



# 2017 Legislative Agenda

## **FUTURE-READY EDUCATION FOR THE WHOLE CHILD**

Adopt the Texas Whole Child Initiative to ensure that:

- ❖ Each student is healthy, physically and emotionally safe, engaged in learning, supported by qualified, caring adults, and challenged academically.
- ❖ Ensure a Well-Rounded Education that prepares students for college and careers and to be active, productive citizens.
- ❖ Ensure access to Social and Emotional Learning and the supports necessary for students to maximize their potential.

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## **IMPROVE EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS**

- ❖ Ensure resources and support for educator preparation programs and on-going professional learning programs.
- ❖ Provide resources and time for induction and mentoring programs for new teachers.
- ❖ Provide on-going, job-embedded professional learning opportunities to help educators.

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## **ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

- ❖ Consider and embrace a flexible system of assessment and accountability to better meet the changing needs and complex diversity of Texas students. A new system should:
  - Focus on high priority learning standards.
  - Reduce the length of tests to a developmentally appropriate amount of time.
  - Provide an alternative method that allows students to graduate when they are unable to pass an End of Course (EOC) test after multiple attempts.

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## **ADEQUATE AND APPROPRIATE FUNDING**

- ❖ Provide appropriate funding so public schools can meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and the demands of increasing graduation requirements and expectations under the state assessment program.
  - Appropriately fund staff, materials, and resources necessary for mandated accelerated instruction to meet the Student Success Initiative and graduation requirements.
  - Include funding for high-quality early childhood programs, including full funding of Pre-Kindergarten for all eligible students, to support English Language Learners and reduce socioeconomic disparities.
  - Fund professional learning.
  - Increase funding for the Instructional Materials Allotment.
  - Oppose any effort to create a tax credit scholarship program. Under such a program, the state would be funding private school tuition at the expense of public schools.

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## **LOCAL CONTROL**

- ❖ Relieve schools from unfunded legislative mandates and administrative requirements that are untimely, strain school budgets, and detract from teaching and learning.

# Future-Ready Education for the Whole Child

- ❖ Adopt the Texas Whole Child Initiative to ensure that:
  - Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
  - Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.
  - Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
  - Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults.
  - Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.
  - Ensure a Well-Rounded Education that prepares students for college and careers and to be active, productive citizens who positively contribute to their communities by:
    - Providing access to all academic subjects. Students need proficiency in subjects beyond those tested by the State Assessment Program including fine arts, history and civics, foreign languages, and physical education and health.
    - Providing access to Advance Placement, International Baccalaureate, and/or Dual Credit courses to all interested students.
    - Providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum that emphasizes future-ready skills and processes including collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and creativity.
    - Providing access to multiple enrichment activities including athletics, fine arts, and clubs and student organizations.
    - Continuing multiple graduation pathways that allow students to pursue interests and passions.
    - Providing instruction to develop global literacy skills and dispositions. Students need global literacy to understand and act on issues of global significance.
    - Providing opportunities for both student voice and student choice. Voice and choice help students to self-assess and self-manage their own personal learning journeys.
- ❖ Ensure access to Social and Emotional Learning and the supports necessary for students to maximize their potential by:
  - Providing programs in social and emotional learning including anti-bullying, anti-harassment, and drug and alcohol programs.
  - Providing counseling services.
  - Providing mental health services.

# Improve Educator Effectiveness

- ❖ Ensure resources and support for educator preparation programs and on-going professional learning programs to help classroom teachers, school leaders, and other educators to maximize student learning.
- ❖ Provide resources and time for induction and mentoring programs for new teachers.
- ❖ Provide on-going, job-embedded professional learning opportunities to help educators:
  - Deeply understand content.
  - Improve their pedagogical skills.
  - Improve their assessment skills.
  - Provide support for social and emotional learning.
  - Leverage technology to enhance learning.
  - Design tasks that promote learning and engagement in a student-centered setting.

# Assessment and Accountability

- ❖ Consider and embrace a flexible system of assessment and accountability to better meet the changing needs and complex diversity of Texas students. A new system should:
  - Focus on high priority learning standards so that students have adequate instructional time for deep and complex understanding.
  - Reduce the number of required tests by testing only certain grade levels and using random sampling.
  - Reduce the length of tests to a developmentally appropriate amount of time.
  - Provide an alternative method that allows students to graduate when they are unable to pass an End of Course (EOC) test after multiple attempts.
  - Allow for multiple measures for assessment such as portfolios, rubrics, student interviews, narrative writing and oral testing as a collective means to determine student achievement and progress.
  - Simplify the current highly-complicated accountability system.
  - Provide for public reporting of data without the assignment of ratings.
  - Continue, with possible modifications and additions, the inclusion of nonacademic factors found in the Community and Students Engagement Self-Evaluation.

