



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING BOOK

82ND REGULAR SESSION



**Texas Association of School Boards
Legislative Briefing Book
82nd Regular Session**

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Texas Association of School Boards
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Serving Texas Schools Since 1949

Dear Board Member:

The 82nd Texas Legislature will convene Tuesday, January 11, 2011. Now is the perfect time for you to meet with your state representatives and senators to discuss issues challenging your school district. This *Legislative Briefing Book* is designed to help facilitate those conversations and prepare you to advocate effectively for your school district during the upcoming legislative session.

This book contains briefs on eight education issues that are likely to be prominent during the 82nd session. Each issue brief explains:

- ❖ the current state of the issue,
- ❖ how the Legislature has addressed the issue in past sessions, and
- ❖ possible changes to current law.

Each brief ends with several questions, the answers to which will help your legislators understand your district's unique circumstances.

This document is not a survey. You are encouraged, but certainly not required, to answer the questions at the end of each issue brief. If you choose to do so, we encourage your board to answer the questions *collaboratively* with your superintendent and district staff prior to the legislative session. Then, communicate your answers to your state representatives and senators. Lastly, it would be helpful if you would also send your district's answers to Dax Gonzalez, TASB Governmental Relations, by e-mail (dax.gonzalez@tasb.org) or fax (512.476.3096).

We encourage you to provide your legislators with a one-page profile containing key facts about your district. If you do not have a district profile, the *2009 Performance Summary Report* for your district, which can be downloaded from the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Web Site, contains a myriad of data legislators would likely find useful:

http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/school.finance/forecasting/summaries/district_summary_0809.html.

As a school board member, you are an invaluable resource in helping legislators ensure that the laws they pass will be beneficial for Texas school districts. We hope that answering the questions on the issue briefs in this document will empower you and your board members with information that legislators will find persuasive.

Sincerely,

The TASB Governmental Relations Team

Issue: “No Cuts” for Public Education

When the Legislature convenes in Austin in January 2011, the state will face a deficit of approximately \$18 billion. The Texas Constitution requires the Legislature to pass a balanced biennial budget. Legislative leadership has vowed not to raise taxes to close the budget gap. The other budget balancing strategies available to the Legislature include: drawing from the state’s \$8.2 billion rainy day fund, raising revenues (e.g., increasing fees, allowing gambling, etc.), and cutting spending.

Given the size of the deficit, the Legislature will rely heavily on funding cuts to balance the state’s 2012–13 budget. Funding for public education makes up the largest percentage of the state’s discretionary budget. Therefore, education funding is a primary target for funding cuts during the 82nd Legislative Session.

Current Law

For the 2010–11 biennium, the state appropriated a total of \$51.4 billion for public K–12 education, or approximately 29 percent of the state’s total budget.

According to the Legislative Budget Board, Texas ranked 45th among the 50 states and 14th out of the 15 most populous states in terms of per-student spending on public education in 2007–08. Just 10 years earlier, Texas had ranked 24th in the nation. Compared to its neighboring states, only Oklahoma spends (slightly) less per student than Texas on public education.

Legislative Activities

In August, legislative leaders ordered each state agency to cut its budget for the 2012–13 biennium by 10 percent. In response, TEA has recommended program cuts totaling \$260 million, including:

\$35 million from science labs	\$48.1 million from textbooks/instructional materials
\$14.3 million from extended year programs	\$42 million from Student Success Initiatives
\$7 million from rural school technology	\$22 million from District Awards for Teaching Excellence
\$1.8 million from steroid testing	\$13 million from teacher mentor program
\$1.5 million from Texas humanities	\$3.5 million from Communities in Schools
\$850,000 from AVANCE	\$2.0 million from funding for Education Service Centers
\$5 million from technology allotment (per ADA allotment drops to \$27.85 from \$28.38 for 2011–12)	

TEA also reduced its proposed administrative budget by \$15 million, the equivalent of approximately 37 staff positions. So far, legislative leaders have exempted the Foundation School Program (i.e., districts’ formula-funded state aide) from the mandated cuts. However, given the size of the state’s deficit, that may change.

District Information

Legislators will likely find your district’s information helpful in determining how to vote on legislation that reduces funding for public education.

For the past five years, we have been operating our district with essentially the same amount of revenue as we received in _____. **Our schools cannot sustain any further cuts in state funding for the following reasons:**

(1) Our students keep improving, but funding cuts will jeopardize our ability to continue to provide the services our students need to meet state standards.

