



March 12, 2019

The Honorable Dan Huberty
Chair, House Committee on Public Education
Members, House Committee on Public Education
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

Dear Chairman Huberty and Members of the Committee:

I am Doug Williams, Superintendent of Sunnyvale ISD and Chairman of the TASA Legislative Committee. Today, I am testifying strongly in support of House Bill 3.

First, I would like to thank Chairman Huberty and this committee for the countless hours of work you've given to provide a comprehensive bill that addresses many aspects of the School Finance Commission study.

This bill accomplishes many of the stated goals for this legislative session. The school finance system in Texas has long been riddled with problems, and this bill provides solutions for reform. Of equal significance, House Bill 3 will bring additional funds to our school districts, and most importantly the students of Texas.

It is my contention this bill has the capacity to reform school finance in the manner that the famed Gilmer Akin Law did in 1949. As that legislation created a path for Texas public education in its day, so too can House Bill 3 move education forward in our state.

When the press conference was held last week and the details of the bill were released, I did what I'm sure many superintendents across the state did. I looked at how this legislation would impact the district I serve. After analysis, and a quick glimpse at preliminary numbers, I determined that Sunnyvale ISD would receive revenue growth significantly less than some of my neighbors and below statewide average. Despite those early projections, I am here today in full support of this bill because it will provide additional funds to all schools in Texas and to echo the thoughts of Speaker Bonnen, "The time is now."

There are many aspects of this bill that target areas of needs for public education. Some of these include:

- Providing substantial discretionary funds to schools by increasing the Basic Allotment to \$6030. We recognize the significance of that number and appreciate the committee's efforts to move toward 60 by 30.

- Raising the minimum teacher salary schedule and allowing districts flexibility in providing meaningful pay increases to our teachers and all staff members.
- Designating funds for students and districts in greatest need.
- Establishing an emphasis toward improving early childhood literacy by funding full day Pre K for qualifying students.
- Reducing recapture by raising the Copper Penny yield, thus allowing 190 school districts to exit from Chapter 41 status.
- Providing property tax relief and beginning the process for alleviating over reliance on local taxpayers to fund education.
- Committing allocations to fast growth districts through the extension of the New Instructional Facilities Allotment.
- Adding dyslexia weight to the formula to address the needs of students previously underserved.

As work continues on House Bill 3 and committee substitutes are introduced, we encourage the committee to consider the following:

- Extend the Small and Mid Size adjustment for Special Education programs. Schools of our size need the support that this adjustment aides in providing needed programs and services to students where shared service arrangements are not practical.
- Adding the creation of a mechanism to regularly adjust the Golden Penny yield. While we realize funding this yield at the Austin level is problematic, indexing it to inflation or property values per pupil would allow for expansion.

In closing, I again want to express my appreciation for your bold efforts in proposing this Texas Plan. I believe the plan is well named because its successful passage will be beneficial to the students of our state. And because the students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow, a well educated citizenry will insure that Texas will stay strong and prosperous. House Bill 3 is a step in the right direction of securing that future.

The Texas Association of School Administrators applauds your efforts and shares in the opinion that “The Time is Now.” We look forward to continuing conversations with you about this and all matters related to public education.

Sincerely,

Doug Williams, Superintendent
Sunnyvale ISD
TASA Legislative Chair
