

The Upcoming 88th
Legislative Session

What's Next?



Texas Senate Republicans: 88th Legislature (2023)



Bettencourt



Birdwell



Campbell



Creighton



Hall



Hancock



Huffman



Hughes



Kolkhorst



Nichols



Paxton



Perry



Schwertner



Springer



Flores



King



Middleton



Parker



Sparks

Texas Senate Democrats: 88th Legislature (2023)



Alvarado



Blanco



Eckhart



Guttierrez



Hinojosa



Johnson



Menendez



Miles



West



Whitmire



Zaffirini



LaMantia

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick's Legislative Priorities



- Property tax cuts
- Improving the reliability of the electric grid
- Border security and law enforcement
- State investment in mental health facilities
- Expand college grants for teachers
- Teacher pay
- Retiree 13th check/COLA
- School safety
- Parent's Bill of Rights



Finding Your Legislators

Who Represents Me?

<https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home>

- Provides information about current districts and members of the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives, the Texas delegation to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and the State Board of Education.

Private School Vouchers

- Public funds for private school tuition, homeschooling, private vendors
- “Empowering parents”, money following the student
- Out of state money used for voucher campaigns
- Rural communities have been significant barrier
- Proposals to exclude rural areas and/or include certain populations
- Intra and inter district transfers as alternative proposal
- TCTA opposes diverting state money from public schools.
- Vouchers in other states lack transparency/accountability.

Teacher Vacancy Taskforce

Preliminary discussions include:

- Lower the cost of healthcare insurance for teachers.
- Temporarily fund the retire/rehire surcharge.
- Resources and guidance for district and campus administrators on positive culture practices and discipline supports.

RESPECT

*

TIME

*

MONEY

TCTA Recommendation:

- Meaningful across the board salary increase

Surplus

- \$27 billion

Spending Cap

- 12.3%/ 12.5 billion more than current budget

School Employees Healthcare

- Rising healthcare costs, teachers bear the burden of higher premiums.
- State's contribution has been \$75/month since inception (2001).
- District's minimum contribution is \$150/month (many contribute more).

TCTA Recommendation:

- Considerably increase the state and district's health insurance contributions.

Retiree Cost of Living Adjustment

- Teachers deserve retirement security.
- Retired teachers have not received a COLA since 2013 for those who retired before 8/31/2004.

TCTA Recommendation:

- Increase pensions through a series of COLAs- to fully catch up to inflation over the years.

School Mental Health

- Mental health needs are at an all time high.
- Impacts include:
 - declines in academic performance;
 - significant increases in mental health provider referrals for students;
 - increases in aggression, anxiety, depression, PTSD, and grief and loss in students;
 - severe disciplinary infractions resulting in longer expulsions and alternative placements;
 - increased absence rates for school staff and burnout.

TCTA Recommendation:

- Increase the number of mental health and behavioral professionals on campuses.

The Texas House of Representatives

House Makeup

- 150 members
- 86 Republicans
- 64 Democrats
- 25 new members – 1 member who was a state rep many years ago
- House Speaker Dade Phelan expected to be re-elected; currently one opponent, Tony Tinderholt
- Currently 13 Democrat chairmen including House Public Education Chair, Harold Dutton
- Anticipate a decrease in the number of D chairmen.

Anticipated Issues

- Student Discipline
- School Safety
- Accountability
- Parent Empowerment
- Educator Preparation

School Safety

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kvue.com/article/news/local/fake-school-threats-consequences/269-a11bd4be-e82a-453...

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LOCAL NEWS

Fake school threats can cause students to face real consequences

A student can be charged with a terroristic threat if they make a fake threat against a school, which can be a felony.

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School Safety

- Discussions include each district receiving a guaranteed amount under the school safety allotment or TEA grant program
- More resources directed at addressing mental health, possibly through TCHATT (Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine)
- Greater disciplinary and legal consequences for terroristic threats and similar behavior
- Filed bills also include efforts to harden schools

Student Discipline

- An issue separate from, but intertwined with, school safety
- More broad than school safety
- Lack of administrative support and teacher autonomy contributes heavily to teacher turnover and the teacher shortage
- One study found that, among teachers who left the field permanently, almost 35% report the reason is related to problems with student discipline

TCTA's current recommendation

- Increase the school safety allotment and expand the uses for the money to include the hiring and training of behavioral interventionists for campuses
- Support SB 245 by Sen. Perry which seeks to, among other things, eliminate a districts ability to get a DOI exemption for campus behavior coordinators, and strengthen teacher authority in student discipline matters

Assessment and Accountability

- Always a hot topic each session
- 2 efforts always ongoing:
 - 1. Effort to get rid of standardized testing – either completely, or decrease to the level allowed by the federal Department of Education
 - 2. Reduce reliance on the STAAR as the basis for accountability ratings.
- Raise Your Hand Texas is making this issue one of their tentpole issues for the upcoming session through their Measure What Matters initiative

TCTA recommendation

- TCTA generally supports efforts to reduce both the number of tests and the stakes attached to the test

Parent Empowerment

- What exactly does that mean?
- Possible that it means lesson plans, tests, curriculum are even more available for parental examination
- Could mean revising the language around parent grievances at the district level

Educator Preparation and the Teacher Pipeline

- Fewer students coming through the traditional education preparation programs
- The majority of candidates are now going through the alternative certification process, but enrollment numbers for alt cert are also decreasing
- Some districts are using the DOI process to allow them to hire uncertified teachers
- Exploration of how to make the profession more enticing – including more/better loan repayment programs and residency programs

TCTA recommendation

- TCTA generally supports efforts to better prepare teacher candidates so they are “day one” ready, but those efforts must be careful not to harm the teacher pipeline, particularly during a teacher shortage.

February 10-11, 2023
at Kalahari Resort in
Round Rock, TX

TCTA's Annual Convention

Capitol Visit

Friday, February 10th – transportation provided from the resort to the Capitol