



April 13, 2015

“Democracy is the only system that persists in asking the powers that be whether they are the powers that ought to be.” – Sydney J. Harris

Dear CFISD community,

The 84th Texas Legislature is in full swing, and I, along with other district leaders, have been making frequent trips to the State Capitol to ensure that Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has the support of its elected officials.

I want to thank the CFISD Community Leadership Committee (CLC), which has met regularly since August and developed a list of 84th Legislative Session Priorities that we are urging our representatives to pursue for the benefit of public education. The brief summary of these priorities, which are [listed in detail on the district website](#), asks our state for:

- an equitable school finance system;
- the support of school choice available within the current system;
- support of existing transparency laws, including clear and concise ballot language; and
- a reduction in the overreliance on state assessments.

School vouchers appears to be a hot topic once again, as the Senate education committee recently conducted hearings on four voucher-related bills.

One of them, **SB4**, will be headed to the floor of the Senate very soon. Misleadingly referred to as a “taxpayer savings grant,” this voucher bill would hurt public schools that rely on per-pupil allotments for fixed expenses. [This helpful policy brief by Raise Your Hand Texas](#) (RYHT) provides a summary of the issues and concerns surrounding vouchers. Please express your opinion to your senators!

A high-quality pre-kindergarten bill, **HB 4**, passed through the House on April 8 and is headed to the House Public Education Committee. I encourage you to [watch this pre-k video made by RYHT](#) and contact your senators about this bill as well.

Additionally, we are still hopeful for a more equitable state funding system. **HB1** passed the House and **HB1759**, sponsored by Jimmie Don Aycock, would increase the basic allotment to benefit all districts. It will be heard in the House Education committee **tomorrow (April 14)**, so please express your support to your legislators.

I encourage you to utilize some of the helpful resources available on our [CLC webpage](#), including a [Communication Tips sheet](#) that gives an easy-to-read overview of the Texas Legislature Online, a diagram of the all-in-one TexLege app and tips for sharing with your legislators. Our [legislative contacts sheet](#) provides all the contact information for every official who represents a piece of CFISD, and you can easily find out who represents you by [entering your address on this site](#).

I will continue to send out and post updates to my blog, so stay tuned as we collectively seek a brighter future for public schools in Texas and CFISD.

Sincerely,

Mark Henry, Ed.D.
CFISD Superintendent