



Plano ISD Legislative Platform

November 20, 2012

BOLDLY BRILLIANT

PLANO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Timeline:

September 18 – Presented legislative statements for consideration

November 20 – Board discussion and final edits

December 5 – North Texas Regional Consortium, Legislative Dinner, hosted in Lewisville ISD

December 11 – Board consideration of Plano ISD Legislative Resolution

January 8, 2013 – Legislative session begins



Five Key Elements for Legislative Change:



- Financial
- End of Course Exams
- Paths to Graduation
- Vouchers
- Calendar – local control

Bills are already being filed that could impact the following statements.

Legislative action request:

Finance:

Repeal plans to phase out hold harmless funding (Additional State Aid for Tax Reduction). In the alternative, allow locally elected school boards for impacted districts the discretion to offset the loss with additional local property taxes. The current school finance formula contains numerous “hold harmless” provisions. Singling out the ASATR hold harmless provisions for elimination unfairly impacts students in districts receiving ASATR. In addition, it breaks the state’s promise from 2006 to replace funding lost through the state mandated property tax reductions.

Should additional state funding be available to replace all or a portion of the reductions in public education enacted in 2011, the additional funding should be distributed in the same manner in which reductions were made in 2012-13.

Legislative action request:

End of Course Exams:

It is requested that students should be required to take a total of four EXIT-STAAR exams in the four foundation areas to ascertain their post-secondary readiness. Multiple tests in the same content areas in consecutive grade levels are considered to be redundant and costly. The estimated five year cost for the current state testing program is \$498 million.

Legislative action request:

Paths to Graduation:

Redefine the default Recommended Graduation Plan to provide additional, rigorous high school course choices that recognize individual students' natural talents, interests and abilities including career and college paths. It is requested that in addition to the current model of 4x4, the legislature provide additional options for students that do not require failure to access. Provide additional math and science courses that cater to student interests and satisfy graduation requirements while also creating a career path without compromising rigor.

Legislative action request:

Vouchers:

All school districts will suffer from vouchers—A voucher program would hurt all Texas school districts, even if there is not a private school in the local community. A voucher program would reduce the amount of state funding available for property poor school districts (Chapter 42). And, property wealthy districts (Chapter 41) would be supporting (through recapture) private schools in the urban and suburban areas.



Legislative action request:

Instructional Calendar:

Allow local independent school districts the flexibility to determine their own instructional calendar start date and calendar features to best meet the needs and expectations of their learners, educators and school community.

Impacts:

- Summer school programs
- College start dates
- Professional development
- Summer work schedules
- End of course testing/close of semester
- Graduation scheduling

Advocacy issues:

Texas Teacher Retirement System (State)

- Advocate for the protection of the Texas Teacher Retirement System for retired and active employees maintaining that the state must continue to provide matching contributions and refrain from using the fund to balance the general budget. It is further advocated that the retirement system be maintained as a 'defined benefit' versus a 'defined contribution' plan.

Early Childhood and Pre-Kindergarten Education (Federal)

- Emphasize legislation supporting early childhood/Pre-K learning as a healthy and reasonable launch into academic growth for children.

Dialogue forecast:

December 4 – consideration of Large Urban Districts consortium discussion regarding legislation

January 27-30 – Participation in the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) & Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) joint meeting.

February 20 – input from the American Association of School Administrators