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Policymakers are kicking off education hearings today for this one-month 2017 special session.

This week, 25 education groups delivered a joint letter calling for positive school finance reform so that neighborhood public schools can provide an excellent education for all children. See their eight points below.

Also, IDRA released a new infographic on the state's divestment in public education.

New Infographic: Texas Divestment in Public Education

The State of Texas has reduced its share of public education spending during the last decade from 49 percent in 2007 to 41 percent in 2017. These state cuts to education, coupled with increases in property values, have resulted in local communities footing the bill for K-12 public schools. And in 2016, Texas received a D on a national school finance report, ranking only 45th in the country.

Texas Divestment of Public Education

Who is Paying?

In 2007...

State 49%

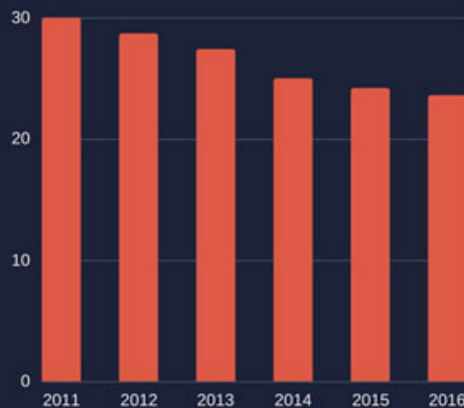
51% Local

In 2017...

State 41%

59% Local

Percentage of State Budget Allocated to K-12 Public Education



In the last decade, state cuts to education and increases in property values have resulted in local communities footing the bill for K-12 public schools.

The result? Inadequate and inequitable resources for school children.

A B C **D** E F

In 2016, Texas received a 'D' on a national school finance report, with Texas ranking #45 in the country

It doesn't have to be this way

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Sources: Texas Education Agency, State Summary Finance Reports, 2007-08, 2017-18; National Association of State Budget Officers—Annual State Expenditure Reports, 2011-2016; Education Week Research Center, 2016 Quality Counts State of the States Report Card.

25 Education Groups Push Texas Leaders to Invest in High Quality Public Education for All Children

Dear Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Speaker Straus and State Legislators:

The undersigned submit this letter to voice our position on the supplemental topics identified by Governor Greg Abbott for the special session related to public education and school funding. The undersigned is a diverse collective of education groups and organizations with hundreds of thousands of members located across Texas.

Each is committed to building the common ground needed to enact positive school finance reform that ensures each and every child in every neighborhood public school has access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom.

In response to Governor Abbott's proposed special session topics for the summer of 2017, the collective asserts their position as follows:

1. The State must meaningfully invest more state resources through school finance reform that ensures a high quality education for every child at every neighborhood public school; efforts to further shift the burden onto local property taxpayers must be avoided.
2. The State must not use taxpayer funds to subsidize private schools, and it must not withhold fair funding for public schools contingent upon the passage of private school funding.
3. The State must avoid taking action that would intrude upon local communities' taxing authority.
4. Texas' hard-working teachers deserve a pay raise, but any state-mandated teacher pay raise must be accompanied with additional state monies flowing through the formulas; districts should not be forced to reallocate existing, limited funds to pay for state-mandated pay raises.
5. Any school finance study must be research-based, sufficiently funded by an appropriation, and tied to specific short-term and long-term educational goals and outcomes.
6. The State must respect local decision-making and due process measures for hiring and firing teachers under current statutes; it must not force local school districts to adopt new termination policies that would further erode the teacher pipeline.
7. The State must not encroach upon public school employees' desire to join a professional organization/association and to have their dues deducted from their wages.
8. The State must not approve policies that could cause bullying and harm to Texas students by continuing to push forward the "bathroom bill;" Texas schools have managed this issue without incident and will continue to do so.

Sincerely...

Association of Texas Professional Educators
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Coalition for Education Funding

Elgin ISD
Fast Growth School Coalition
Intercultural Development Research Association
La Fe Policy Research & Education Center
MALDEF
Mexican American School Board Members Association
The McNeil Foundation
Pastors for Texas Children
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
South Texas Association of Schools
Texas American Federation of Teachers
Texas Association of Community Schools
Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce
Texas Association of Midsize Schools
Texas Classroom Teachers Association
Texas Elementary Principals & Supervisors Association
Texas HOPE
Texas Kids Can't Wait
Texas Latino Education Coalition
Texas LULAC
Texas NAACP
Texas State Teachers Association

For more information...

- ▶ IDRA Penny Power tool - Shows how much revenue your school district generates for each average penny of tax set by local taxpayers
- ▶ IDRA Fair Funding for the Common Good website
- ▶ Factsheet: Texas School Finance - What to do about Recapture
- ▶ IDRA testimony and statements
- ▶ Testimony presented by the Texas Latino Education Coalition

July 21, 2017

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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.