

Plano ISD Legislative Priorities for 85th Regular Session

(1) Property Tax Relief

Historically, Plano ISD as a “Chapter 41” district has contributed more than \$1.4 billion in recapture payments to the State of Texas since the 1993 inception of the funding structure. This redistribution of local property tax collections, attributed to taxpayer’s rising property values, is being directly remitted to the state general fund.

We support a school finance system that provides automatic adjustments to the basic allotment and each of the weighted property wealth values relative to the rates of inflation and population growth in the current or any future public education funding system utilized by the State.

In addition, the current law permits school districts to lower the M&O tax rate in the future; however, school districts could be required to hold a second election to go back to the rate that was previously approved in the prior election. To assure that public independent school districts have greater ability and incentive to provide local property tax relief, we support eliminating the possibility that future increases to a Maintenance and Operations rate previously approved by taxpayers might cause the district to subject voters to the cost of another election to ratify that same rate again.

(2) Assessment and Accountability

Support a system of assessment and accountability that values student growth and achievement over standardized, high-stakes testing. The system should focus on measuring and rewarding multiple metrics developed locally, including student growth, rather than punitive sanctions and labels, such as the A-F rating. The system should be developmentally appropriate and reduce testing redundancy.

(3) Support Early Childhood/Pre-K Education

Support complete funding for full-day Early Childhood Programs serving students from at-risk populations. Early Childhood Programs are the most proactive programs in public education, because they enable students to enter Kindergarten with the literacy, math, and social/emotional competencies needed to be successful. Plano ISD has quality programs and trained staff to address the needs of at-risk children to capitalize on early brain development that establishes a child’s social competence, cognitive skills, emotional well-being, language, literacy skills, physical abilities and is a marker for well-being in school and life resiliency.

(4) Provide Flexibility with Regard to Interest & Sinking Fund Tax Rate

In years that debt payments on outstanding bonds would require a lesser tax rate than the previous year, we would like the ability to maintain the same tax rate as the previous year and use the surplus revenue to retire debt at a faster rate. A portion of existing law allows districts to levy taxes to make debt payments before they come

due. However, the laws governing tax rate notices and adoption do not. We ask that these laws be amended to provide that flexibility.

(5) Funding-Related Priorities

1. Support adequate funding for Texas public schools to ensure students have access to an education that prepares them for postsecondary success.
2. Oppose the use of public funds for vouchers, tax credits, education savings grants, portability measures, or any other mechanisms to privatize public education.
3. Provide the flexibility to opt out of TRS Active Care.

(6) Termination of Chapter 21 Employees Upon Felony Conviction

Empower districts to immediately terminate Chapter 21 employees upon felony conviction without delays due to statutory notification requirements.

(7) Excuse Attendance for Students Who Are Exempt from Final Exams

A school district may excuse a student from attending school during the administration of a final examination for a course in which the student is enrolled if the school district allows the student, because of a good attendance record and high student academic achievement, to be exempt from the administration of the final examination. We support that a student whose absence is excused based on the aforementioned criteria, shall be counted as if the student attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of students in the school district.