

Brazosport ISD 85th Special Session Legislative Agenda Priorities

1. *Legislation to increase the average salary and benefits of Texas teachers; and legislation to provide a more flexible and rewarding salary and benefit system for Texas teachers.*
 - **BISD** values contributions of teachers, but advocates for local elected school boards to determine local school district budget priorities. The BISD Board of Trustees has approved a \$1,850 pay raise for teachers for the 2017-2018 school year. BISD supports the administrative flexibility included in the District of Innovation plan that was approved by the Board in 2017. This flexibility allows hiring of certified teachers that can be used in different content areas. It also allows hiring of highly credential teachers in career and technology education classes.
2. *Legislation establishing a statewide commission to study and recommend improvements to the current public school finance system.*
 - **BISD** advocates that public school finance system needs to be addressed immediately and include increasing the state's contribution to public education. BISD also advocates that a School Finance Reform Commission would address financing public school districts and public charter schools.
3. *Legislation to empower parents of children with special needs or educational disadvantages to choose an educational provider that is best for their child.*
 - (From 1/2017 BISD Legislative Advocacy Priorities) **BISD** opposes any form of diverting public tax dollars to any system of private education, whether it be in the form of tax credit scholarships, education savings accounts, entitlements or vouchers whereby the recipient of public tax dollars are not held to the same rules, regulations and requirements as any other Texas public ISD. Any non-public education recipients of public/taxpayer funds should be under the same laws, mandates and requirements as Texas public schools. Charter schools should also be under the same laws and accountability standards as traditional public schools if they are to continue receiving funding. BISD believes education savings accounts or tax credits, vouchers or any other form of government subsidy is not an appropriate answer for students with special needs.
4. *Legislation reforming the laws governing ad valorem property taxes.*
 - **BISD** advocates any property tax reforms would best be addressed through restructuring of **the current outdated** educational funding formulas. BISD supports the following reforms included in the original HB 21 (prior to Senate amendments) relating to funding for public school districts:
 - Increase the basic allotment per student each year of the biennium, relative to the rates of inflation and population growth, to provide an equitable funding increase to benefit all public school districts in Texas.
 - Reduce recapture payments. Equalized property wealth measures (property value per WADA, or weighted average daily attendance) beyond the first six pennies of Tier 2 enrichment funding do not correlate to the growth rate in actual property values. This divergence in values creates large increases in recapture liability for districts with a robust economy, which is a disincentive for economic development and success. We support automatic adjustment of equalized

property wealth values relative to the rates of inflation and population growth to more equitably assess recapture liabilities.

- Simplify and update transportation funding per student.
 - Add weight per student in funding calculations for students with dyslexia, bilingual students and CTE students.
5. *Legislation using population growth and inflation to establish a spending limit for political subdivisions.*
- **BISD** advocates the increase in appraised property values is governed by the Texas Comptroller and not local taxing entities.
6. *Legislation regarding the use of multi-occupancy showers, locker rooms, restrooms, and changing rooms.*
- Showers, locker rooms, restrooms and changing rooms are not an issue in BISD. **BISD** advocates for local control of issues associated with our school district, including privacy issues. BISD concludes that the limiting the district's control on this matter is an overreach by legislators.
7. *Legislation prohibiting state or local government entities from deducting labor union or employee organization membership fees or dues from the wages of public employees.*
- **BISD** opposes prohibiting payroll deductions for employee (teacher) organization membership fees. Payroll deduction for public school employees is no cost to taxpayers or the school district.

