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ATPE Releases Top Priorities for 87th Texas Legislative Session

State's largest educator association is urging lawmakers to prioritize public education funding and waive standardized testing requirements in light of pandemic

AUSTIN, Texas—[The Association of Texas Professional Educators \(ATPE\)](#)—the largest educator association in Texas—has released its advocacy priorities for the upcoming legislative session, which convenes Jan. 12, 2021.

“[ATPE's priorities for the 87th Legislature](#) are drawn from the front-line experiences of our members in classrooms across Texas,” said ATPE Executive Director **Shannon Holmes**, Ed.D. “While Texas educators are teaching Texas students, we’re at the Capitol fighting to ensure they have the resources and tools they need to accomplish this critical task. We’re delivering their top concerns directly to lawmakers.”

ATPE's Priorities for the 87th Legislature:

- ATPE supports prioritizing public education funding to ensure school districts have the necessary resources to address the many ongoing challenges of COVID-19, preserve funding gains and equity achieved through last session's House Bill 3 (HB 3), and continue efforts to raise the prestige of education profession through meaningful compensation.
- ATPE supports measures to alleviate the burden of standardized testing and accountability requirements in order to allocate time and resources to pressing critical needs brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as prevent high-stakes decisions from being based on flawed or unreliable data and reduce the pressure testing places on students, educators, and parents.
- ATPE supports initiatives to ensure all Texas students have access to optimal public school learning environments that are safe, supplied with current technology, and adaptable to changing needs, while preventing the diversion of the state's limited resources to unregulated private, home, or for-profit virtual schools.
- ATPE supports efforts to provide greater resources for the mental health and social and emotional needs of public school students and staff.
- ATPE supports measures to reduce staff turnover by addressing public school employee concerns about working conditions, including health and safety issues, increased workloads, and burdensome reporting requirements exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ATPE supports laws and policies that protect the rights of educators to become more involved in advocacy and elections at all levels of government and encourage them to set an example of engaged citizenship and civility for future generations of Texans.

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“Educators across Texas know that even when the short-term effects of COVID-19 have subsided, the lasting effects of the pandemic on student learning and mental health will continue for years to come,” added Holmes. “As Texans, we can’t ignore that, and we’ll do everything in our power to make sure public education is a top priority in a tight state budget.”

ATPE’s priorities were defined by the [2020-21 ATPE Legislative Program](#), which represents ATPE’s official positions on issues governed and influenced by the Legislature, state boards and agencies, and the federal government. The ATPE Legislative Program is shaped by ATPE’s membership and approved each year by the ATPE House of Delegates at the annual ATPE Summit.

On Feb. 21, 2021, ATPE will host “ATPE at the Virtual Capitol,” a legislative symposium and advocacy training event exclusively for its approximately 100,000 members. Educators from across Texas will learn about issues facing the upcoming Texas Legislature, hear from ATPE’s experts, and gain tips for advocating for their profession and ATPE’s priorities during this non-traditional legislative session.

About the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)

Founded in 1980, ATPE is the leading educators’ association in Texas with approximately 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, and future, retired, and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for Texas’ five million public school students. | atpe.org