



2020 Interim Legislative Agenda Topics

2020 Interim Legislative Priorities:

- 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 TRS works to develop regional, consumer-based healthcare plans through which affordable plan options are offered to TRS-ActiveCare members by the start of the 2020-21 plan year
- Expand opportunities for districts to earn College Career Military Readiness (CCMR) outcomes points for accountability ratings, and align the CCMR outcomes bonus to the CCMR point system
- Ensure legislators recommend effective solutions and appropriate ongoing funding for threat assessments and identification, services and supports for students with mental health needs
- Track and report the correlation of poverty to state accountability ratings assigned to campuses and school districts

Accountability: An effective, efficient and equitable state academic accountability system is necessary to carry out the mission and objectives of the Texas public education system. Texas' current academic accountability system provides confusing information to parents about the performance of their child's school and is too complex for school districts to navigate effectively. The state accountability system should be a tool that helps local school boards and educators improve student performance. The Texas Legislature should:

1. Leave the authority to address low performing schools with the locally elected board of trustees. Local authority still depends on state standard academic measures; however, it allows the local board of trustees to determine the best response to the results of those state measures
2. Remove the high-stakes SSI retention provision for students assessed in grades 5 & 8
3. Modify accountability rules to include non-test based indicators in addition to STAAR results for calculating elementary and junior high school ratings
4. Make the provisions for individual graduation committees permanent

5. Monitor implementation of the A-F rating system and make adjustments to the system as appropriate
 - Track and report the correlation of poverty on campus and district accountability ratings
 - Expand opportunities for districts to earn College Career Military Readiness outcomes points
6. Eliminate Public Education Grant (PEG) designations

Mental Health and School Safety: *Public safety is a priority for the Arlington ISD. The Texas Legislature should:*

1. Work with school districts to create a platform that identifies students with mental health needs that pose a threat to public safety
2. Provide appropriate ongoing funding for identification, services and supports for students with mental health needs
3. Provide appropriate funding and assistance for threat assessments
4. Allow school districts flexibility to determine how safety and mental health funds are spent in order to best meet local needs

School Finance: *Legislation and an appropriation 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 impact three areas critical to public education – student achievement, qualified education workforce and local control. The Texas Legislature should:*

Student Achievement:

1. Ensure the Texas Education Agency's implementation of HB 3 aligns with legislative intent. Make adjustments as necessary
2. To prepare students to make informed choices for high school coursework and endorsement plans for their college and career choices, expand the courses eligible for weighted career and technical education in grades 6 – 8 to include certain courses that are not used for high school graduation credit
3. Align criteria for the CCMR outcomes bonus to the CCMR point system in the Accountability system
4. Reject legislation that imposes financial responsibility or penalty on school districts to cure the state's prior policy limiting the identification of students for special education services, and provide adequate funding to meet the incremental needs of special education students

Tax Relief:

1. Identify state revenue sources to sustain the finance system authorized through HB 3 and to continue buying down school district M&O tax rates
2. Provide tax relief to property owners and assist school districts in providing relevant learning environments by fully funding the \$40 guaranteed yield per student for Existing Debt Allotment and Instructional Facilities Allotment set forth in HB 21 passed by the First Called Session of the 85th Legislature

Qualified Workforce:

1. Allow school districts discretion to include librarians, counselors and nurses with more than five years of experience in differentiated compensation increases approved for classroom teachers with more than five years of experience
2. Increase access to affordable health insurance for public school employees. Ensure TRS develops regional, consumer-based healthcare plans through which affordable plan options are offered to TRS-ActiveCare members by the start of the 2020-21 plan year

Local Authority:

1. Monitor administrative rules created by the Texas Education Agency to ensure alignment with legislative intent, and limit the authority of the appointed Texas Education Commissioner to unilaterally establish administrative rules, guidelines and procedures
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. Provide flexibility to invest surplus oil and gas royalties in accordance with the Texas Trust Code, similar to the provisions included in HB 1472 passed by the 85th Legislature
4. Provide relief from current unfunded state mandates and do not add additional unfunded mandates

School Choice: The Arlington ISD is a district that offers choice for students and parents. The Texas Legislature should:

1. Reject any legislation that diverts public funds to private institutions that are not accountable to the public for the use of those funds
2. Incentivize school districts to provide program choices by fully funding transportation costs for choice programs
3. Expand flexibilities available through the district of innovation regulations
4. Require more transparency and accountability for existing charters
5. Limit the expansion of charter schools

Pre-kindergarten: Access to quality pre-K positively impacts academic readiness and performance. The Texas Legislature should:

1. Fund universal full-day Pre-K
2. Fund Pre-k through ADA rather than the early education allotment

**ARLINGTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
UNFUNDED MANDATES
Sample List**

1	22:1 Student/Teacher Ratio Grades K-4 (assumes a campus-wide average K-4 staffing ratio of 24:1)	\$16,820,393
2	TRS - payment on salaries above state minimum	8,149,607
3	TRS - state contribution for 1st 90 days on new employees	400,000
4	TRS-Care Retiree Insurance Plan (.75% of total payroll)	3,001,885
5	TRS-Supplemental 1.5% Contribution	4,455,233
6	Special Education Program - program mandates exceed state funding	18,077,764
7	Dyslexia Program - program mandates exceed state funding	1,940,719
8	End-of-Course Exams and STAAR Retesting	1,330,338
9	Screeener for GT Testing	48,238
10	PEIMS Data Reporting	3,857,346
11	Budget & Tax Rate Hearing Notice, Schools FIRST Hearing Notice and Statutorily Required Public Notice	24,587
12	Integrated Pest Management Program	244,246
13	Public Information Act Requests	31,357
14	Payment to county appraisal district to fund its operations	2,090,488
15	Elections	149,716
16	Criminal Records Checks	23,233
17	Cameras in Self-Contained Special Education Classrooms	151,250
18	Truancy Prevention	510,126
19	Health Insurance mandated District Contribution	8,991,000
	Sum of Sample Unfunded Mandates	\$70,297,526
	2019-20 Operating Budget (net of Capital Outlay)	534,603,586
	Percent of 2019-20 Operating Budget	13.15%