

Austin ISD Legislative Update

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AUSTIN
Independent School District

2024-25

Budget Bills - HB 1 & SB 1

- **\$5.25 billion total in new money for public schools**

- \$400 million for increased school safety allotment (contingent on passage of legislation)
- \$4.85 billion for increased public school funding (contingent on passage of legislation)

- **\$6.5 billion in property tax relief**

- \$3 billion to maintain existing tax relief passed last session
- \$3.5 billion for *NEW* property tax relief (*SB1 specifies raising homestead exemption by \$40,000 if separate legislation passes*)

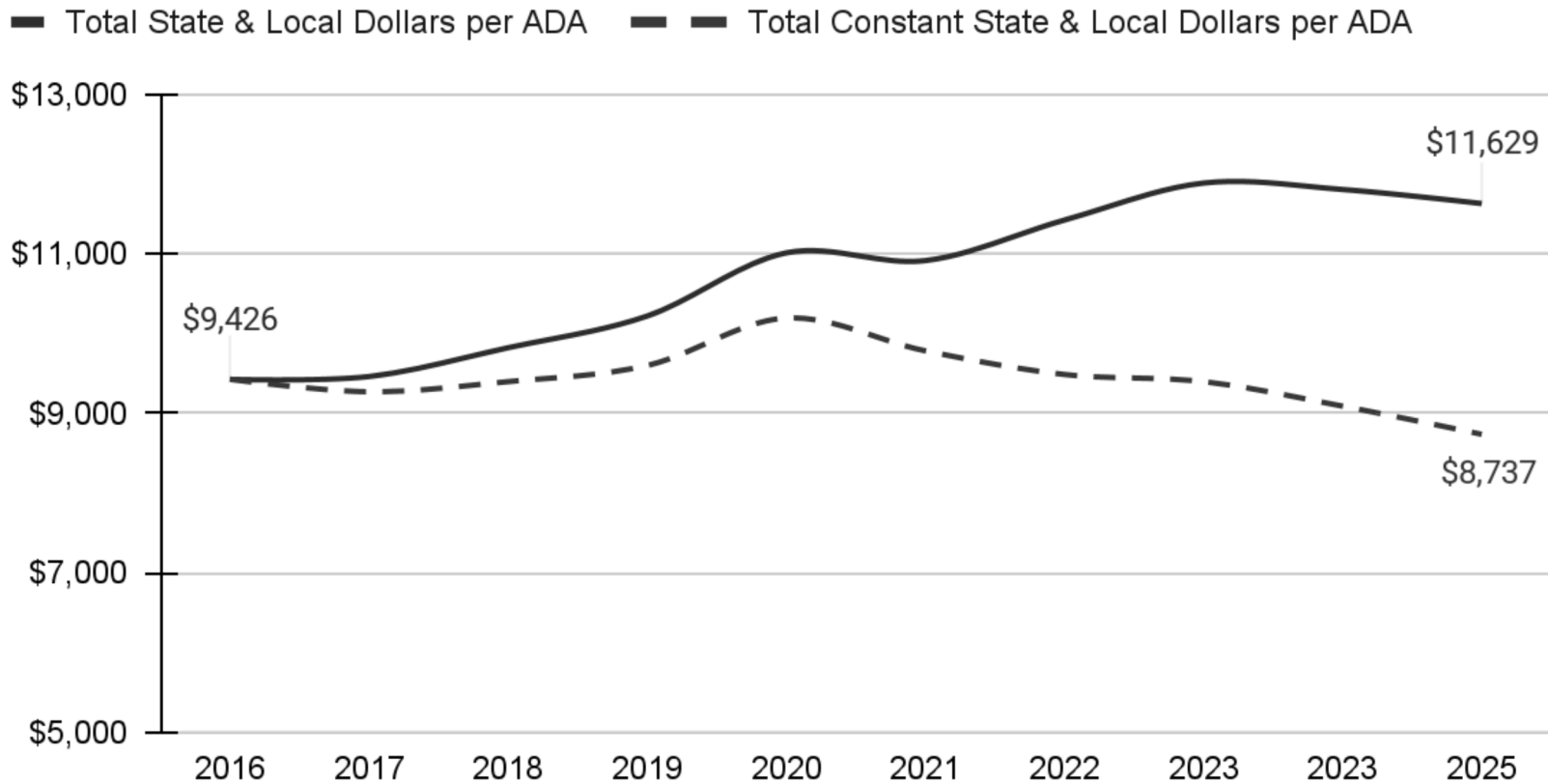
- **\$1 billion for vouchers**

- **Other funding for items already required by law**

School Funding

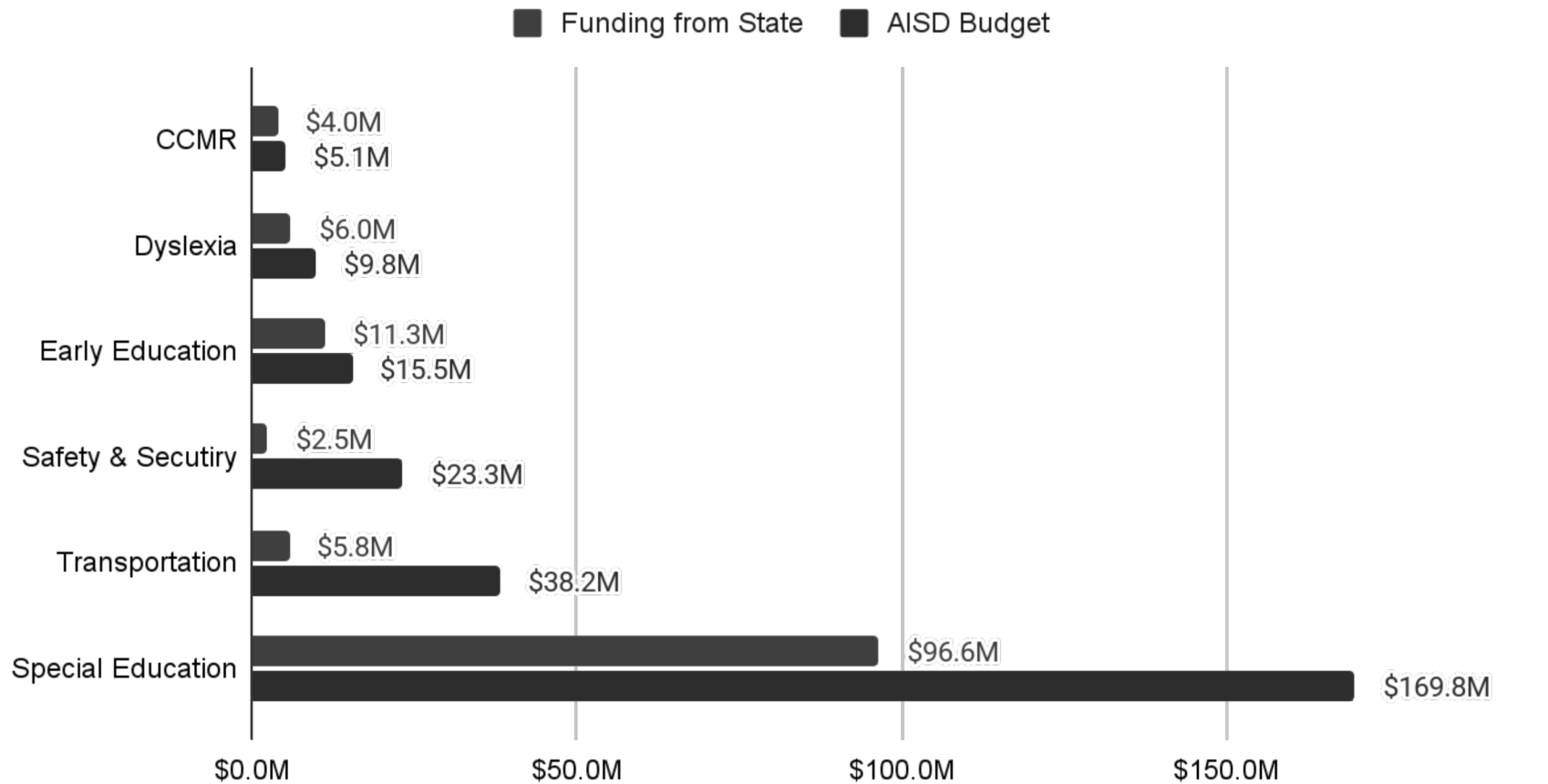
- Current basic allotment of \$6,160 hasn't been raised since 2019 despite over 20% inflation
- The buying power of the basic allotment has decreased by \$1,340 since 2020. *See Fund Schools First, www.fundschoolsfirst.org*
- Senate and House bills differ on how to spend the \$4.85 billion

Inflation Adjusted ADA



Source: LBB, fiscal 2024

Underfunded Programs



SB 26 (Creighton)

- Provides about \$4.3 billion - no increase to basic allotment
- Creates a new teacher retention allotment that must be used to increase salary of classroom teachers as follows:
 - School districts with 5,000 students or less
 - At least three but less than five years of experience: \$5,000
 - Five or more years of experience: \$10,000
 - School districts with more than 5,000 students
 - At least three but less than five years of experience: \$2,500
 - Five or more years of experience: \$5,500
- Expands Teacher Incentive Allotment boosting pay to instructors based on students' academic growth; principals and APs also eligible
- Free pre-K for children of teachers



HB 2 (Buckley)

