



*Serving the counties of District 2: Fannin, Delta, Hunt, Hopkins, Rains,  
Rockwall, Kaufman, Van Zandt, and part of Dallas County*

## **Education Candidate Forum Recap - Part III**

Over the last two weeks, we've covered answers I gave in a recent public education candidate forum where I stressed that as a state, we must move from an institution-centric system to a student/teacher-centric system and make it our goal to focus on the quality of education in the classroom.

The education of our children is one of the most important responsibilities we have as adults. In order to continue its leadership in this area, Texas must move its education system away from a focus on institutions and administration, and toward better quality education, recognizing that the student is the most important person involved in K-12 education, and the teacher is the most important employee.

Since the underlying principles to my answers are so important, I decided to add a third part to this series to include the six pillars of a student/teacher-focused education system:

### **Parity in Pay (PIP)**

For too long, teacher pay has languished below administrative pay. Classroom teacher pay scales should be on par with administrative personnel pay scales. Research proves what we all know instinctively – teacher quality differences explain the majority of variations in student achievement.<sup>1</sup>

More than economics, second languages, or family circumstances, an effective teacher positively impacts student achievement. Also, more than a superintendent, campus administrator, or support staff, an effective teacher positively impacts student achievement.

Pay scales are a local decision. However, many local districts' pay scales reward administrators with high salaries without similar recognition of the professional expertise of teachers. Parity in pay would require that the salary of an effective teacher be in line with the salaries of administrators on campus or central administrators in the district. We will not solve our education issues in this state until we recognize the classroom teachers as the professionals they are.

### **Required Supplies Allowance (RSA)**

According to a recent survey of 1,800 private and public school teachers, an average teacher spends around \$600 out of their own pockets each year for basic school supplies.<sup>2</sup>

With a state average annual expenditure of \$11,704 per student and an average student to teacher ratio of 15.2, there is the equivalent of \$177,900 going into each classroom. Teachers should not have to be paying out of their pockets for basic supplies. The appropriate allowance amount per classroom should be a local decision; that there should be an allowance, should not be up for debate.

### **Education Focused Mandates (EFM)**

The State Constitution requires a statewide funding system for a general diffusion of knowledge. The state funding system ensures adequate funding to do so. School districts should restrict their services to only those required by the constitution and by statute before they begin crying foul on "unfunded mandates."

However, over time, special interest groups have been able to statutorily institute mandates which have little to no effect on the safety or the quality of education in a classroom. All mandates should be strictly limited to those necessary for the safety or quality of education in the classroom.

1. <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Staffingstudents/Teacher-quality-and-student-achievement-At-a-glance/Teacher-quality-and-student-achievement-Research-review.html>

2. <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2017/08/02/teachers-spend-hundreds-of-dollars-a-year.html>





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### **Student Campus Choice (SCC)**

All students deserve the opportunity to receive the education that they and their parents feel meets their needs. No student should be required to stay in an environment in which they are failing just because of their zip code.

Regardless of the quality of the district, school, or teacher, there are some students who may perform better in a different setting. As an absolute minimum, they should have the opportunity to make that choice within the public school setting. Inter- and intra-district campus choice within the public school system should be available to all students through a system of statewide open enrollment with high demand campuses being filled by lottery.

### **Student / Teacher Rights and Responsibilities (STRR)**

A student/teacher focused education system will recognize the balance between rights and responsibilities of students and teachers. Students have a right to learn in a safe, disciplined environment. They also have a responsibility to act in a safe, disciplined manner. Teachers have a responsibility to teach, and they have the right to be able to do so in a safe, disciplined environment.

Teachers should have the right to maintain that environment by having the authority to temporarily remove disruptive students from their classroom without fear of reprisal from principals, administrators, or parents. Teachers and students both have the right to expect principals or administrators to permanently remove students who are habitually disruptive for the good of all students.

### **Restore FERPA**

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was gutted in 2012 and no longer protects our children and their teachers' data from almost unlimited data sharing. Under the new regulatory interpretation, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) and state departments of education may disclose personally identifiable student data to literally anyone in the world, so long as the disclosing agency uses the correct language to justify its action.

Privacy and the protection of student and teachers' data is a top priority for our team. I am very uncomfortable with the excessive, overreaching use of Texas children's private data. I am for restoring FERPA and protecting Texas student and their teachers' private data.

I hope these emails have given you a helpful overview of my positions on education related issues. Texas must focus more on teachers, students, and quality education. If you have any further education related questions, please feel free to reach out to my staff at (512) 463-0102.