TEXAS SCHOOL COALITION

Committed to sustainable, meaningful investments in all Texas students!

Priorities for the 88th Legislative Session

Enable public schools to meet students' needs

With inflation at its highest point in decades, public schools are paying more than expected for fuel, utilities, and other mandatory costs. Public school employees and their families, meanwhile, are navigating rising living expenses. Schools need additional state funding to limit the impact of inflation, keep qualified teachers in the classroom, and prepare students to inherit the robust economy that Texans have worked hard to build.

Control the cost of recapture

The annual cost of recapture to taxpayers is larger than ever, with estimates that it will reach nearly $5 billion this school year. Absent legislative changes, this amount will continue to increase. The Legislature should look for ways to reduce the burden of recapture on schools and taxpayers, such as providing a discount for districts that make early recapture payments. The state should also consider ways to ensure that unexpectedly high recapture amounts are reinvested in public education. Additional investments in the Basic Allotment can also help reduce the growth of recapture while providing more dollars to educate students in all Texas public schools.

Protect the sustainability of public education funding

The 88th Legislature is likely to consider spending some of its surplus funding on property-tax relief. Additional tax-relief is potentially beneficial because it can reduce recapture, but the state must also recognize the rising cost of educating every student. The state spends billions of dollars per year on property-tax rate reductions that have already been enacted into law. Additional rate reductions will bring additional costs, and state leaders must ensure such spending is responsible and sustainable in good and bad economic conditions. State leaders should ensure that no school district faces a loss of funding due to the expiration of the Formula Transition Grant.

Ensure public accountability of public dollars

Public tax dollars should fund public schools with clear systems of accountability in place. The diversion of tax dollars to unaccountable schools takes needed resources out of public school classrooms, hurts districts' ability to pay teachers, increases recapture, and reduces transparency for taxpayers. Any school that receives public tax dollars should be held accountable for student performance and its management of taxpayer resources.

Preserve local decision-making

A vast, diverse state cannot answer every challenge with state-mandated solutions. Locally elected, locally accountable school boards need flexibility to meet the needs of their students, manage taxpayer resources, conduct elections, and respond to the needs and priorities of their communities.

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