



Legislative Issues at **Austin ISD**

School Finance

1. Update the Transportation Allotment to allow Chapter 41 districts to apply the amount it would receive in transportation funding as a credit against the total amount of recapture.

- AISD would receive a credit of approximately \$5,437,501 in FY 2017 and FY 2018.

2. Update the Cost of Education Index (CEI)

- The CEI has not been updated since 1991.
- The CEI attempts to adjust for varying economic conditions across the state, based mainly on the size of the district, the teacher salaries of neighboring districts, and the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in the district for the 1989-90 school year.
- The cost of living in Austin has sky-rocketed, making it unaffordable to attract and retain excellent teachers.
- The average home cost in the Austin-Round Rock area in 1991 was \$83,142, and has increased to \$325,663 in March 2016.

3. Recognize 100 percent of CEI in WADA calculation compared to 50 percent under current law.

- Currently, 100 percent of the effect of the CEI is allowed to increase the Basic Allotment for each district. This adjustment increases Tier I allotments as well as Tier I State Aid.
- However, only 50 percent of the effect of CEI is allowed to flow through the formulas into the calculation of WADA, which is used in Tier II and in Chapter 41 recapture calculations.
- Because Austin ISD is a Chapter 41 district and does not receive Tier I or Tier II funds from the State, the district effectively receives only 50 percent of the intended benefit from the CEI (in the calculation of recapture).
- Correcting the formulas to allow 100 percent of the CEI to flow into the rest of the equalized system would increase the number of WADA and provide increased Tier II funds for Chapter 42 districts as well as reduced recapture for Chapter 41 districts. This would assure a consistent and equitable treatment of the CEI adjustment to all districts, regardless of size, demographics or wealth.



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4. Improve funding for students who are identified as at-risk and English language learners.

- These funding weights have not been adjusted since 1984, while the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in AISD has grown from 48.8 percent in 1994 to 58 percent in 2016, and the ELL population in AISD has nearly tripled in the same time period from 11.3 percent in 1994 to 27.8 percent in 2015-16.
- Increase the current funding weight of 0.20 to 0.25 to provide adequate funding to students at risk of dropping out of school. Increased funding would allow school districts to provide more resources to students and their families to address the obstacles that cause many to drop out. An increase of this weight to 0.25 would provide an additional \$14,757,443 to Austin ISD.
- Increase the current funding weight of .10 to .20 for bilingual students. Additional funding would assist the district in meeting the needs of an increasingly large student population coming to Austin ISD from all over the world speaking languages other than English and Spanish. Over 94 languages are spoken in Austin ISD, and additional support and resources are necessary to provide an education to many of our unschooled refugee and asylee students. An increase in this weight would result in an additional \$11,968,462 for Austin ISD.

5. Enact legislation to exclude contributions made by school district to the federal social security system from the amount subject to recapture by the state under Ch. 41, TEC.

6. Increase CTE weight from 1.35 to 1.5.

Mental & Behavioral Health

1. Provide state funding to support campus-based mental and behavioral health services for students.

2. Amend Insurance Code to require that campus-based mental and behavioral health practitioners be admitted as in-network providers.

- For adolescents, the first signs of mental illness or emotional distress can emerge in the school environment. Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and family problems often are the root causes of poor academic performance, disciplinary issues, and truancy.
- Providing mental health and behavioral health services early is crucial to getting students the help they need to get and stay on the right track and be successful in life. Investing in them early saves money in the long run, as the cost of incarceration and inpatient mental or behavioral care is far more expensive.
- Providing such services on campus is efficient, cost-effective, limits the time a student misses classes, and is available when a student is in acute need of services.