TASP
84th Legislative Session Update

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October 2015
When we started this session in January...

$18B surplus in the bank

More Republicans in office, more conservative leadership

**Top Priorities:**
- Open Carry
- Border Security
- Property Taxes
- Religious Freedom
When we started this session in January...

Open Carry is back...
And *campus* carry passed, too...

Guns up,
Delta House !!
When Harry Met Harry...
Pastors may have a slice of this cake...or not
SB 1 – Property Tax Relief

- Increases Homestead Exemption from $15,000 to $25,000 (cost $1.2B)

Note: $10 savings monthly - enough for a Big Mac every month!
Major Education Bills Passed
HB 1 - General Appropriations Act

- $1.2B - Foundation School Program
- $2.3B - Enrollment Growth (85K new students)
- $1.057B - Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA)
SB 149 – Individual Graduation Committees (IGC)

• Establishes IGCs
• **Pass 3 out of 5 EOCs and walk the stage?**
• Applies to Class of 2015 and Class of 2016 only
• IGCs include:
  • principal or designee,
  • teacher of relevant course(s),
  • dept. chair/other, and
  • parent/guardian
HB 2804 – Letter Grades for Schools (A-F)

“We gotta call’em something.” – Rep. Aycock, Chairman of House Public Ed
HB 2804 – Amended Accountability System

• ISDs/campuses will each receive letter grades in 2017-2018 school year

• **Key Provision:** TEA must model 2015-2016 school year

• **What does it all mean?**
  - Test scores are worth **55%** *(not 100% anymore)*
  - Non-testing items are worth **45%**
HB 2804 – Let’s play

- Fine Arts
- Wellness and PE
- Community and Parental Involvement
- 21st Century Workforce Development program
- Second language acquisition program
- Digital Learning Environment
- Dropout Prevention Strategies
- Educational programs for GT students
- Compliance with statutory reporting and policy requirements
HB 1842 – Interventions and Sanctions

District has 5 years to turn around a campus or risk losing it.
Assessments

What about us? Where’s our HB 5?
Can we have fewer tests? ...hmm, maybe next session, kid.

HB 743 – Test must be finished within 2 hours
HB 1164 – Alternate writing assessments maybe
CTE

HB 18 – Removes cap on dual credit
HB 1430 – Public Service endorsement includes mental health services
More Accountability/ Curriculum Bills

- HB 2812 - TEA may approve ADA for instructional programs provided **off-campus by an entity**

- SB 1867 - **Over-age special ed students** are excluded from dropout calculation

- HB 2660 - Enables **optional flexible day** programs to earn a full day of attendance for 240 minutes of instruction rather than the 360 minutes of instruction currently required
Governance

- **HB 2** – Provides $768 million to keep TRS-Care solvent
- **HB 1783** – Employees have the right to report a crime witnessed at school to any peace officer; adds school administrator to one who is prohibited from coercing another into suppressing or failing to report info to law enforcement
Personnel

• **SB 1259** - Teacher responsible for instructing the student should implement a portion of the IEP; ARD Committee must prepare *written report* (decision, signatures, agreement, and bonus: *dissenting opinions* Ok)

• **HB 445** – Notice to public employees of the availability of paid leave for military service

• **HB 786** – Employees have right to express breast milk
Training

- **HB 2186** - Requires staff development training on **suicide prevention** as part of **new employee orientation for educators**. Existing educators must receive suicide prevention training according to a schedule adopted by TEA. Training may be satisfied through independent review online. Effective 2015-2016 school year.

- **SB 133** – Expands list of school employees eligible for **mental health first aid trainings** to include: secretary, bus driver, cafeteria worker, and school resource officers.

- **SB 382** - Continuing ed credit for instruction regarding **use of AED**
Health Bills

• HB 440 - PE curriculum must accommodate needs of special education students. Previous law addressed meeting needs of students with all physical ability levels.

• HB 66 - **If ISD adopts local policy re: epi-pens**, schools must have them available to be administered by trained personnel at each campus and at every off-campus school-sanctioned event.

• SB 265 – Students must be allowed to use **sunscreen**
HB 3562 – Meal Card Grace Period

- Requires ISD to adopt a grace period policy regarding the use of the prepaid meal cards or accounts
- The policy **must allow a student** whose meal card is exhausted to continue, for a period determined by the district, **to purchase meals** by accumulating a negative balance on the student's card
- Districts **must notify a parent** of the lack of funds
- Districts may set a schedule for repayment on the account balance, but may **not** charge fees or interest on outstanding balances
SB 507 – Special Ed Cameras

• **Upon request** of a parent, staff member, or trustee, cameras
• Must be installed in self-contained special education instructional settings
• Video surveillance must include **audio** and must cover the setting from every angle (**no blind spots**, except restrooms/changing areas)
• School must retain video footage for at least **six months**
• **Effective 2016-2017 school year**
Student Issues

• HB 679 – Tex. Dept. of Housing/Community Affairs will conduct a study on homeless youth by Dec. 1, 2016.

• **HB 1559** – ISD website must contain info regarding services for homeless students.

• SB 1494 – Requires TEA to assist the transition of homeless students in connection with: transferring records within 10 working days after enrollment, awarding credit, financial aid, etc.

• **HB 1804** – Campuses/charter schools must notify child’s caseworker of any disciplinary actions.

• HB 3748 – Colleges must designate a liaison for former foster students.
More Student Issues

• **SB 206** – Allows *fosters kids* to continue to attend their school even if foster home is outside district; free college tuition also.

• **SB 314** – *Non-parent* can be appointed as Managing Conservator.

