



## 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

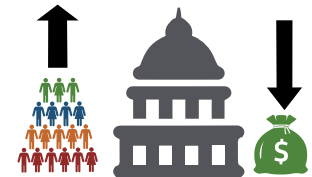
FBISD asks legislators to support an updated and adequately funded formula-based school finance system, which takes into account student and district characteristics when determining appropriate levels of funding to meet state and local standards.

#### SOLUTION:

- Update outdated formula elements and simplify the funding formula (by moving to a single-tier system).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:

#### 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.



## 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.