



GEORGINA CECILIA PÉREZ

TEXAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Georgina C. Pérez, Texas State Board of Education District 1

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be "GCP", located to the right of the "FROM:" line.

DATE: 6 November 2020

RE: TXSBOE1 Legislative Priorities

Authority of the State Board of Education

Support legislation to expand the statutory authority of the State Board of Education to allow the Board to approve the Commissioner's proposed charter expansion amendments – which have been a major cost driver to the state budget, with unlimited numbers of new campuses approved each year – to ensure that there is an elected and voter-accountable body providing checks and balances over this \$3.6 billion annual state tax-dollar expenditure.

Support legislation that expands the authority of the SBOE to develop pre-apprenticeships and determine which CTE certification programs qualify for a performance indicator in the A-F Accountability System.

Educational Equity for Students

To ensure accountability and fairness, support legislation to prohibit approval of a charter expansion amendment for any open enrollment charter school that serves a percentage of students with special needs that is lower than the state average.

To ensure equal opportunity for all Texas students, support legislation that would eliminate the ability of charter schools to exclude any student from enrollment because of past discipline problems just as school districts cannot exclude any student because of discipline problems.

Fiscal Impact

Given the budget challenges faced by Texas during the pandemic, support legislation for the Texas Education Agency to provide the State Board of Education, legislators, and the public with the additional cost to the state annually and over ten years for any new charter campus proposed through the charter amendment or application process so that the fiscal impact to the state is clearly understood in advance of the final approval.

Advocate for tying the charter school "small and midsize allotment" to the same 5,000-student cap as the district small and midsize allotment so that there is a level playing field for all schools.

Foundation High School Program

Oppose legislation that would implement additional course requirements for high school graduation or reduce the number of elective courses currently available to students to take as part of the Foundation High School Program.

Healthy and Safe Schools

Prioritize the health safety of students and staff. Support flexibility for local schools to make decisions regarding educational delivery models based on local public health conditions without fear of losing funding. Ensure parents and educators have meaningful input into school decisions regarding COVID-19.

Support funding to provide personal protective equipment, technology, and staffing to support safe and socially distanced learning environments.

High-Stakes Testing and Punitive Consequences

Support legislation which aligns all high-stakes testing requirements to those required by federal law and removes the A-F grades used to punish students, teachers, schools, and communities.

School Finance Formula

Support legislation which increases funding for counselors and mental health services; provider-to-student ratios are much too high. Per TEA data, 7000 Texas students shared 1 (one) social worker and nearly 3000 students shared 1 (one) psychologist in 2018. The counselor-to-student ratio is roughly 500:1, double the American School Counselor Association recommendation.

Student Data Privacy

Support legislation to give the SBOE rule-making authority over all instructional materials, including Commissioner-adopted materials, that collect or use student data online (reference Subchapter D Chapter 32).

Teachers Salaries

Research confirms that quality educators are the most important factor influencing student achievement, yet educator salaries remain well below other industries with similar educational requirements, especially in rural areas. In order to attract and retain quality educators, support a meaningful increase in educator salaries across the board that compensate all educators like the professionals they are.

Technology and Instructional Materials Allotment (TIMA)

Advocate for increased funding for the TIMA to ensure districts can provide adequate technology and instructional materials to meet higher standards for students. Oppose any carveouts from TIMA that decrease the amount of funds to school districts, including efforts by the state for rating instructional materials. Advocate that funding for “quality” reviews be allocated from a source other than TIMA.