



## Legislative Progress Made Towards Fulfilling the 2008-10 TASB Advocacy Agenda Resolutions

Note: Only Resolutions that were addressed during the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session are included in this document. For a complete list of TASB Resolutions, please visit [www.tasb.org/issues/advocacy\\_agenda/2008/resolutions.aspx](http://www.tasb.org/issues/advocacy_agenda/2008/resolutions.aspx).

### School Finance

#### 65 Percent Rule

TASB shall support expanding the definition of “instructional costs” for purposes of the 65 Percent Rule to include costs related to librarians, counselors, school maintenance, and transportation.

*HB 3 (the accountability bill) fulfills the intent of this resolution by completely eliminating the 65% Rule.*

#### Increasing Enrollment Due to Base Realignment

TASB shall support additional federal and state funding for those school districts which will be impacted by dramatically increasing student enrollment resulting from the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act.

*HB 3646 (the school finance bill) provides an allotment to districts impacted by BRAC enrollment changes.*

#### Small and Mid-size Adjustment

TASB shall support increasing the adjustment to the basic allotment to provide relief for all small and midsize school districts, regardless of Chapter 41 status, due to diseconomy of size.

*HB 3646 accomplishes this by extending the mid-size adjustment to Chapter 41 districts.*

#### Compensatory Education

TASB shall oppose the use of set-asides from the Foundation School Program compensatory education funding to pay for other state programs and services.

*HB 3646 accomplishes this by repealing compensatory education set-asides.*

#### Formula Funding

TASB shall support returning to a formula-funded school finance system that is adjusted for adequacy so that funding is available to pay for all required services and operations and for the effects of inflation since the 2005-06 school year.

*HB 3646 somewhat accomplishes this. The bill takes a step towards returning school finance to a formula-funded system for districts that received target revenue below the state average. Additionally, the Basic Allotment will automatically be adjusted to reflect changes in the average statewide property value.*

## **TRS Contributions**

TASB supports legislation that requires the state to include the teacher pay raise mandated by House Bill 1 and any future state-granted, across the board salary increases in the minimum salary schedule to ensure that the state is responsible for making its share of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) payments, not only for the statutory minimum salary schedule but also for any state-mandated pay increases.

*HB 3646 accomplishes these items. HB 3646 provides funding for the HB 1 pay increase and provides a subsequent across-the-board pay increase for educators on the state minimum salary schedule. It also provides that if the new salary increase provisions require a district to give more than an \$800-per-educator annual salary increase, the district may deduct the additional costs for TRS or Social Security benefits from the amount of the raise.*

## **Curriculum**

### **Adding Additional Courses to Recommended High School Program**

TASB shall support legislation or a change in State Board of Education rules that adds additional math and science courses, specifically including applied math and science courses, to those approved for the Recommended High School Program.

*HB 3 accomplishes this partially by requiring the State Board of Education to approve additional applied math and science courses that can be taken within the Recommended High School Program after a student has completed Algebra II or Physics.*

### **Development of TEKS**

TASB shall support a process that relies on input from professional educators working in Texas public schools to develop essential knowledge and skills for each subject in the required curriculum.

*Based upon grassroots pressure regarding the process followed for revising the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for English Language Arts last year, the State Board of Education has made a concerted effort to create and follow a process that relies on input of professional educators in revising the Science TEKS.*

### **Expanding Courses that Apply Toward Math and Science Credit**

TASB shall support elective and vocational courses to count toward math and science credit when the school is not in a block or modified schedule.

*HB 3 accomplishes this by allowing a CTE course to substitute for the fourth year of math and science under the Recommended High School Program, as long as the CTE course covers the math or science TEKS and is endorsed as a college credit course or a pre-requisite for a college credit course.*

## **College Readiness**

TASB shall support legislation and rules that provide Texas school districts with the curricular resources and local flexibility necessary to prepare students to enter college or the workforce with the knowledge and skills they need to compete in a global, 21st century economy.

*HB 3 provides districts and students with more curricular flexibility. The bill eliminates some of the state-required courses for graduation under the RHSP, thus providing districts flexibility to require additional courses for graduation within the Recommended High School Program. The bill also gives districts that achieve high rates of college readiness additional flexibility in using high school allotment funds for instructional programs in grades six through twelve.*

## **DAEP Funding and Standards**

TASB shall support equitable and properly funded disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs) that will provide a curriculum and coursework necessary for graduation. This curriculum may consist of several delivery methods, which may be correspondence courses, distance learning, or summer school with a teacher-to-student ratio that is conducive to the student's learning environment.

*Curricular requirements for DAEPs, as envisioned by this resolution, have been implemented through administrative regulation (19 TAC 103).*

## **P-16 Initiative**

TASB shall support the P-16 initiative which will focus on reducing dropout rates for students; reducing the number of high school graduates needing remedial education; increasing the participation in higher education; and increasing the number of minorities completing dual credit courses, college degrees, and certificates.

*Three bills that TASB followed this session addressed the elements of this resolution:*

- **SB 2258** provides intensive summer programs for public school students and college readiness programs at public institutions of higher education.
- **HB 3** provides that students who pass the Algebra II and English III end-of-course exams and graduate on the Recommended High School Program will be considered "college ready," and colleges/universities cannot require them to take remedial courses in those subjects.
- **HB 2480** authorizes a public junior college to enter into an agreement with a school district, organization, or other person operating a high school for the purpose of offering dual credit courses, regardless of whether the high school is located within the service area of the junior college district.

