



2023 Legislative Agenda

2023 Legislative Priorities:

Allocate state funds to ensure that public education is not disrupted due to financial hardships created by the global health crisis after considering the impact of any federal funding provided directly to districts to meet those needs.

Identify state revenue sources to sustain the finance system authorized through HB 3 and to continue buying down school district M&O tax rates.

Ensure the Texas Education Agency's implementation of HB 3 aligns with legislative intent and make adjustments as necessary.

Ensure that TRS continues the work it began following the 86th legislative session to increase access to affordable health insurance for public school employees.

Require a complete recalibration of the accountability system in 2023.

Ensure legislators recommend effective solutions and appropriate ongoing funding for threat assessments and identification, services and supports for students with mental health needs.

School Safety: *The Arlington ISD considers school safety to be its number one priority. The 88th Texas Legislature should:*

1. Increase funding for school districts to enhance their security. This should include increasing the school safety allotment. Lack of funding is often the largest barrier to implementing security enhancements and adding security personnel.
2. Differentiate between policy and practical applications. Allow most practical application decisions to be made at the local level. Many decisions are best made close to the facility, students, staff and parents.
3. Prioritize mental health by:
 - Working with school districts to create a platform that identifies students with mental health needs
 - Providing appropriate ongoing funding for identification, services and supports for students with mental health needs
 - Allowing school districts flexibility to determine how safety and mental health funds are spent in order to best meet local needs
 - Funding Multi-disciplinary Threat Assessment Teams for every school district so they are appropriately staffed and can effectively intervene to stop violence before it occurs.

School Finance: *Education needs or account for recent challenges related to inflation and human capital. Legislation is needed that provides funding for public education to fully meet the mission and objectives described in Texas Education Code, Section 4.001 and the 60x30TX higher education plan. The 88th Texas Legislature should:*

School Funding:

1. Change the funding model to be based on enrollment, not attendance, as districts'

3. Reject legislation that utilizes school district fund balances to meet the state's obligations to fund public education.

Local Authority:

1. Recognize TEC § 7.003 as the statutory basis for governance and authority for decision-making in Texas. Preserve local control and flexibility to address the unique needs of local communities.
2. Reject legislation that expands required ballot language, mandates November election dates or requires a super majority for school bond and tax rate elections.
3. Amend the Texas Open Meetings Act to permanently allow local boards or individual trustees to attend meetings virtually through mechanisms found to be effective during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Human Capital: School districts are all about people and require a large, diverse workforce to operate efficiently and effectively. In recent years, school districts have faced increasing difficulty filling all positions, from teachers and substitutes to bus drivers and food service workers. The state can establish policies and provide funding to help alleviate the staffing shortages. The 88th Legislature should:

1. Fund a teacher certification loan program to support costs associated with teacher certification requirements for traditional and alt certification programs. The loan program should include a requirement that teachers must work in a Texas school district for five

3. Revamp the accountability system to reduce an over-reliance on STAAR testing in elementary and middle school grade bands as a measure for successful schools.
4. Prioritize funding to provide mental health services to students and families.
5. Fund universal pre-K for all 4-year-old students to accelerate access to research-based early childhood learning.
6. Expand attendance-based funding beyond seat time.

Parental Rights: *The Arlington ISD believes parents are critical partners with the school district in the education of their children and encourages active parental involvement in both creating and implementing its educational programs. The 88th Texas Legislature should:*

- 1.