During the 2009–10 school year, _____ percent of our students passed the TAKS tests in all subjects tested, as compared to _____ percent during the 2008–09 school year.

For the 2008–09 school year, our completion rate was _____ percent.

For the 2008–09 school year, our grades 7–8 dropout rate was _____ percent.

_____ percent of our schools are rated Academically Acceptable or higher.

_____ percent of the class of 2009 were “college ready” based on exit-level math and English TAKS tests.

(2) During the next two years, our district will face increasing challenges and will incur additional costs to meet those challenges.

During the 2009–10 school year, our district’s enrollment grew/declined by _____ students. As a result, the district had to _____, _____, and _____ [e.g., hire more personnel, build more facilities, etc.] which increased the district’s operating expenses.

During the 2009–10 school year, _____ percent of our students were economically disadvantaged, _____ percent were LEP, and _____ percent received special education services. Students in each of these groups require personalized instruction, which increases the district’s operating expenses.

During the 2012–13 school year, we will have to begin administering end-of-course exams, which will be more rigorous than the exit-level TAKS. In order to prepare our students for these exams, we will have to implement the following programs:

- [Program name] _____ \$ [cost of program if possible to quantify]
- [Program name] _____ \$ [cost of program if possible to quantify]
- [Program name] _____ \$ [cost of program if possible to quantify]

(3) Our school board and administration have already trimmed costs wherever possible; a cut in state funding will hurt our students and teachers.

Our district has taken the following cost-cutting measures during the past two years:

- _____ [which saved \$_____]
- _____ [which saved \$_____]
- _____ [which saved \$_____]
- _____ [which saved \$_____]

During the 2009–10 school year, we spent \$_____ per student, of which \$_____ went directly to instruction. Only _____ percent of the district’s budget was spent on district administration, and _____ percent was spent on campus administration. This is far less than most corporations spend on administration.

If our state funding is reduced for the 2011–12 school year, we anticipate having to cut the following programs/services:

Please make education a priority during the 82nd session; don’t cut funding for our public schools.

Texas students need and deserve a quality education. If you cut funding for our schools, our students and the state’s economy will pay the price.

Issue: Fund Balances

School districts generally accumulate fund balances as the result of careful and disciplined fiscal stewardship over many years on the part of the board of trustees and district management. Districts maintain fund balances to manage cash flow deficits, to qualify for lower interest rates on district bonds, and to cover unexpected expenses or emergencies.

Fund balances have long been recognized as a key component of a school district’s financial health. The Government Finance Officers Association recommends, as a best practice, that governmental entities maintain a fund balance that at a minimum is equivalent to two months of operating expenses. Additionally, TEA advises school districts to maintain a fund balance equivalent to between two and three months worth of operating expenses.

Two-thirds of Texas school districts have fund balances lower than the “two- to three-month” standard suggested by TEA. Inadequate state and federal funding has forced districts to spend down fund balances in lieu of program cuts or large local tax increases. In fact, approximately 60 percent of all school districts used fund balances to balance their 2010–11 budgets.

Legislative Activities

As we approach the 82nd Legislative Session, school district fund balances may be seen as one resource available to close the state’s budget gap. This option is attractive to some who incorrectly view fund balances as a district savings account or “rainy day fund.” In truth, a school district’s fund balance is a *snapshot* of the unencumbered balance in the district’s checking account. The fund balance will rise and fall daily as the result of mismatches between the district’s revenue and expenses. Thus, it is imperative that you are able to accurately describe the operational role of fund balances, and what it may mean to your students if the Legislature mandates its use.

District Information

Legislators will likely find your district’s information helpful in determining how to vote on legislation that would draw down or mandate the use of fund balances.

- Our district’s current unrestricted fund balance is \$_____. This equals _____ months of our district’s operating expenses and sufficient cash to cover our anticipated cash flow deficits due to _____ and _____.
- Our district did/did not have to draw down our fund balance to balance our 2010–11 budget.
- We have managed the fund balance with careful consideration and deliberation with community stakeholders. The reasons we have built up/spent down our fund balance include:
 - _____,
 - _____, and
 - _____.
- Legislators are considering requiring districts to use their fund balances over the next biennium to cover operating costs. This would affect our district in the following ways:
 - _____,
 - _____, and
 - _____.