- \$3.2 billion to increase BA by \$220 from \$6,160 to \$6,380
- \$1.8 billion to increase special education funding; transitions to funding based on the intensity of services; provides \$1,000 for each special education evaluation; increases outcomes bonuses related to CCMR for special education
- Spends \$1.1 billion to increase small and mid-sized allotment weights
- Increases the compensatory education allotment by \$32 per student
- Creates a fine arts allotment of \$51 per student or \$102 per educationally disadvantaged student, not to exceed \$15 million in a school year
- Expands eligibility for pre-K to special education students and funds pre-K programs administered by the TWC and Texas A&M University System

SB 2 - Education Savings Accounts

- \$1 billion set aside in budget to begin in 2026
- Universal voucher (Education Savings Accounts)
- If more applications than positions available, priority for 80% of positions available for “low income household” and children with disabilities
- “Low income household” defined as household with total annual income that is at or below 500% of the federal poverty level = \$160,750 for a family of 4
- Voucher amount \$10,000 and \$11,500 for student with disability; \$2,000 for home-schoolers, and \$2,500 for homeschoolers with special needs
- Passed Senate Feb. 5; referred to House Public Education on Feb. 25

HB 3 (Buckley) – Education Savings Accounts

- Universal open to students in public school, private school or homeschool
- Voucher is based on 85% of the estimated statewide average state and local funding per student in average daily attendance
- Amount for student with a disability would be equal to what their home district would have received, up to \$30,000
- Homeschool students would receive up to \$2,000
- If more applications than seats available, lottery prioritizing students in the following order:
 - Student with a disability and a household income below 500% of federal poverty guidelines
 - Students with a household income below 200% of federal poverty guidelines
 - Students with a household income between 200% and 500% of the poverty guidelines
 - Students with a household income above 500% of federal poverty guidelines

Property Tax Relief – SJR 2 and SB 4

- Increases the current homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000 and to \$150,000 for disabled individuals and those 65 or older
- Provides that the state will hold school districts harmless for the revenue lost due to the loss of property tax revenue
- Requires voters to approve a constitutional amendment, SJR 2, if passed by two-thirds of the members in both the House and Senate.
- The Senate passed SJR 2 with a vote of 30-0
- Pending committee referral in the House

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – SB 12 (Creighton)

- Would make it illegal for Texas school districts to factor in diversity, equity and inclusion in hiring and employment decisions
- Would prevent schools from developing policies, programs and training that reference race, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation
- Would require districts to create policies for disciplining employees who engage in or assign DEI-related tasks to others
- Would ban classroom instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation
- Amends transfer provisions and sets up lottery order of types of students prioritized if more applications received than the number of available seats
- Amends grievance policies



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – SB 1565 (Creighton)

- Prohibits assignment of DEI duties to any person
- Prohibits a district employee, contractor or volunteer from engaging in DEI duties
- Requires adoption of policy and procedure for appropriate discipline, including termination, of an employees or contractor who engages in or assigns to another DEI duties
- Neither bill limits or prohibits schools “from acknowledging or teaching the significance of state and federal holidays or commemorative months” or teaching how those holidays or months fit into Texas and U.S. history





Other Bills of Interest

- **SB 260 (Huffman)** - increases allotment to \$20/student and \$30K/campus
- **HB 6 (Leach)** – removes from mandatory DAEP placement, marijuana and e-cigarette possession, use, sale or delivery; allows expelled students to be placed in virtual or in person DAEP and provides ADA for such students
- **SB 10 (King)** - display of the Ten Commandments in classrooms
- **SB 11 (Middleton)** - period of prayer and reading of the Bible or other religious text in public schools
- **HB 183 (Patterson)** - regulation and review of certain library materials included in public school libraries

Bills Affecting Political Subdivisions - Lobbying

- SB 19 –Middleton, et al - Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities *[Heard in State Affairs on Feb. 27]*
- SB 239 Middleton , et al - Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities
- SB 1420 Nichols - Relating to the use by a county, municipality, or school district of public money for lobbying activities
- HB 571 Cain - Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities



Bills Affecting Political Subdivisions - Lobbying

- HB 671 Shaheen - Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities
- HB 755 Spiller - Relating to certain requirements applicable to certain public entities that engage in lobbying
- HB 1189 Troxclair - Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities
- HB 1294 Patterson - Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities





How to Be Involved

To receive weekly legislative summaries regarding issues affecting Austin ISD, please email Edna Butts at edna.butts@austinisd.org

Contact Your Legislator

Testify at a Legislative Committee

Join/Follow an Organization:

- Friends of Texas Public Schools
- Raise Your Hand Texas
- Texas Parent PAC
- Texas PTA
- Texas School Coalition

Questions?



STRONG Schools
STRONGER Austin

