



87th Legislative Session

Texas Association of Rural Schools

Legislative Priorities


The Legislative Session brings about opportunities for **TARS** to support and author legislation that supports our members positions and priorities. Additionally, **TARS** will work with other associations on common issues that align with memberships mission. The major goal of the *Texas Association of Rural Schools* is the enhancement of the fiscal capacity of rural school districts while narrowing the gap in the fiscal capacity between rural districts and others.


TARS Supports:


The Texas Association of Rural Schools (TARS) supports and works with all the school organizations supporting Texas Schools! **TARS** and **TAMS** have a partnership forged in our efforts to support the small and mid-size funding elements in school finance.

TARS SUPPORTS


Education Funding

 Return to the Small and Mid-size Adjustment especially for CTE funding.


 Acknowledge and address the diseconomy of scale that exists in rural, small and mid-size districts.

 Tying charter school funding (small and midsize allotment) to the same 5,000 – student cap as the district small and mid-sized adjustment. Support legislation that increases local community involvement in the charter approval and expansion process similar to those required of traditional public-school districts in bond and tax ratification elections.


Local Control

 Support the continuation of Texas school districts to implement districts of innovation with no restriction, but to highlight local control.


Broadband/Internet Connectivity

 Modern education requires reliable and high capacity connectivity. Small rural telecommunication companies and co-ops rely on the Texas Universal Service Fund (TUSF) to maintain telecommunications operations in high-cost rural areas across the state. TARS therefore supports a robust and permanent TUSF to help ensure connectivity for rural school districts.

Teacher Retirement System of Texas

 Advocate for the continuation of the current defined benefit pension program for TRS members. Advocate for increased state funding to assist with increased healthcare costs associated with TRSActive Care and TRS-Care. Advocate for alternatives to TRS-ActiveCare that would provide additional options to districts while sustaining the current system for those that remain in the system.

Education Service Centers


 The ESC's are a critical part of the success of rural, small and mid-sized school districts. TARS supports the continued state financial support of ESC's and the lack of regulatory oversight the ESC's have over local school districts.

TARS Opposes

Any state plan that would divert public tax dollars to private entities. Especially with no academic or financial accountability or transparency to the state, taxpayers, or local communities or rural school consolidation under the pretense of saving funds.

TARS OPPOSES

Oppose any attempt by the Legislature to mandate consolidation of rural schools

 Rural school districts support and keep Rural Communities alive through creation of jobs and keeping local businesses, "in business." We fully expect the population in Rural Texas to stabilize or even increase with recent developments of more people working from home and moving back to Rural Texas. Rural Texas is the backbone of our Texas Economy through agriculture and energy. The small, friendly environment found in Rural School Districts only benefits our children and provides them opportunity to grow their leadership skills. An opportunity that would not be available if districts are consolidated.

Opposes any attempt to keep the current accountability system in place without changes to account for the impact of COVID-19 missed instruction

Opposes any attempt to decrease funding to school districts

Charter School Expansion, Vouchers, Taxpayer Saving Grants, Virtual Vouchers

The Voice of Rural Texas!

GIVE US A CALL - WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU!

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