



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 5:

Senate Bill 507 Funding Amendment

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.

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.