## **GED Certificates**

TASB shall support legislation that affirms that a student who attains a General Education Development Certificate (GED) is a "completer."

*HB 3 accomplishes this by providing that a student pursuing a GED cannot be counted as a "dropout" for purposes of computing dropout or completion rates.*

## **Property Tax**

### **Tax Rate Adoption**

TASB shall support allowing school districts to adopt tax rates based on the certified property value estimates released by county appraisal districts in June.

*HB 3646 accomplishes this by allowing districts to adopt tax rates based on certified property value estimates. Additionally, the bill further requires the estimates to be released in April rather than June.*

## **Target Revenue**

### **Target Revenue Minimum**

TASB shall support a floor to be established for target revenue that is determined at a minimum level by the current state average target revenue of \$4,941 based on a per WADA basis.

*HB 3646 essentially establishes a new target revenue floor by setting the Basic Allotment at \$4,765/WADA, which is tied to the average property value statewide, rather than to the average target revenue.*

### **Target Revenue Variances**

TASB shall support legislation that will modify the calculations for target revenue as the variances in the dollar amount between individual school districts are too great and are not equitable.

*HB 3646 effected two changes in the school finance system to improve equity among districts: the Basic Allotment was raised to \$4,765/WADA, and every district will receive an annual increase of at least \$120/WADA (with a cap on that increase of \$350/WADA).*

### **Target Revenue Increase**

TASB shall support legislation to increase target revenue levels to recognize the actual cost of essential programs and services for students.

*HB 3646 somewhat accomplishes this by increasing the Basic Allotment, providing every district with an annual increase of at least \$120/WADA, and authorizing new grant programs to help districts cover the costs of certain programs (i.e., exceptional special education costs).*

### **Target Revenue Disparities Among Neighboring Districts**

TASB shall support legislation to change the target revenue calculation in order to reduce the disparities in funding neighboring school districts.

*HB 3646 reduces (but does not eliminate) disparities in funding among neighboring districts.*

### **Accountability**

#### **Accountability System**

TASB shall support a less complex accountability system that rewards individual student progress; recognizes large, diverse districts; reduces state testing; and implements constructive measures before sanctions.

*HB 3 accomplishes 3/5 of these items. It establishes an accountability system that rewards individual student progress; assigns ratings based on a proportionate number of indicators (85% of student achievement indicators) in order to account for differences in district size and diversity, and implements constructive interventions before sanctions.*

#### **Accountability System**

TASB shall support legislation to create an academic performance accountability system that supports 21<sup>st</sup> century college and workforce standards.

*HB 3 accomplishes this by establishing “postsecondary readiness” as a state goal and integrating college readiness standards into the new state accountability system. It also requires the SBOE to approve additional applied math and science courses and CTE courses that meet college standards.*

#### **Alignment of Accountability Systems**

TASB shall support legislation that combines the federal and state accountability systems for districts into one standard accountability system.

*HB 3 somewhat accomplishes this by allowing the commissioner to waive state sanctions if substantially similar federal sanctions are already being implemented.*

## **Facilities**

### **Energy Efficiency Goal**

TASB shall support legislation eliminating the 5 percent per year goal to reduce school districts' energy consumption or support adding a waiver for districts that have documentation of efforts implemented prior to the new law.

*SB 300 accomplishes this resolution by eliminating the goal to reduce electricity consumption by 5 percent per year. However, the bill requires school districts to establish a long-range energy plan to reduce electricity usage by 5 percent beginning with the 2008 state fiscal year and to consume electricity in future years in accordance with the plan.*

### **Storm Water Drainage Fees**

TASB shall support legislation exempting school districts from storm water drainage fees assessed by municipal drainage utility systems.

*SB 1522 accomplishes this for school districts in El Paso County.*

## **Student Issues**

### **ADA Exceptions**

TASB shall support legislation to include student absences for making college visits and participating in Olympic-caliber events as exceptions for which ADA funding is provided.

*HB 2542 accomplishes half of this resolution by providing two excused absences for college visits.*

### **Early Childhood Development**

TASB shall support early childhood development and curriculum that meets and exceeds the needs of all students.

*HB 130, which was vetoed, would have accomplished this by allowing districts to pursue grant funding for enhanced quality pre-K programs.*

### **Student Discipline**

TASB shall support student discipline that is equitably enforced with all student populations.

*HB 171 accomplishes this by requiring districts to consider mitigating factors before disciplinary action is taken against a student.*

## **Transportation**

### **Seatbelts on Non-District Buses**

TASB shall support statutory language that would allow flexibility to districts when it is not possible to use school buses and there are not contracted buses with seatbelts available.

*HB 3646 accomplishes this by requiring seatbelts on school buses only in those cases where the school district is reimbursed for the costs for complying with the seatbelt law by the state.*

### **Seatbelts on School Buses and Exemption from Liability**

TASB shall support revising current law to encourage, rather than require, students to wear seatbelts on buses or adding language that districts are not liable if students refuse to comply.

*HB 3646 accomplishes this by requiring seatbelts on school buses only in those cases where the school district is reimbursed for the costs for complying with the seatbelt law by the state.*