

Spring Branch Independent School District
Agenda Item Information

Date of Board Meeting: September 13, 2010

Subject: Discussion of the Proposed Legislative Priorities and Positions for the 82nd Session
of the Texas Legislature

Administrator Responsible:

Name: Marjorie Duffey

Position: Associate Superintendent of Administration and Personnel

Purpose of Agenda Item: Discussion

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND/OR BACK-UP:

Recommend discussion of the Proposed Legislative Priorities and Positions for the 82nd Session of the Texas Legislature.

Proposed Priorities and Positions for consideration are attached.

SPRING BRANCH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

**PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY FOR THE
82nd SESSION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE**

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on _____

The District's goal is that all Spring Branch ISD students will graduate on time from high school, and go on to complete a 2 year technical degree, or a 2 year associates degree, or a 4 year baccalaureate degree.

In order to support this goal, SBISD believes the current funding system needs to:

- Maintain current levels of state funding per student for Spring Branch ISD.
- Revert competitive grants to formula distribution.
- Allow school districts to index local revenue to inflation and provide that, if a district's budget is not increased by more than CPI, the district may approve a tax rate to fund its budget without the need for a rollback election.

PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS FOR THE 82ND SESSION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

FINANCE

- **SCHOOL FINANCE:** Support modifications to the current school finance system to provide additional funding to meet expenditure increases caused by inflation, growth, and changes in student demographics.
- **CHAPTER 41:** Support the elimination of Chapter 41 recapture.
- **STAFF SALARIES:** Support additional State funding to increase the salaries of teachers, nurses, counselors, and librarians to at least the national average.
- **TEACHER RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS:** Support funding from the State for teacher retirement contribution increases that result from State funded salary increases.
- **COST OF EDUCATION INDEX:** Support development and use of a biennially updated index that captures all district costs and increases State funding annually to meet cost increases due to the combination of growth and inflation.
- **LOCAL ENRICHMENT:** Support voter approved local enrichment in excess of 17¢ to allow school districts to supplement funding to meet community expectations. In addition, support the elimination of recapture on any discretionary taxing authority authorized by a vote of the district's voters.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Spring Branch believes that our strong pre-kindergarten program with its robust curriculum is essential to long-term student success. As a result, Spring Branch believes the following:

- The State should provide funding for high quality voluntary full-day pre-kindergarten for eligible students through the states formula funding.
- To the extent that pre-kindergarten is funded through State (TEA) grants, that funding should not favor low-performing school districts over those school districts that have demonstrated historic high performance.
- The State should permit school districts to choose appropriate curriculum and assessment to use with the District's pre-

kindergarten students from a menu of curriculum and assessment choices that should include the curriculum and assessment currently employed by Spring Branch.

- **VOUCHERS:** Support private school vouchers, tuition tax credits, and other such programs funded with public tax dollars provided that the private/charter school that receives voucher funds will agree to admit and retain any student who presents a voucher, regardless of race, socio-economic status, learning disability, English language proficiency, and/or physical/mental limitations. Additionally, the private/charter school must agree to adhere to the same financial and academic accountability standards of all public schools in the State.
- **MANDATES:** Support the appropriation of adequate funds to fully fund the cost of any new program mandated by the legislature.
- **ENHANCED TECHNOLOGY:** Support increasing state funding for technology, including hardware, software, and staff development.
- **TRANSPORTATION:** Support an increase in the funding formula compensating school districts for providing pupil transportation commensurate with the increase in costs since the last legislative adjustment of the formula in 1985.
- **APPRAISAL CAP:** Support 5% appraisal cap on residential property contingent on the elimination of Chapter 41 recapture.
- **RETIREEES:** Support elimination of TRS penalties for school districts that hire retired educators.
- **ADEQUACY:** Support adequacy in funding so that all school districts have financial resources that will provide an excellent education to all students.
- **HIGH SCHOOL ALLOTMENT:** Support increase in high school allotment funding to meet increases in the combination of growth and inflation.
- **TRS COST OF LIVING INCREASE:** Support a cost of living adjustment for retired public education employees.
- **TRS RETIREES HEALTH CARE:** Support state funding of retiree health care to maintain existing coverage and rate structure.
- **COMPTROLLER VALUATION:** Support change to total taxable value definition in the Comptroller's Property Value Study to include the total

dollar amount of any reductions in appraised value ordered by an appraisal review board in connection with a protest or by a court in connection with an appeal of the protest, in the year that is the subject of the study.

