



Austin Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

POSITION STATEMENT

Approved March 24, 2011

The Austin Chamber Board of Directors recommends that the Texas Legislature:

- **Support successful implementation of college/career-ready expectations ⁽ⁱ⁾**
- **Support maximum K12 operational and personnel flexibility ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾**
- **Support no more than 7% cut in public school funding for any Central Texas school district ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾**
- **Support enhanced local business support for school districts during funding transition**

Background

- Ideally public education funding would not be cut given its critical importance to our state's future. Further, Central Texas currently sends nearly half a billion dollars in "Robin Hood" payments previously designated for education purposes every two years to help the state balance its budget.
- We recognize that some reduction will be necessary to balance the state budget.
- Our experience as a business community is that with clear goals and strong leadership, a reduction of 5-7% in a given year can be implemented by improving operational efficiency without compromising the quality of service delivered. Reductions on the order of 15-20% may require more complex restructuring, a longer planning horizon, and a reduction in quality of services delivered would be likely during the transition and perhaps beyond.
- We oppose any reduction in the quality of education for Texas, to our goals for graduation rates, to prepare our students for college/high-performance careers and to achieve "first semester enrollment in college. We do not support a reduction of more than 7% for any one district because we believe to do so would endanger those critical objectives.
- Our experience re-engineering our own businesses in the face of new and changing economic conditions has resulted in significant performance improvements and realized savings while still delivering the same or better services. Over an appropriate planning horizon, we encourage the state to form an initiative to evaluate different, creative, and more cost effective ways to deliver a better education to our students within available resources.
- Going forward, we request our school superintendents, the key local education leaders with the highest level of subject matter expertise in their district, be given the tools and authority to lead their districts. We ask that they be encouraged and empowered to constantly improve the efficiency of their districts and use that efficiency to invest in achieving the goal of graduation, college readiness and direct college enrollment for nearly all students.

i Successful implementation of House Bill 3 from 81st Texas Legislature. This current law appropriately organizes public education around student accomplishment of college/career readiness. The Legislature should resist efforts to weaken HB3.

ii Successful passage of HB400 to include local control for superintendents and school Trustees for personnel, contract design/termination/appeals/operations. The state appropriately sets student, campus, district expectations, but the Legislature must reduce operational mandates.

iii For the coming biennium, a 7-percent cut is against a baseline of full current law, formula funding and enrollment growth, as projected by the Texas Legislative Budget Board. No one school district should receive more than a 7% cut from this baseline, assuming level student enrollment.