The *Legislative Report* is a publication of the Texas Association of School Boards

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**TEA installs new leadership over South San Antonio ISD**

The Texas Education Agency this week announced the appointment of a seven-member board of managers and a new superintendent to lead and operate South San Antonio ISD. The Agency said the appointment came, "after nearly two decades of elected trustee and administrative dysfunction resulting in diminished student academic outcomes, poor financial controls, public distrust and multiple TEA investigations." TEA noted that the decision follows an agreed upon, year-long evaluation period in which the district's elected board failed to rectify documented governance deficiencies and shortcomings. Read more.

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**Buckley files school finance bill**

House Public Education Committee Chair Brad Buckley (R-Salado) this week filed his proposed school finance bill, House Bill 2. A few of the bill's provisions include:

- Basic allotment (BA) increase to $6,380 from $6,160 per student ($3.2 billion)
- 40% (up from 30%) of any BA increase must be used for staff salary increases
- Increases to the small and midsized allotments ($1.1 billion)
- Intensity-based special education funding and an additional $615 million per year in the special education allotment
- Creation of a $1,000-per-initial-evaluation allotment
- Requirement to hire certified teachers for foundation curriculum courses
- Prohibition against schools using districts of innovation law to exempt themselves from requirements regarding hiring certified teachers and notifying parents about classes taught by uncertified teachers

The Texas Association of School Business Officials posted this section-by-section analysis of the bill.

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**Buckley files education savings account bill**

Chair Buckley also filed his education savings account (ESA) voucher bill, House Bill 3, this week. The bill would allow participants to draw down funding equal to 85% of the average per-pupil state and local funding Texas students receive or the amount a student with a disability would otherwise be entitled to at their local district (not to exceed $30,000). Homeschooled children would be entitled to $2,000. The program, which would be administered by the Texas Comptroller's Office and certified educational assistance organizations, prioritizes children according to the following schedule if more individuals apply than there is funding:

- children with a disability and whose household income is below 500% of federal poverty guidelines;
- children whose household income is below 200% of poverty guidelines;
- children whose household income is between 200% and 500% of poverty guidelines;
- children whose household income is above 500% of poverty guidelines.

Read a summary of HB 3.

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**Senate Ed passes teacher pay bill**

The Senate Education K16 Committee this week considered and passed SB 26 (Creighton), which provides for a permanent teacher retention allotment, expansion of the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA), free pre-k for children of classroom teachers, and statewide liability insurance for teachers.

Chair Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) laid out a committee substitute for the bill which amends language emphasizing merit based pay for the TIA, which was necessary to conform with the governor's emergency item on teacher pay. Additional changes in the committee substitute will ensure that teacher retention pay is directed to experienced teachers.

Creighton and members of the committee discussed the merits of the bill, including challenges faced by school districts in implementing the TIA for small and rural schools and the removal of language in statute which requires school districts to direct 30% of any increase in the basic

allotment on pay for teachers, district employees, librarians, and counselors.

School board members, superintendents, teachers, teacher and counseling organizations, and groups representing parents and the business community largely testified in support of the bill. Some asked that the committee include compensation for all school district employees, but many agreed that the current crisis with teacher retention, attrition, and recruitment must be prioritized.

All eleven committee members voted to pass the bill to the full Senate.

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**Upcoming legislative committee hearings**

**House Public Education** will meet at 10 a.m. on Feb. 25 to hear invited testimony from state agencies concerning updates on the state of public education and the Tri Agency Workforce Initiative between TEA, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission. Read the posting.

The **House Appropriations Subcommittee on Article III (Education)** will meet at 10 a.m. on Feb. 24 to hear invited and public testimony on budget recommendations for several state education agencies, including TEA. Read the posting.

**House Ways & Means** will meet at 11 a.m. on Feb. 25 for an organizational hearing and invited testimony from the Texas Comptroller and the Legislative Budget Board. Read the posting.

Watch any House livestream.

**Senate Health and Human Services** will meet at 8 a.m. on Feb. 26 to hold an organizational meeting and to consider the following bills:

SB 25 (Kolkhorst) that creates a Texas Nutrition Advisory Committee to develop nutritional guidelines for Texans to promote healthy living. The bill also prohibits schools from restricting student participation in recess or physical education activity as a penalty for the student ’s academic performance or behavior.

SB 314 (Hughes) prohibits certain food additives from being included in free or reduced-price school meals, such as brominated vegetable oil, red dye 3, and potassium bromate.

View the posting.

Watch the livestream.