

LISD Council of PTAs

Focused Legislative Priorities

85th Legislative Session

While all of the TXPTA legislative priorities are important, in order to focus on a more manageable list of four items the LISD Council of PTAs has selected the following priorities to emphasize.

These are items LISD Council of PTAs will be sure to speak up about when legislation is created next session. LISD Council of PTAs will call, email, write and even go down to Austin to speak to our legislators about issues that affect our children. **You do not need any special skills in order to advocate this way.** All you need is a little information, which LISD Council of PTAs will provide, and a passion for your children.

Adequate and Equitable School Funding

Pursue an adequate and equitable solution for school funding while maintaining accountability and responsibility for educating the whole child.

What this actually means: Texas school districts recently lost a school finance lawsuit. Thus, the legislature has to voluntarily decide to evaluate school funding. The current funding system is outdated for example, the base of the formula is derived from a number that has not been evaluated since 1981. Texas needs to insist our legislators evaluate the funding provided to our students.

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness

Advocate for reduced emphasis on state-mandated testing, focusing on grades 3-8, and monitor changes to STAAR for high school students, and limits on benchmark testing for all tested grades.

What this actually means: Texas has seven additional tests not required by federal law: 4th grade Writing, 4th grade Social Studies, 7th grade Writing, 8th grade Social Studies, English I Writing, English II Writing, US History. Texas parents should advocate to reduce state-mandated tests.

State Accountability System

Pursue a new accountability system that is valid, reliable and balanced, focuses less on state assessment, and recognizes other attributes of a strong school program, including arts instruction and physical activity.

What this actually means: the state accountability system, how schools and districts are rated by the state, are primarily focused on STAAR. This gives too much weight to a test given on one day. The accountability system needs to include a variety of items that parents feel are important when they are evaluating their child's school.

Oppose Vouchers

Oppose vouchers, including Education Savings Account Programs (ESA Programs), that allow state funds to be utilized in private schools that are not accountable to the taxpayer or the state.

ESA Programs allow eligible parents to use a portion of the funds the state expends for their student's public school education to fund private school tuition, tuition at eligible institutions, and distance education, curriculum.

What this actually means: vouchers are public tax dollars that the government would allow students to use to attend private school rather than public school. Vouchers are not currently legal. This is a big priority for the Senate this session. There are too many unanswered questions about voucher use especially during a year when the state's budget is low.

**If you have any questions, please contact me or anyone at council.
Kristi Hassett, Legislative Chair, 214-707-6391 cell, hassettfive@verizon.net**