# Adequate and Appropriate Funding

- ❖ Provide appropriate funding so public schools can meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and the demands of increasing graduation requirements and expectations under the state assessment program. Any effort to create a tax credit scholarship program (voucher) is inappropriate. Under such a program, the state would be funding private school tuition at the expense of public schools. Appropriations for public education should:
  - Appropriately fund staff, materials, and resources necessary for mandated accelerated instruction to meet Student Success Initiative and graduation requirements.
  - Provide funding for support programs and extended time to help students meet state standards.
  - Provide funding for social and emotional learning, counseling, and mental health services.
  - Repurpose funds dedicated to the current state testing program by reducing the amount of testing and applying the funds to support teaching and learning assessed through multiple measures.
  - Include funding for high-quality early childhood programs, including full funding of Pre - Kindergarten for all eligible students, to support English Language Learners and reduce socioeconomic disparities.
  - Fund professional learning, including additional professional learning days, to improve instruction and address students' evolving needs.
  - Increase funding for the Instructional Materials Allotment so districts can provide necessary instructional materials and instructional technology resources and delivery systems to engage students in digital learning to ensure they are future-ready.
  - Oppose any effort to create a tax credit scholarship program. Under such a program, the state would be funding private school tuition at the expense of public schools.

# Local Control

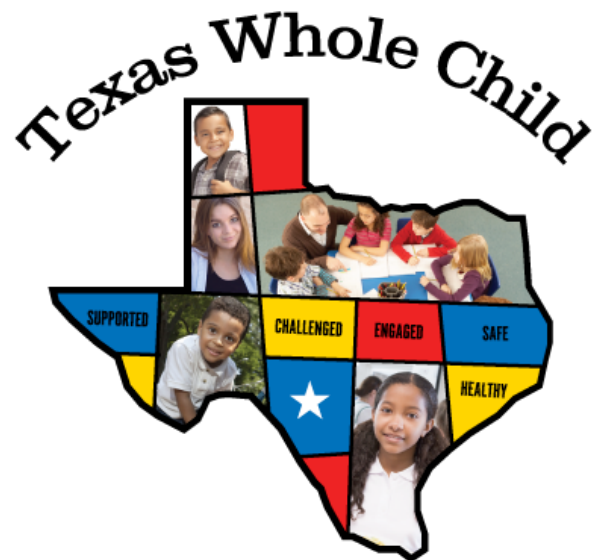
- ❖ Relieve schools from unfunded legislative mandates and administrative requirements that are untimely, strain school budgets, and detract from teaching and learning including:
  - Providing school districts local control of the start date of the school calendar allows the first semester to end before the Winter Break with similar days of instruction between semesters.
  - Allowing school districts to have sufficient funding to provide fiscal discretion to meet the needs of children in their local schools.

The 5 million students in Texas public schools are the future of Texas. Legislative actions and decisions must promote their success through the development of the whole child. The Texas Whole Child Initiative is based on the concept that, in order for a child to be educated successfully, he/she must be: healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

It is time for Texas policymakers to embrace the Texas Whole Child Initiative and provide a well-rounded education that is authentic, relevant, and rigorous while emphasizing future-ready skills and processes.

Texas ASCD calls on the Texas Legislature to adopt the following recommendations during the 2017 Legislative Session.

- 1 Adopt the Texas Whole Child Initiative
- 2 Improve Educator Effectiveness
- 3 Embrace a flexible system of assessment and accountability
- 4 Provide adequate and appropriate funding
- 5 Allow local control



## Who We Are:

The Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Texas ASCD) is a professional organization with over 2,000 members. Texas ASCD serves Texas public educators and advocates for policies that allow educators flexibility to teach in ways that are most effective for the diverse Texas population. This advocacy benefits the whole child and results in better educational outcomes for the entire state. Texas ASCD membership represents all strata of public education professionals including teachers, principals, superintendents, curriculum directors, staff developers, university students and professors.

Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

1601 Rio Grande Street, Suite 451, Austin, Texas 78701

Phone: (512) 477-8200 ★ Fax: (512) 477-8215 ★ [www.txascd.org](http://www.txascd.org)