



# Advocacy Update

Arlington Council of PTAs

August 2017



- Your PTA Membership has a national, state, and local impact!
- Texas PTA Hosts Rally Day during legislative session for hundreds of PTA members and leaders
- At least 400 bills impacting Texas children are tracked each legislative session
- Up-to-the minute legislative updates and action alerts sent to keep members informed and involved: sign up for "Under the Dome" alerts at <http://bit.ly/ACOPTA>
- We have a daily voice at the Capitol through a Texas PTA lobbyist
- Texas PTA furthers an aggressive legislative agenda; during the last session, TXPTA lobbied in support of:
  - **David's Law** – PASSED: gives school districts the tools to investigate off-campus cyber-bullying threats
  - **Powdered Alcohol** - Pursued banning the sale to minors of powdered alcohol, or Palcohol, a powder that can be mixed with liquids — similar to the way Kool-Aid is mixed with water — to create an alcoholic beverage that can have alcohol levels equivalent to a shot of vodka.
  - **Testing Accountability Reform** - Advocated for reduced emphasis on state-mandated testing, focusing on grades 3-8, and monitor changes to STAAR for high school students, and limits on benchmark testing for all tested grades. Pursued a new accountability system that is valid, reliable and balanced, focuses less on state assessment, and recognizes other attributes of a strong school program, including arts instruction and physical activity.
- TXPTA is still lobbying in favor of the following items during the special session:
  - We support HB 21 (Rep. Dan Huberty): HB 21 has been filed to begin the process of comprehensive finance reform. The bill:
    - Increases funding to help schools with existing debt.
    - Increases the bilingual allotment.
    - Creates a dyslexia allotment.
    - Extends funding for Career and Technical Education to 8th-grade programs.
    - Sets the basic allotment for each student at \$5,140 so that it cannot be reduced without legislative action.
  - We support HB 23 (Huberty), as it creates a grant program to allow public school districts and campuses including charter schools to operate an independent program that expands services for autistic students aged 3 - 9.
    - Qualifying districts and campuses must provide innovative instruction and academic support to qualifying students.
    - The Texas Senate and the Governor want to create a private school voucher program for students with special needs. Texas PTA opposes those programs because they do not protect special education students' rights to federal and state protections and because the programs are not accountable to the state.
- You can contact your state at local elected officials to let them know you support these bills. To find out who represents you, visit: <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>
- For more information, contact Jeannie Deakyne, Arlington Council of PTAs Chair, Legislative and Civic Concerns, at [jpdeakyne@hotmail.com](mailto:jpdeakyne@hotmail.com)