
June 15, 2023

RE: Fiscal Notes on HB 1605 and HB 3 and Teacher Compensation

Dear LISD Elected Delegation:

We want to share with you some concerns around the fiscal notes associated with HB 1605 and HB 3. We share these concerns, in anticipation of a special session, where there will hopefully be an opportunity to revisit providing a necessary increase to the Basic Allotment which would provide increased teacher compensation for the biennium.

When Governor Abbott called for the TEA to create a Teacher Vacancy Task Force in March 2022, he recognized the teacher workforce shortage crisis facing public education and the need for solutions to be created. The task force released their final report and recommendations in February 2023. The first item the task force recommended addressing was increased compensation through providing an increase to the Basic Allotment. When we all met with you about LISD Legislative Priorities in December 2022, we had already determined that an increase to the Basic Allotment was absolutely vital and shared information with each of you about this. We knew, well ahead of the task force report, that the main way to address teacher compensation and inflationary costs would be through an increase to the basic allotment and advocated for the increase to be around \$900.

With the record breaking surplus of \$33B, Comptroller Hegar stated, "This truly is a once in a lifetime legislative session for budgeting and priorities that the Legislature might want to fund."

We had previously shared concerns with all of you about HB 1605 and now that it has passed, the fiscal note on HB 1605 puts \$800M towards a lower ranked priority from the teacher vacancy task force than compensation. Additionally, this dollar amount assumes the Texas Education Agency (TEA) adding 74 full time positions to administer the requirements of this bill at a cost of \$8.9M annually. In order to access some of the money in HB 1605, we would need to adopt resources selected by TEA rather than receive money towards the basic allotment that would help pay for the resources we have selected from the state adopted list and already built our LISD curriculum around.

We had previously shared in our March Newsletter to all of you that we spend well over \$3M on Safety and Security which is significantly more than what the safety allotment at \$9.72 per student provides. Unfortunately, HB 3 is not providing the funding for armed security personnel and we have estimated it will cost about \$3-\$4M in addition to what we were already spending to provide this for our schools. HB 3 funding currently is estimated to provide \$1.5M, which will not come close to addressing \$6M in safety spending that will be necessary as we implement HB 3 requirements. The fiscal note on HB 3 provides 45 full time positions for TEA at a cost of \$6.4M and provides 30 vehicles for TEA at an initial cost of \$3.8M. Finally, the \$1.1B HB 3 provides to TEA to administer to schools through grants and technical support is not addressing that school districts were underfunded for school safety prior to the 88th legislative session convening.

While we understand that TEA needs additional funding to implement the legislative requirements, so do school districts. These fiscal notes on just these two bills alone will add over 100 positions to TEA. In LISD, less than 3% of our budget is spent on administration of the organization with the majority of our budget being spent on campus staff to work with students. Should a special session be called to address K-12 public education, we continue to advocate for resources to be prioritized for addressing teacher compensation and inflationary costs facing school districts through raising the Basic Allotment. We also advocate for strict oversight from the legislature of how the TEA will manage the large amounts of taxpayer money and additional personnel they are being allocated from the legislation passed this session.

As several of you are former or current parents of LISD students you know first hand the quality of education provided by our district. With one of the lowest teacher turnover rates in the DFW area and two recent awards from Forbes as one of the only school districts in the state of Texas to be identified as a best place to work, we are proud of how our students benefit from a stable workforce in LISD. We are asking for your help, as we provided a raise to our teachers of approximately \$2,000 and are facing a \$49M deficit as we are working to maintain the excellent programs and staff our LISD community and students deserve.

We appreciate the communication that each of you have had with us throughout this session, and we continue to strive to be a partner with all of you as you serve our community. We are calling on our LISD staff and families to reach out to the Governor and to all of you about their support of funding for public education, as we appreciate that you all desire to hear from your constituents. We believe that property tax compression and an increase to the basic allotment can all be accomplished and would continue to reinforce that if education savings accounts are put into place that the same rules and funding be applied consistently across educational providers both public, private, and homeschool.

With appreciation for your service,



Lori Rapp, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Jenny Proznik
LISD Board of Trustees, President



Dr. Buddy Bonner
LISD Board of Trustees, Vice President



Katherine Sells
LISD Board of Trustees, Secretary



Michelle Alkhatib
LISD Board of Trustees, Place 6



Dr. Staci L. Barker
LISD Board of Trustees, Place 7



Allison Lassahn
LISD Board of Trustees, Place 2



Sheila P. Taylor
LISD Board of Trustees, Place 3