



Coalition to INVEST IN TEXAS SCHOOLS

Core Principles on School Finance

The following statements have been developed collaboratively by all participating organizations. These statements of core principle will be used as a framework for evaluating legislative proposals related to school finance. All organizations that comprise the Texas Education Leadership Collaborative will not support a school finance bill or combination of bills that fails to incorporate, all of these principles. Individual organizations may also endorse legislation consistent with their own legislative priorities that goes beyond these principles.

The Texas Constitution

Article 7 - Education

Section 1 - SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE OF A SYSTEM OF PUBLIC FREE SCHOOLS

A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.

Adequacy Principle

A state school finance system should adequately provide for "the general diffusion of knowledge" in order to preserve the "liberties and rights of the people" and should:

- Recognize the dynamic nature of requirements and expectations,
- Provide, at a minimum, expectations reflected in the required state curriculum, including both the foundation and the enrichment curriculum,
- Provide cost adjustments for varying student needs and district characteristics, and
- Provide opportunities for all Texas students to achieve the highly educated status that will enable them to live successfully in our increasingly global and digital world.

Equity Principle

A state school finance system should provide for "the general diffusion of knowledge" in order to preserve the "liberties and rights of the people" and for "the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools" and should:

- Provide a system of equity that includes at least 90 percent of the students within the equalized system and narrows the gap in funding immediately and further reduces it over time,
- Include provisions to ensure that students "have access to programs and services that are appropriate to the student's educational needs and that are substantially equal to those available to any similar student," [TEC § 42.001(a)],
- Provide for a "standard of neutrality that provides for substantially equal access to similar revenue per student at similar tax effort, considering all state and local tax revenues of districts after acknowledging all legitimate student and district cost differences," [TEC § 42.001(b)] and
- Ensure that no other education or tax policies diminish the effects of the equity provision.

Capacity Principle

A school finance system should "make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools" and should:

- Increase the state share by creating stable revenue structures that will enable the state/local partnership to meet the adequacy and equity principles,
- Reduce the over-reliance on local property taxes and recapture,
- Adjust for changing economic factors, and
- Incorporate annually additional students without reducing the revenue per student.



Local Enrichment Principle

A state school finance system should provide for "the support and maintenance of an efficient system of free public education" and should:

- Ensure that enrichment provisions meet the equity principle,
- Provide for meaningful discretion for all districts, and
- Respect the right of local school communities to allocate resources.

Facilities Principle

A school finance system should "make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools" and should:

- Affirm that facilities influence learning,
- Provide state support for existing debt and new facilities in ways that reflect a strong value in a state and local partnership,
- Recognize the diversity of local needs and funding capabilities,
- Ensure that facilities support meets the equity principle, and
- Respect the right of local school communities to make decisions related to the allocation of resources.

Vouchers

The Coalition opposes the use of public funds to provide financial resources to private elementary and secondary schools through funding of programs or materials, tax credits, virtual charters, and/or vouchers, and considers such funding an improper use of tax revenue and public monies.