorable  
Ron Reynolds**  
Texas House of  
Representatives  
Room E2.306, Capitol Ext.  
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[@ronreynolds](https://twitter.com/ronreynolds)

#### **District Address**

2440 Texas Parkway  
Suite 102  
Missouri City, Texas 77489  
(281) 208-3574  
Fax: (281) 208-3696

#### **HOUSE DISTRICT 28**

**The Honorable  
John Zerwas**  
Texas House of  
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Fax: (512) 236-0713  
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[@RepJohnZerwas](https://twitter.com/RepJohnZerwas)

#### **District Address**

P. O. Box 434  
Simonton, Texas 77476  
(281) 533-9042  
Fax: (281) 533-9049

#### **HOUSE DISTRICT 85**

**The Honorable  
Phil Stephenson**  
Texas House of  
Representatives  
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Fax: (512) 463-5244  
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#### **District Address**

834 Third Street  
Rosenberg, TX 77471  
(281) 232-7900  
Fax: (281) 232-7901

#### **HOUSE DISTRICT 131**

**The Honorable  
Alma Allen**  
Texas House of  
Representatives  
Room E1.506, Capitol Ext.  
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[@AlmaAllen131](https://twitter.com/AlmaAllen131)

#### **District Address**

10101 Fondren Road,  
Suite 500  
Houston, TX 77096  
Rosenberg, TX 77471  
(713) 776-0505  
Fax: (281) 232-7901

### **OTHER KEY CONTACTS**

#### **Governor Greg Abbott**

P. O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711  
Austin: (512) 463-1782  
Fax: (512) 463-1849  
Toll free: 1-800-843-5789  
email: <https://gov.texas.gov/contact>  
[@GovAbbot](https://twitter.com/GovAbbot)

#### **Lt. Governor Dan Patrick**

P. O. Box 12068  
Austin, Texas 78711  
CommentLine:  
(512) 463-5342  
Austin: (512) 463-0001  
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[@DanPatrick](https://twitter.com/DanPatrick)

#### **House Speaker**

**Joe Straus**  
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[@SpeakerStraus](https://twitter.com/SpeakerStraus)