• **HB 10** – Schools must now report the *trafficking* of a child that involves: forced labor or trafficking that causes the child to engage in sexual acts.

• **HB 189** – Statute of limitations for injuries arising out of *sexual abuse* of a child has changed to **15 years**
HB 2398 – Changes to Truancy Law

• Truancy conviction can be **expunged**
• Peace officer’s **cannot** take a student into custody for truancy
• ISD shall adopt truancy prevention plan and employ/designate a truancy prevention facilitator
• **ISD must offer additional counseling** and may not refer a student to truancy court if the truancy is the result of pregnancy, being in the state foster program, homelessness, or being the student’s family’s principal income earner.
• **Truancy must be prosecuted as a civil case**
Truancy Court may issue remedial actions like...

• Attend school without unexcused absences – **Brilliant**!
• Attend prep classes for GED
• Attend a non-profit to address abuse, rehab, **training in manners** – why didn’t I think of this?
• Complete not more than 50 hours of community service
• Suspend or not issue driver’s license – **what**?!
• Attend classes for student’s at risk of dropping out of school designed for both parents and students –
• Refrain from identified injurious conduct – **of course**!
• Enjoin all contact with person contributing to the truant conduct – **seems easy**
• Pay any necessary costs
HB 910 – Changes to Open Carry

• Open carry signs clearly visible to public at each entrance to the property

• Concealed carry signs displayed in a conspicuous manner clearly visible to the public

• Carrying (open or concealed gun) at school events still prohibited

• Carrying (open or concealed gun) at meetings of governmental bodies still prohibited

• BUT must still give effective notice of prohibition or not an offense
Governor’s Record on Bills

- 1,202 - Signed by Governor
- 162 - Filed W/out Gov. Signature
- 42 - Vetoed by Governor (33 of 42 had at least one Democrat sponsor)
Wrap - Up

• General Session Stats:
  ➢ 6,476 bills filed this session
  ➢ 1,430 passed (22%)
  ➢ $1.5B new dollars for public education
  ➢ $6.2B still available in the state budget
  ➢ $11.1B in Rainy Day Fund.
  ➢ HB 1759, major school finance bill, never had a chance
Sunset Advisory Commission Update
Sunset Advisory Commission

- TSBEP is under Sunset this year. Hooray!
- **Hmm... What is Sunset?**
How are agencies reviewed?

Three steps:
• Sunset Staff Review
• Sunset Commission Deliberation
• Legislative Action
How can I participate?

• **Mailing List**
  • Anyone interested in receiving the Sunset review schedule, Commission meeting schedule and agendas, staff reports, and hearing materials?

• **Input During the Sunset Staff Review**
  • You may contact Sunset directly or fill out the public input form.

• **Response to a Sunset Staff Report**
  • You may respond in writing by filling out the public input form.

• **Testifying before the Sunset Commission**

• **Participating in the Legislative Session**
  • Generally, Sunset recommendations are drafted into a bill.
What changes can be made thru Sunset?

• Abolish or Continue the agency?

• If the Commission chooses to continue an agency, it can make recommendations to improve the agency’s operations.
  
  • **Example:** Transferring certain functions to another agency to eliminate duplication
  
  • **Example:** Increase efficiency of operations
What changes **cannot** be made thru Sunset?

- **No** individual complaints, grievances, or cases, please.
- **Not** an avenue for appeals.
- **No** requests for additional funding or staff.
- Sunset gathers info re: types of complaints, grievances, and cases the agency has overall and sees whether a larger policy issue can be addressed through the Sunset review process
Now what?

- Sunset Commission needs a **chairman**
- Sunset staff analyst has **not** been assigned yet
- Besides TSBEP, there will be **30** other state agencies reviewed this year
- TSBEP will be reviewed in **May 2016**

- In the meantime....

- **TASP should draft one-pagers with a problem & a solution or recommendation**
Who sits on Sunset Advisory Commission?

- Sen. Nelson (R- Flower Mound)
- Sen. Birdwell (R- Granbury)
- Sen. Campbell (R- New Braunfels)
- Sen. Hinojosa (D - McAllen)
- Sen. Schwertner (R- Georgetown)
- Rep. Price (R- Amarillo)
- Rep. Burkett (R- Sunnyvale)
- Rep. Gonzales (R- Round Rock)
- Rep. Raymond (D - Laredo)
- Tom Luce, Public Member (Dallas)
- Dawn Buckingham, Public Member (Austin)
Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Update
Counselors, Social Workers, and School Psychologists wrote letter

1 in 5 high schools do not have a counselor

Mental Health plays a role in student outcomes

Senate version approved provisions:
  • Authorizing Elem. Sec. School Counseling Program
  • Allowing school-wide funding for counseling
  • Allowing SEAs to use Title IV funds for counseling and mental health services
  • Allowing LEAs to use Title II funds to identify trauma

House version adopts “school psychologist”

What are the chances? Hmm....December/ January
ESEA Update

- Senate version: Every Child Achieves Act (S 1177)
- House version: Student Success Act (HR 5)
- 1 in 5 high schools do not have a counselor
- Mental Health plays a role in student outcomes
- **Senate version** approved provisions:
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**LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

Overview of the Legislative Process

- Introduction & Referral of Bills
- Committee Consideration
- Calendars & Scheduling
- House Floor
- Senate Floor
- Executive Business in the Senate
- Bicameral Resolution
- Presidential Actions
- Public Law
ESEA Update

• Texas has 2 Senators & 36 Congressmen
• www.congress.gov
• www.govtrack.us
• https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_congressional_delegations_from_Texas
The End