Issue: Unfunded Mandates

Each session, the state imposes more mandates on Texas school districts, many of which are important and worthy. But, in order to comply with these mandates, districts typically have to build or expand facilities, hire additional personnel, purchase new equipment or supplies, and/or pay new fees. Thus, state mandates inevitably increase a district's operating costs. In some instances, the mandates are initially accompanied by state funding; in others, no state funding is made available. As a result, school boards are forced to seek additional funding from the state or local taxpayers to cover the costs of implementing the state's mandates.

Legislative Activity

In recent years, some legislators have tried to acknowledge the local costs imposed by state initiatives and make compliance contingent upon a state appropriation to cover the costs of implementing the mandate. For example, school districts are only required to comply with the three-point seat belt mandate if state funding is made available, and in 2009 the school bus evacuation drill was made permissible to school districts.

District Information

School officials can help legislators limit the number of unfunded and underfunded mandates imposed on school districts by quantifying the costs of existing mandates. Use the chart below to answer some of the following questions:

- Which state-mandated programs are the *most costly* for your district?
- What is the annual cost of complying with each of those mandates for the 2009–10 school year?
- How much state funding did your district receive to comply with each of those mandates?
- What factors contributed to the cost of compliance? (e.g., hiring new staff, increasing the workload of existing employees, purchasing additional supplies, requiring employee training, general maintenance and upkeep)

Description of State Mandate	District's Total Cost of Compliance for 2009–10	State Funding Received for that Mandate	Cost Factors

Issue: Facilities Funding

State funding for public school facilities is a form of property tax relief. The Legislative Budget Board measures the “tax rate avoidance” for districts that qualify and receive facilities funding. The interest and sinking (I&S) tax rate difference between those districts that receive state facilities funding assistance and those that do not has ranged from \$0.12 to \$0.14 lower over the last eight years.

During the 1990s, the Legislature created two state funding programs for school facilities: the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) program helps school districts construct new instructional facilities, and the Existing Debt Allotment (EDA) helps districts cover the costs of existing debt for instructional and noninstructional facilities. Both programs provide state funding to eligible school districts in the form of a guaranteed yield on the district’s I&S tax rate. The guaranteed yield for both IFA and EDA is \$35 per student per penny of local I&S tax effort, but the EDA has an additional limit insofar as the guaranteed yield is applied only to the first \$0.29 per \$100 of property value of the district’s I&S tax rate. The Legislature has not increased the \$35 guaranteed yield or the \$0.29 tax rate limit since both programs were created more than a decade ago.

At the time of both programs’ inception, roughly 85–88 percent of students were in school districts that were eligible for state facilities funding. As a result of increases in property values over the past several years, more school districts reach the \$35 guaranteed yield with local tax revenue. Consequently, approximately 60 percent of students now reside in school districts eligible for facilities funding.

Current Law

Only school districts with low property wealth are eligible for IFA funding and must apply to TEA for the funds. For the 2010–11 school year, the Legislature appropriated \$75 million in new IFA funding.

EDA funding also is based on district property wealth, but is not application based. If a school district’s locally generated revenue is below the \$35 guaranteed yield per student per penny, the district automatically receives EDA funding. For the 2008–09 and 2009–10 school years, the Legislature appropriated \$68.9 million to roll forward by two years the eligibility date for the EDA program.

Legislative Activities

During the 81st Legislative Session, the Legislature created a permanent roll forward for the EDA program. Prior law stated that bonds were eligible only if the district made payments on the bonds or collected taxes to make payments on the bonds during the 2006–07 school year. The permanent roll forward removed reference to the 2006–07 school year and now simply refers to “the final school year of the preceding state fiscal biennium.”

District Information

Legislators will likely find your district’s answers to the following questions helpful in determining how to vote on legislation addressing facilities funding during the upcoming session:

- Does or did your district receive IFA or EDA funds?
 - If yes, for which school year(s) and how much funding from each program?

- Does your district anticipate being eligible for facilities funding next year?
- If the state eliminated the EDA program, how much would your district have to raise its I&S tax rate to cover its obligations?
- In what year did your district first receive EDA funding?
 - Initially, what percentage of your district’s annual debt service was covered by EDA funding?
 - What percentage is covered today?
- In what year did your district first receive IFA funding?
 - Initially, what percentage of your district’s annual debt service or lease purchase agreement was covered by IFA funding?
 - What percentage is covered today?
- When was your last bond election?
 - Was it successful?
 - If so, by how many pennies did your district’s I&S tax rate increase?
 - How is your district using the bond proceeds?
- What is your district’s projected growth (percentage) over the next three school years?
 - 2011–12:
 - 2012–13:
 - 2013–14:
- Does your district anticipate holding a bond election in the next three to five years?
 - If so, for what facilities?

