

TCTA Legislative Priorities for the 86th Texas Legislature



The following priorities were approved by the TCTA Representative Assembly in February 2019.

SUPPORT INCREASED STATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Increases in funding can help ensure the attraction and retention of highly-qualified educators, provide appropriate training, and ensure quality instructional materials and appropriate support to meet the increasing academic goals set for Texas schoolchildren. Gains from increased property values should remain in the school funding system, supplementing not supplanting existing funding levels. A portion of the funding increase must support a state-funded across-the-board pay raise for teachers and other personnel to ensure new funding reaches the classroom.

IMPROVE BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

State contributions to the retirement fund should be enhanced, and the current structure of the retirement system retained, so that educators and other school employees are provided a measure of financial security after years of service to the state. Funding for the active and retired employee health insurance programs must be increased to make health care affordable and sustainable.

RESTORE STATUTORY PROTECTIONS FOR TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Texas educators, students and parents are provided basic protections in state law that have been eroded by the proliferation of Districts of Innovation and charter schools. These protections include class size limits, teacher certification requirements, parent notification of departures from class size and certification laws, and basic teacher rights and benefits. Further erosion must be halted and protections restored to ensure a standard baseline of expectations and transparency for all educators, students and parents.

CONTINUE REFORM OF THE TESTING SYSTEM

Standardized assessments should be used as diagnostic tools to help educators provide individualized instruction to students. The number of tests in elementary and middle school, as well as benchmark testing and other excessive preparation, should be reduced. Student test performance and value-added measures should only be used for purposes for which they have been validated, not for purposes such as ranking and sorting schools and teachers.

PRESERVE MEANINGFUL AND APPROPRIATE STANDARDS FOR TEACHER PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION

As educational goals and expectations continue to increase and Texas students become more diverse, it is more important than ever that teachers be knowledgeable not only in their assigned subject matter but in proven methods for educating children. The state must maintain and enhance high standards for preparation and certification. Shortcuts to get around hiring certified teachers must be minimized or eliminated.

PRESERVE AND EXPAND TEACHER DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY

Teachers must be able to maintain an academic environment conducive to learning and keeping our children safe. Current laws that allow teachers to remove disruptive students must not be restricted, and school campuses should be required to have discipline policies in place to assure a safe environment conducive to instruction and to provide appropriate disciplinary support for teachers.

OPPOSE VOUCHER EFFORTS AND UNCHECKED CHARTER EXPANSION

Lawmakers should focus on providing adequate resources to the public school system. No law should be passed that uses public funds to support private or home schools, whether through vouchers, tax credits, education savings accounts or other means. Charter schools should be expected to enroll students from the same population as traditional schools and should be held to the same accountability standards.