

As the Texas Legislature embarks upon its 2009 session, we in the Plano Independent School District present this document stating our priorities. We believe that supporting, encouraging and promoting quality public education should be the priority of the state legislature.

The vast majority of community leaders, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, astronauts, business people and homemakers in Texas have graduated from our public schools and are contributing significantly to their communities.

The laws made by state government have a tremendous impact on the lives of the staff and students in our district. They can be used to improve education, or they can be used to restrain and restrict the ability to progress. We encourage our legislators to continue to seek ways to encourage local improvement and to reward those districts and schools which demonstrate outstanding practices.

We look forward to working with the legislature to make public schools in Texas the best in the nation.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Doug Otto,
Superintendent of Schools



Lloyd "Skip" Jenkins,
President, Board of Trustees

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Dr. Doug Otto, *Superintendent of Schools*

Mission Statement

The Plano Independent School District will provide an excellent education for all students.



Plano Independent School District
2700 W. 15th Street
Plano, Texas 75075
(469) 752-8100
www.pisd.edu

Plano ISD is an active member of the Texas Association of School Boards and in general supports the TASB legislative platform.



P L A N O I S D

2009

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

“Historically, students of all backgrounds and abilities have progressed through our public schools and developed skills which made them life-long learners, in addition to meaningful contributors to society. We believe that true and legitimate local control by school boards of schools and programs, as granted constitutionally, is the only means to maintain, strengthen and improve public schools.” —Ralph Stow, President, Plano ISD Education Foundation

Recommended 4X4 Graduation Plan

Plano ISD supports additional mathematics and science course requirements for students to graduate under the Recommended Plan if multiple paths for acquiring those course credits are available to students.

- Provide additional, rigorous high school diploma plan choices that recognize individual students' natural talents, interests and abilities.
- Prepare all students for a variety of career and continuing education aspirations.
- Allow full participation in fine arts, career and technical education and extracurricular courses and activities.
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills focus should be on deepening understanding of crucial concepts versus superficial awareness of a multitude of concepts.

Accountability

Plano ISD supports a state accountability system that upholds a consistent system of school ratings over time, focusing on measuring student academic growth and allowing for success of all schools without regard to location, size and demographics. The district also is opposed to single event, high-stakes testing. Finally, Plano is in agreement with the Public Education Visioning Institute's "supporting premises" undergirding accountability.

- School districts should have the option of providing a locally-designed growth model, subject to TEA approval.
- Academic growth should be ascertained using multiple measures.
- Academic growth should be formally measured at multiple times during each school year.
- All students, including English language learners and special education students, should have expected growth targets identified.
- Utilize more incentives and rewards.
- State accountability measures should provide actionable information for classroom teacher use throughout the school year.
- The state accountability system should include achievement growth measures for students that include all years of school attendance.

Adequacy

Plano ISD supports legislation which addresses the spiraling operating cost by indexing state funding to an inflationary factor.

- The state funding formula for transportation has not increased since 1985, and Chapter 41 districts do not benefit from a transportation allotment.
- The state funding formula for the cost of education index has not been adjusted since 1991.
- The combination of property tax and state funding known as the district's target revenue has not been adjusted since 2006.

Plano ISD opposes legislation that redirects tax dollars from public schools to non-public school programs.

Plano ISD supports the provision of financial resources to school districts, including known cost factors. Funding must be related appropriately to the highest performance expectations established by the state rather than as unfunded mandates.

- Do not legislate any additional unfunded mandates.
- Continue to fund Rider 86.
- Provide funding to offset legislated requirements for:
 - 4x4 Graduation Plan
 - Fitnessgrams
 - Bus evacuation drills
 - Payroll benefits tied to mandated pay raises
 - Fingerprinting
- Target revenue needs to reflect an inflationary index.

Capacity for Growth

Plano ISD supports a school finance system that provides increasing resources to school districts over time to accommodate enrollment growth, changes in the composition of the student population, raised performance expectations, inflation and other cost drivers.

- Remove the Available School Fund as part of the target revenue evaluations.
- Increase the High School Allotment.
- Allow local school boards more discretion to levy taxes, allowing access to fifth/sixth pennies without an election.

Virtual Schools

Plano ISD supports a state-funded virtual school system that provides equal access for all students to participate in an excellent online learning experience that can serve as an alternative or supplement to a traditional K–12 model. This experience would allow students to take online courses both within the normal school day as well as outside of the regular campus schedule.

- The district supports legislation that establishes a statewide average daily attendance model for funding online learning in which each successful course completion equates to a percentage of average daily attendance.
- School districts should be allowed to continue to provide locally-developed virtual school programs.
- Provisions should be made for the training of teachers locally to excel in online teaching.
- Districts should be allowed to develop online teaching courses to be approved by Texas Virtual Schools and offered to their local teachers before being required to provide the course state wide.
- Districts should maintain local control in counseling services to work with parents and students to approve course recommendations.

Local Control

Plano ISD supports legislation providing local control over issues that should be decided with community preferences.

Plano ISD supports the position that a student's grade point average (GPA) should be determined by the local school districts.

- Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses should be weighted more than dual-credit courses.
- Pre-Advanced Placement, International Honors and Honors courses should be weighted more than on-level courses.
- All courses that receive credit on the graduation plans should receive grade points.

- The only way to raise revenue is through an M&O tax election. Current tax rate election law penalizes "Robin Hood" districts like Plano ISD.
- The current tax rate requires additional materials and resources to support learning.
- Special education programs continue to grow and require more resources than the state provides.
- Provide resources for ability to pay teachers a salary competitive to other states.
- Return to districts, in an equitable manner, the tax dollars that are generated annually by state property value growth.

“We encourage the legislature to strengthen the framework supporting our public schools and to provide the tools and financial resources which will allow all of the citizens of Texas to improve their local schools.” —Phil Dyer, Chairman, Plano ISD 2008 Facilities and Technology Bond Task Force