Issue: Career and Technology Education

Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs are designed to enable students to continue their education and/or gain entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job. Employers, state leaders, economic development groups, school trustees, and educators agree that providing students with access to high-quality, rigorous CTE programs helps Texas build a workforce pipeline that enhances the state's competitive edge.

Current Law

In 2006, the Legislature mandated that *all* Texas high school students graduate on either the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) or Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) (26 credits) *unless* certain requirements are met for a student to pursue the Minimum High School Program (22 credits). Students pursuing the RHSP or DAP must complete four years each of math, science, English language arts, and social studies (commonly known as the 4x4 curriculum).

In 2009, the Legislature allowed students greater opportunity to take elective courses within the RHSP or DAP, but the same legislation also made it more difficult for a student to substitute a CTE course for one of the four required math or science credits. In order for a CTE course to count for math or science credit, (1) the student must have completed Algebra II or Physics, (2) the CTE course must be a college credit course or a prerequisite to a college credit course, and (3) the CTE course must cover all of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) required for the advanced math or science course.

The Legislature directed the State Board of Education (SBOE) to revise the TEKS for CTE courses, so that a greater number of advanced CTE courses fulfill the fourth science credit (after Physics) and/or math credit (after Algebra II). After revising the CTE TEKS, the SBOE approved 10 CTE courses that fulfill the fourth science credit and two CTE courses that fulfill the fourth math credit. The SBOE also approved one CTE course that can be taken for math credit prior to Algebra II. Since most CTE courses that count towards the graduation requirements do so only after a student has completed Physics or Algebra II, middle school students generally do not have the option of taking CTE courses for graduation credit.

The state provides school districts with additional funding for each full-time equivalent student enrolled in CTE courses in grades 9–12 (or grades 7–12 for students in special education). The program weight for a CTE courses is 1.35. In 2009, the Legislature created two CTE-related grant programs: one provides funds to universities to develop advanced math and science courses that prepare high school students for employment in high-demand occupations, and another program assists public junior colleges, technical institutes, and eligible nonprofits in defraying the start-up costs of new CTE programs (including dual-credit courses).

In 2007, the Legislature authorized a program to reimburse CTE students who pass a state license or certification exam and demonstrate financial need.

Legislative Activity

In 2010, legislative leaders requested all state agencies to reduce their 2011–12 budgets by 10 percent. TEA's proposed budget reduction for fiscal year 2011–12 includes reducing the industrial certification examinations program by \$350,000.

District Information

Legislators will likely find your district's answers to the following questions helpful in determining how to vote on CTE-related legislation during the upcoming session:

- What percent of your district's students are enrolled in CTE courses?
- Does your district offer CTE courses that students can take prior to completing Algebra II or Physics?
- Do you believe that those CTE courses are as rigorous as the traditional math or science courses offered for graduation credit? If so, how do you measure the comparable rigor of CTE and traditional math and science courses?
- Does the amount of state funding your district receives for CTE cover the costs of providing CTE courses?
- Are there any legal or practical obstacles preventing your district from offering more CTE courses?

Issue: Students at Risk of Dropping Out

According to TEA, a little more than 2 million of the 4.7 million students who attended Texas public schools in the 2008–09 school year were reported as dropping out of school, a 0.2 percent decrease from the previous school year (2007–08). The number of dropouts in grades 7–12 dropped to 40,923, a 10.6 percent decrease from the 45,796 students who dropped out in 2007–08.

- The grade 9 dropout rate went from 10.5 percent for the class of 2008 to 9.4 percent for the class of 2009, and the actual number of dropouts declined by more than 2,500.
- Out of 308,427 students in the class of 2009, 80.6 percent graduated, 8.6 percent continued in high school the year following their anticipated graduation, and 1.4 percent received GEDs.
- In less than than years, almost 700 previous dropouts have completed the requirements for graduation through innovative recovery strategies.

The state funds invested in dropout prevention and recovery programs have attracted millions of dollars in matching funds from private foundations. The end result is fewer students dropping out.

Current Law

The state compensatory education allotment provides additional financial support to help school districts provide additional services and instructional support, beyond the regular program, for students at risk of dropping out of school. The allotment is based on the number of students participating in the National School Lunch Program. A student is considered “at risk” if the student is under 21 years of age and meets one of 13 criteria listed in Texas Education Code, §29.081, which consider student performance, disciplinary placement, who the student lives with, and health of the student.

