



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TEXAS SCHOOL FINANCE COMMISSION

March 19, 2018

The Mexican American School Boards Association (MASBA) is a champion for equity, diversity & inclusion, advocating for the closing of gaps for all students—particularly for the Latino students who comprise the majority in our Texas public schools and the English Language Learners who are expected to be 25% of our public school population by 2025.

To ensure that Texas remains competitive and possesses a skilled, college- and career-ready workforce, MASBA has several recommendations for the Texas School Finance Commission:

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REGARDING THE COMMISSION'S OUTCOME RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Change high school graduation requirements, to allow students to complete one year of fine arts or CTE.** This will provide students flexibility & the opportunity to pursue CTE certifications. It will also result in more funding for districts.
2. **Dedicate a modest amount of state funding—say, \$20M—to reward high schools that earn an academic distinction in post-secondary readiness.** A “gold star” is hardly a carrot; instead, give schools with coherent CTE sequences a real incentive.
3. **Dedicate a modest amount of state funding to award districts that allow students to earn associate degrees.** Districts currently expend resources to help our students get these degrees, receiving nothing in return.
4. **Allow all Tech Apps courses to receive the CTE weight (1.35).** It's the 21st century: Let's incentivize those who promote our students' study of computer science, web design, video game design, etc.
5. **Fund CTE courses for 8th-grade students.** Our districts currently pay for students to enjoy these opportunities, receiving nothing in return.
6. **Incentivize & reward companies and career schools that partner with districts to provide technical training.**
7. **Double state funding (to \$96M) for the TWC Skills Development Fund and allow districts to be eligible to receive grants.**

REGARDING THE COMMISSION'S REVENUES RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To avoid cuts to public education, which none of us wants, **please consider the following avenues of revenue generation:** (A) Raise the state sales tax by one cent and generate \$2.5B, (B) Require sales tax of “dark stores,” (C) Increase the motor vehicle sales tax by \$25 and generate \$640M, (D) Provide tax amnesty for late payers and generate \$100M.
2. **Create a constitutional amendment so that, similar to transportation, education might enjoy a sales tax diversion.**

REGARDING THE COMMISSION'S EXPENDITURES RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Update the weights of our state education finance system.**
2. **Allow local property owners to keep growth in property taxes.**
3. **Simplify the transportation allotment and provide credit for recapture.**
4. **Eliminate the Student Success Initiative and expand funding for the Foundation School Program.**
5. **Provide significant property tax relief by funding the Existing Debt Allotment.**
6. **Update the Bilingual Education Allotment, to support dual immersion, dual language programs.**