- **CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY FUNDING:** Support extending State funding for career and technology programs to grade 7.
- **FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDING:** Support state funding necessary to guarantee the sustainability of programs currently being funded with federal stimulus funding.

SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

- **STAFF SALARIES:** Support additional State funding to increase the salaries of teachers, nurses, counselors, and librarians to at least the national average. In addition, support hold harmless state aid in the amount necessary to cover the cost of an annual automatic salary increase for inflation.
- **MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHER ACCREDITATION:** Support state funding of incentive bonuses and higher compensation to attract teachers in high need areas, including math and science.
- **PERFORMANCE INCENTIVES:** Support implementation of locally developed merit-based performance pay systems.

STUDENT EDUCATION

ACCOUNTABILITY:

While House Bill 3 passed during the 81st Legislative Session made progress toward improving the State's accountability system, Spring Branch believes that further changes are necessary. Specifically, Spring Branch believes that the current accountability system should be modified to address the following:

- The accountability system should have as its sole focus the goal of ensuring that all students complete high school and are prepared, without remediation, to obtain a two-year Associate's, a technical certification, or a four-year Baccalaureate Degree.
- The accountability system should assess students based on annual academic, non-academic growth and development of 21st Century workforce skills.

- The accountability system should utilize multiple assessments.
- The accountability system should reward success based on overall student performance.
- The accountability system should mandate corrective action for chronically deficient performance in student sub-populations.
- The state needs to retreat from having TELPAS on-line only. Every other assessment has both on-line and paper/pencil. Technology purchases are being driven by testing, not our programs.
- **STUDENT PREPARATION FOR POST-SECONDARY SUCCESS:** Support funding to create and implement curricula and assessment tools to ensure that students are taught the academic and non-academic skills necessary to be adequately prepared for the 21st Century workplace.
- **ASSESSMENTS:** Support allowing school districts to utilize nationally norm-referenced tests in place of current high school TAKS testing and end of course assessments.
- **TAKS WAIVER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS:** Support allowing students, schools and school districts that have demonstrated long-term success to obtain a waiver from the necessity of taking and/or administering some or all of the accountability system testing.
- **ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS:** Support increased funds to schools to support academic and non-academic interventions for students in grades 3-12 who are at risk for not being adequately prepared for post-secondary success. Include in the identification process various checkpoints of the Student Success Initiative (5th grade reading and math, 8th grade reading and math, and up to and including the 12 courses assessed by the End of Course exam). Additionally, funds should be provided to meet the needs of any student at risk of not achieving the Recommended High School Program diploma.
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- **COLLEGE FOCUS:** Support funding necessary to provide for student support, staff development, and parent/community education necessary to increase the number of students who continue their education beyond high school.
- **TOP 8% RULE:** Support the elimination of the top 8% rule for college admission to State Universities.
- **PERFORMANCE INCENTIVES:** Support state funding of locally developed and implemented financial incentives to reward campuses that have demonstrated high levels of student academic growth, significantly

closed performance gaps in the core curriculum, and performed at the highest standards established by the state.

- **PRE-KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM:** Support permitting school districts to choose appropriate curriculum to use with the District's Pre-K students from a menu of curriculum choices that should include the curriculum currently employed by Spring Branch.
- **PRE-K INSPECTIONS:** Support legislation to confirm that collaborations on school district campuses between Pre-Kindergarten programs and external providers are not subject to the licensing requirements of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

COMMUNITY

- **CAP ON NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTED UNITS BY DENSITY:** Support a geographic density cap on the number of government assisted units.
- **GOVERNMENT ASSISTED HOUSING:** Support a requirement that a property owner be required to provide 180 days notice to all addresses in a 3 mile radius surrounding any property that the owner is requesting to become government assisted housing.
- **CONSTRUCTION RESIDENTIAL IMPACT FEES:** Support legislation that would amend the Texas Government Code to authorize school districts to impose construction residential impact fees on residential developers.

GOVERNANCE

- **LOCAL CONTROL:** Support preserving local control of public school districts by duly- elected school boards
- **SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS:** Support local control to permit school districts to hold trustee and bond elections in either May or November at locations consistent with the communities' historical desires.
- **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:** Support allowing districts to apply for a waiver on school start dates if the district's community demonstrates the desire to start on a date earlier than the fourth Monday of August.