Legislative Activities

Over the past several sessions, the Legislature has passed laws providing academic and financial support to students at risk of dropping out. In 2006, the Texas Legislature created the High School Allotment, which provides approximately \$335 million every year for dropout prevention and college readiness.

The following year, the 80th Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 2237 requiring TEA to add dropout prevention programs to its best practice clearinghouse and districts to create personal graduation plans for struggling high school students. This legislation authorized TEA to provide grants to school districts and other organizations that operate dropout prevention and/or dropout recovery programs. The Legislature appropriated more than \$100 million for the grant programs.

In August 2008, the commissioner of education awarded dropout recovery grants to 18 school districts and four private institutions. HB 3 requires, effective September 1, 2009, the commissioner to adopt a new set of student achievement indicators, including those for:

- dropout and completion rates for grades 9–12 (computed according to the federal definition of the National Center for Education statistics) and
- high school graduation rates (computed in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act).

The commissioner must not include the following for computing dropout and completion rates:

- court-ordered GED students who have not yet earned their GED;
- students who were previously reported to the state as dropouts;
- students who are not in membership for purposes of ADA;

- students who first enrolled in grades 7–12 as unschooled refugees or asylees;
- students who are in the district exclusively because they are being detained in a county detention center but otherwise are not students of the district; and,
- students incarcerated in state jails and federal penitentiaries as adults and persons certified to stand trial as adults.

Additionally, the 81st Legislature allocated \$50.8 million for Communities in Schools, an organization that helps schools develop programs that combine parental involvement, academic support, and career and social services awareness with counseling for at-risk students.

In 2010, legislative leaders requested all state agencies to reduce their budgets by 10 percent. TEA has proposed a budget reduction for the 2011–12 fiscal year, which reduces the funds for the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative by \$13 million and for Communities in Schools by \$3.5 million. Both are successful dropout prevention programs, and these cuts are particularly hurtful at a time when Texas is showing improvements in dropout prevention.

District Information

Legislators will likely find your district’s answers to the following questions helpful in determining their votes next session on whether to continue current levels of funding for dropout programs:

- How many students in your district were deemed at risk under state law:
 - In 2009–10? _____ (number) _____ % of total student population
 - In 2010–11? _____ (number) _____ % of total student population
- How many students in your district dropped out of school in 2009–10?
 - In grades 7–8 _____ (number) _____ %
 - In grades 9–12 _____ (number) _____ %
 - How many of the students who dropped out completed a GED program?
_____ (number) _____ %
 - How many of the students who were coded as “drop outs” actually completed all credits for graduation but failed the TAKS and did not enroll in a fifth year of high school?
_____ (number) _____ %
- How many dropouts reenrolled in your district, and what percentage of those students either graduated or completed high school?
 - In 2008–09? _____ (number “recovered”) and _____ % graduated or completed high school
 - In 2009–10? _____ (number “recovered”) and _____ % graduated or completed high school
- List the programs your district offers to prevent at-risk students from dropping out?
 _____ grades served _____
 _____ grades served _____
- How much did your district spend on dropout prevention/recovery programs during the 2009–10 school year, and what was the source(s) of those funds (fed/state/ local/private)?

\$ _____ (source)	\$ _____ (source)
\$ _____ (source)	\$ _____ Total

Issue: District Awards for Teaching Excellence

The District Awards for Teaching Excellence (DATE) was enacted as part of House Bill 1 (Third Called Session, 2006). The purpose of the DATE program is to provide funding for districts to create or continue a system of monetary awards for educators who demonstrate success in improving student achievement. The grant program provides state funds to allow districts the opportunity to create a local incentive pay plan or to implement the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), which has been recognized for:

- increasing student performance;
- promoting teacher collegiality;
- reducing teacher turnover; and
- attracting talented teachers to high-poverty schools.

School districts across the state have taken advantage of the DATE program in increasing numbers. Currently, 324 districts are now participating in DATE, including most of Texas' large urban districts. Fifty-six percent of Texas teachers now have the opportunity to earn awards for their hard work and effective teaching skills.

Current Law

The state of Texas appropriated \$147.5 million to fund this program during the 2008–09 school year, the first year DATE was implemented. For the 2009–10 and the 2010–11 school years, DATE funding was increased to \$198 million each year, using funds reallocated from the repealed Texas Educator Excellence grant program.

