

**Spring Branch Independent School District  
Agenda Item Information**

**Date of Board Meeting:** November 19, 2007

**Subject:** Discussion of Board's Interim Legislative Priorities

**Administrator Responsible:**

**Name:** Diane Jackson, Ed. D.

**Position:** Policy Administration / Governmental Relations

**Purpose of Agenda Item:**

Information only       Action needed       Report

**Additional Information and/or Back-Up:**

Discussion of Board's Interim Legislative Priorities.

Legislative Priorities and Positions for the 80<sup>th</sup> Session have been updated and are attached. A recommendation for the top priorities for the interim is attached.

Supplemental information was provided to the Board in Friday Notes.

SPRING BRANCH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**  
FOR THE  
80<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

FINANCE

- **CHAPTER 41:** Support the elimination of Chapter 41 recapture. As an alternative, support increasing the equalized wealth level from \$319,500 to \$400,000.
- **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 2¢ to allow school districts to supplement funding to meet community expectations.
- **PRE-K TUITION GRANT:** Support the continuation of the Pre-K tuition grant.
- **VOUCHERS:** Oppose private school vouchers, tuition tax credits, and other such programs funded with public tax dollars UNLESS 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 agrees to adhere to the same financial and academic accountability standards of all public schools in the state.

TEACHERS

- **STAFF SALARIES:** Support additional State funding to increase the salaries of teachers, nurses, counselors, and librarians to at least the national average.
- **TEACHER CERTIFICATION:** Support realignment of teacher certification to grades K-5 and grades 6-12 (rather than current K-4, 5-8, 9-12).

STUDENT EDUCATION

- **ASSESSMENTS:** Support allowing school districts to utilize nationally norm-referenced tests and to replace current high school TAKS testing with end of course assessments.
- **ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS:** Support increased funds to schools to support intervention for students identified at risk of failing at the various checkpoints of the Student Success Initiative (3rd grade reading, 5th grade reading and math, 8th grade reading and math, and 11th grade exit-level tests).
- **COLLEGE FOCUS:** Support increasing the high school allotment to be used to support increasing the number of students who continue their education beyond high school.

## COMMUNITY

- **CAP ON NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTED UNITS BY DENSITY:** Support a geographic density cap on the number of government assisted units.
- ~~**OVER 65 FREEZE:** Support modification of law and/or Texas Constitution to allow homeowners over age 65 to enjoy the benefits of the reduction in property tax rates approved in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Called Session of the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature.~~

## GOVERNANCE

- **LOCAL CONTROL:** Support preserving local control of public school districts by duly-elected school boards
- **ELECTION DATES:** Support local control to permit school districts to hold trustee and bond elections in either May or November.

SPRING BRANCH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS**  
FOR THE  
80<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

FINANCE

- **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.
- **FACILITIES:** Support legislation that would increase facilities funding, including the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) and Existing Debt Allotment (EDA), as well as legislation that would automatically update the Equalized Debt Allotment each biennium for all bonded debt service not covered by IFA.
- **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.
- ~~**ELIMINATE RECAPTURE ON SUPER PENNIES:** Support the elimination of Chapter 41 recapture on any discretionary taxing authority authorized by a vote of the district's voters.~~
- **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.
- ~~**PUBLICATION OF DISTRICT CHECK REGISTER:** Support increased transparency and accountability by requiring school districts to publish their check register on the district's website.~~
- **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.
- ~~**HURRICANE RELIEF FUNDING:** Support continued funding directly to school districts that accepted students in 2005-2006 due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.~~
- **TRS COST OF LIVING INCREASE:** Support a cost of living adjustment for retired public education employees.

## TEACHERS

- **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 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.

## STUDENT EDUCATION

- **PARENT, STUDENT, TEACHER AGREEMENTS:** Support the implementation of a locally developed written agreement form to be signed by the student's parent, teacher(s), and the student that will define the responsibilities of the student's parent, teacher(s) and the student.
- ~~**KATRINA EVACUEES:** For 2006-2007, separate grouping for accountability and measure by year-over-year growth.~~
- **SCHOLARSHIPS:** Support state funded scholarships for students who continue their education beyond high school.

## COMMUNITY

- **GOVERNMENT ASSISTED HOUSING:** Require property owner 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.

SPRING BRANCH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**RECOMMENDED INTERIM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**  
80<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

FINANCE

- **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.
- **PRE-K TUITION GRANT:** Support the continuation of the Pre-K tuition grant.

TEACHERS

- **STAFF SALARIES:** Support additional State funding to increase the salaries of teachers, nurses, counselors, and librarians to at least the national average.

STUDENT EDUCATION

- **ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS:** Support increased funds to schools to support intervention for students identified at risk of failing at the various checkpoints of the Student Success Initiative (3rd grade reading, 5th grade reading and math, 8th grade reading and math, and 11th grade exit-level tests).
- **COLLEGE FOCUS:** Support increasing the high school allotment to be used to support increasing the number of students who continue their education beyond high school.