



Texas School Coalition

Committed to the success of public education for all students in Texas!
txsc.org

PRIORITIES FOR THE 86TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

2019

Reduce the harmful effects of recapture on local property taxpayers and schools

Even though local taxpayers continue to pay more as their property values increase, these additional dollars do not help their local schools. Instead, it's the state that benefits, because local property taxes turn into Robin Hood recapture payments that allow the state to reduce its share of education funding.

Robin Hood once affected a handful of districts, but it now serves as a significant state revenue stream that threatens to surpass \$3.8 billion per year by 2021. Every additional property-tax dollar collected allows the state to give less money to local schools and spend more on things that have nothing to do with education. We must stop leaning on local taxes and local taxpayers to balance the state budget. Increasing the state's share is the only way to ease the local property-tax burden while maintaining quality public education in the state.

Ensure funding meets student needs

As inflation rises and students' educational needs increase and diversify, the cost of preparing Texas' future workforce continues to grow. Educators should be compensated with salaries and benefits that reflect the value their work creates for Texas and compete with compensation offered in the private sector. Schools also must provide a safe learning environment for every student.

Despite these rising costs and ever-changing responsibilities, the Basic Allotment and Equalized Wealth Level, which drive the school finance formulas and Robin Hood payments, have been frozen for four years. At a time when more is expected from students and teachers than ever before, schools cannot accomplish their mission with stagnant funding. We must also ensure that no district receives less funding to serve these increasing and increasingly distinct student needs.

Promote local governance and transparency for taxpayers

Local governance works best when taxpayers understand how their tax dollars are being used. Taxpayers need and deserve an accounting of how all property taxes collected in the name of public education are being spent by the state and by local entities.

Each Texas school district has a unique set of circumstances that make it unlike any other in the state. Locally elected officials answer to parents and taxpayers in their communities, and they are best-positioned to manage and govern their districts in ways that meet those districts' needs. Because districts' needs vary so dramatically, it is vitally important to give local leaders the flexibility to address the unique challenges and opportunities of their communities.

Keep the funding for public schools with public schools

Public tax dollars must have public accountability — they must be used in ways that help all Texas public school students. Limited *public* resources should support innovation and choice within the *public* school system.