The law requires district planning committees to establish goals for their district awards plan. Once the district goals have been determined, district planning committees will create an awards plan that: 1) is districtwide, 2) is for select campuses, or 3) implements TAP.

If a district chooses to implement its program in a subset of campuses, then the district is required to target the most high-need campuses. DATE plans should award teachers and principals who are the most effective at improving student performance.

Legislative Activities

In response to the anticipated budget deficit, TEA reduced DATE funding by \$3 million for the 2010–11 school year. TEA's legislative appropriations request reduces funding for the DATE program by an additional \$22 million for the 2011–12 and 2012–13 school years.

District Information

Legislators will likely find your district's answers to the following questions helpful in determining how to vote on legislation addressing the DATE program:

- Does or did your district participate in the DATE program? If not, is your district considering participating in the DATE program? Why or why not?

- If your district participates in the DATE program
 - How many teachers and principals were eligible for a DATE award?
 - Of eligible teachers and principals, how many received a DATE award?
 - What was the average amount of an award?
 - How much state funding did your district receive for your DATE program?
 - How much local funding did you use for your DATE program?
 - What were the district's goals in participating in DATE (e.g., implement TAP, turnaround struggling campus, etc.)?

Issue: Pre-kindergarten in Texas

In Texas public schools, prekindergarten (pre-k) is designed to help students develop skills necessary for success in the regular public school curriculum, including language, mathematics, and social skills. Texas has the largest state-funded pre-k initiative in the country with 763 districts offering the program and more than 214,000 students participating during the 2009–10 school year.

Current Law

Texas school districts must offer a half-day pre-k program if at least 15 eligible *four-year-old* children are identified within district boundaries. Under current law, there are five categories of students who are eligible for free public school pre-k, including:

- (1) children unable to speak and comprehend the English language;
- (2) students deemed educationally disadvantaged (eligible for free/reduced lunch program);
- (3) those who are homeless as defined by federal law;
- (4) a child whose parents are on active military duty, in an activated reserve unit, or who were killed or wounded during active duty; and,
- (5) children in the Texas foster care system.

A Texas school district may extend its pre-k program to include *three-year-old* children who meet those eligibility requirements. In addition, districts also may allow other students to attend pre-k and may charge those students tuition.

State law requires that before establishing a new pre-k program, a school district must consider the possibility of entering into a contract to share use of an existing Head Start or other childcare program site (including private programs) to provide public school pre-k.

School districts with 15 or more eligible four-year olds enrolled in a pre-k program receive state funding from the Foundation School Program based on average daily attendance for a half-day of instruction. A district wishing to expand its pre-k services may apply to TEA for a pre-k expansion grant, secure community funding, or charge tuition to those students who are not eligible for free pre-k under state law.

Currently, public school pre-k teachers must have a bachelor's degree, be certified, and pass a background check. TEA provides voluntary pre-k curriculum guidelines that encourage districts to maintain student-to-teacher ratios in pre-k programs consistent with the 22:1 ratio required by law for kindergarten through grade 4.

Legislative Activities

In 2009, the 81st Legislature passed legislation that would have created a grant program to help districts implement an enhanced-quality, full-day pre-k program for eligible children. The bill was eventually vetoed by Governor Rick Perry. Future legislation will most likely address increasing student eligibility, expanding current half-day programs to full-day programs, and limiting class sizes or establishing teacher-to-student ratios.

District Information

School board members should answer the following questions which will provide their legislators with data that will be helpful during the upcoming session:

- How many pre-k students does your district serve?
 - How many of those are eligible for *free* pre-k?
 - Does your district serve three-year olds?
- Is your pre-k program half-day or full-day?
 - If half-day, how much would it cost to extend it to full-day?
- What is the student-to-teacher ratio in your pre-k program?
- What is the student-to-staff ratio in your pre-k program (e.g., teacher aides)?
- What consequences would a mandatory maximum teacher-to-student ratio of 10:1 have for your district?

- How much does the pre-k program cost your district?
- How much state funding does your district receive?
 - a. Total funds received: \$ _____
 - b. Foundation School Program funds (total amount): \$ _____
 - c. Tuition: \$ _____(per student); \$ _____(total amount)
 - d. Pre-k expansion grant (total amount): \$ _____
 - e. Other amounts (and specify the source(s))
 - \$ _____ from _____(source)
 - \$ _____ from _____(source)

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