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EDA / IFA

To improve efficiency, combine EDA and IFA into a single facilities funding program. To improve effectiveness, establish a yield increase over time to improve the security of campuses and address the specific needs of fast growth school districts.

The guaranteed yields for these programs have not been updated since 2000. When these programs began, over 91 percent of the students enrolled in public schools were eligible for state support. Over the last sixteen years that percentage has diminished to 43 percent of students eligible for state assistance. If the yield were increased to provide state funding to 88 percent of the students (\$78.64/ADA), the average I&S tax rate reduction for districts receiving state funding would be significant, approximately \$0.07 per \$100.

Recommendation

Begin phase-in of the combined EDA and IFA yield increase to at least the 88th percentile. By increasing the yields from \$35/ADA to \$45.50/ADA, the tax rate reduction statewide for school districts would be approximately \$0.02. The state should also use state savings due to local value growth each year to increase the program yields. During the 2015-16 school year the state is anticipated to spend approximately \$100 million less on the EDA and IFA programs due to this local value growth.

NIFA

Adjust the current NIFA program to a .1 weight in the School Foundation Program or increase the annual appropriation to \$125 million.

NIFA's funding levels have remained stagnant over the previous two sessions despite the growth in students and any facilities. A large number of districts took advantage of the program and the funding level significantly harmed their ability to reduce their communities tax burden.

Recommendation

Produce an additional weight to .1 for students entering a new campus will better accomplish the goal of ensuring those children have properly equipped facilities. Alternatively, an increased appropriation would also assist in opening new campuses.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Recommendation

Support Charter School legislation that strengthens notification requirements for new campus openings and student leaver reporting.

Currently, charter schools have an outdated and inefficient mode of communicating their establishment of campuses. The delay of notification restricts a school district's analysis of how this growth will impact facility planning. Furthermore, TEA currently has a data tool which shows what charter schools a student attends upon departure from their traditional independent school district.

A charter school should notify any districts within a specified radius upon the purchase of property or entering a contract for lease of a property with the intent to establish a campus. Additionally, municipalities and other applicable entities which may receive an earlier notification shall notify local school districts.

ELECTIONS

Recommendation

Oppose any changes to elections and transparency statutes that do not apply to all levels of government (state, county, local).

Not only does consideration need to be given to fast-growth school districts that need to exceed the \$0.50 debt cap due to rapid enrollment growth and construction needs, but more emphasis on total tax rate management needs to be considered by the Legislature.

Fast growth communities need new flexible tax rate management tools that allow locally-elected school boards and voters to prudently and effectively manage the school district's total tax rate. Flexibility and tax rate management is key to successfully planning and implementing school district facility plans and operational needs as they grow.



FASTGROWTH
SCHOOL COALITION

The Fast Growth School Coalition is a collective voice that educates and advocates for investment in the state's fastest growing school districts to deliver the high-quality education Texas students and taxpayers deserve.

FastGrowthTexas.org