

## **84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session Results**

### **Pertaining to Texas PTA Priorities**

#### **CRMS PTA voted on supporting in January 2015**

##### **Bills that Passed and have been signed into law:**

##### **EpiPens on school campuses (SB 66-supported by Texas PTA).**

Effective immediately. Creates guidelines for campuses that choose to maintain a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors to be utilized if a student without a diagnosed allergy has an allergic reaction. Limits liability for a school that follows these guidelines.

##### **Electronic cigarettes (SB 97-supported by Texas PTA). Effective October 1, 2015.**

Bans selling e-cigarettes to anyone under 18. Requires ISDs to adopt policies to prohibit the use or possession of e-cigarettes on school campuses or at school-related events on or off campus.

##### **Access to healthy foods (HB 1305-supported by Texas PTA).**

Gives the board of trustees of a school district in which at least 10 percent of the students enrolled in one or more schools are eligible for the national school breakfast program the option of developing and implementing a locally funded program to provide a free or reduced-price breakfast to all students in the schools or school eligible under the national program as an alternative to participating in the national program. Requires a school district campus or charter school that provides a locally funded program and in which 80 percent or more of the students qualify under the national program to offer a free breakfast to each student.

##### **Truancy decriminalized (HB 2398–supported by Texas PTA). Effective September 1, 2015.**

Allows a school to refer a student to court if efforts to remediate the behavior fail, but it would be civil court rather than criminal court.

##### **Records expunction. Effective September 1, 2015.**

Protects records for juvenile offenders (SB 1707, HB 1491, and HB 4003).

##### **Evaluation of schools.**

- HB 2804 (opposed by Texas PTA). Makes broad changes to how the state evaluates schools, including bringing in factors like community engagement, AP course enrollment, attendance and dropout rates. Gives districts and campuses A-F ratings based on their performance in five areas. Student performance on STAAR is primary measure of school performance (55%), but other factors, including community engagement, AP course enrollment, attendance, and dropout rates, account for 45%.
- HB 1842 (supported by Texas PTA). Amends accreditation interventions and sanctions, including changes to the required information investigators must

present and the inclusion of school board members in hearings before the commissioner to explain a campus's low performance, lack of improvement, and plans for improvement. Allows for a non-voting student trustee for turnaround campuses, adds establishing innovation zones for campuses that request to participate and qualify, and modifies some of the existing charter regulations for school turnaround.

**Public school funding (HB 1-supported by Texas PTA). Effective September 1, 2015.**

State's budget bill. The final budget for the next two years is around \$210 billion. Included in the budget is a \$1.5 billion boost to public education beyond enrollment growth.

**School counselors/completion of dual credit courses as an alternative to compliance with end-of-course assessment requirements (HB 18-supported by Texas PTA).**

Funds improvements for professional development opportunities for school counselors. Allows successful completion of dual credit courses as an alternative to compliance with end-of-course assessment requirements.

**Math STAAR testing in grades 3-8.**

Results of 2015 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) in mathematics for grades 3–8 will be excluded from the 2015 state accountability system.

**Benchmark testing (HB 1164-supported by Texas PTA). Effective September 1, 2015.**

Authorizes a writing assessment study and pilot program to develop an alternative method of assessing writing than current STAAR writing assessment. The alternative method will be piloted in several school districts and a recommendation will be made to legislators prior to the next legislative session.

**End Of Course (EOC) exams (SB 149-supported by Texas PTA). Effective immediately.**

Allows students who have passed the course(s) but failed the EOC(s) to receive their diplomas with the unanimous approval of an individual graduation committee composed of teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents. Committees can require other demonstrations of mastery of the material.

**Bills that Failed or were vetoed by governor:**

**Funding inequity (SB 496-was supported by Texas PTA).**

Calculation of average daily attendance for regular program students is different from the calculation of average daily attendance for students enrolled in a flexible school day program, who are better served by the scheduling flexibility the program allows. This difference in calculation, and the effect on school district funding under the Foundation School Program, restricts schools in their ability to offer a flexible schedule for students who wish to participate in internships, dual enrollment courses, or outside work.

**State testing (SB 313-was supported by Texas PTA).**

Develops a framework to guide the SBOE in narrowing the essential knowledge and skills of the foundation school curriculum and to ensure that the SBOE adopts instructional materials that do not consume the entire amount of the instructional materials allotment so that districts will have the ability to spend their allotments for purposes other than just the purchase of textbooks.

**Raising age of mandatory adult prosecution to 18 (HB 330 and HB 1205–were supported by Texas PTA).**

**Healthy advertising in schools for food products sold on school property that are not part of school meal program (SB 954 –was supported by Texas PTA).**

**Repeal of law pertaining to physical fitness assessments of students (HB 1227–was opposed by Texas PTA).**

**Creation of community schools open throughout the year to students, families, and community members before, during, and after school hours (HB 1891 and HB 1892–were supported by Texas PTA).**

**“Parent trigger” bill (SB 14–was supported by Texas PTA).**

Bill would have strengthened current law that allows parents of students enrolled at a campus with an unacceptable performance rating to submit a petition to the commissioner of education requesting that the commissioner order reconstitution, repurposing, alternative management, or closure of the campus. Current law does not allow this action for five years and gives school boards the authority to ask the commissioner to override the petition of the parents.