

# **Understanding Philanthropy's Role in Education Advocacy**

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# Overview

- What happened to public education in 2011 and why did it happen?
- NOW Is the Moment for Philanthropy to Step Up
- How Can Foundations Respond?
- Who Are the Education Players?
- School Finance (It's a Huge Deal – AGAIN)

**There is NO WRONG WAY  
to make advocacy grants.**

**There is only YOUR WAY  
to make advocacy grants.**

# State Budget:

## What happened?

- Historic Budget Cuts (\$4 billion from Foundation School Program, \$1.3 billion from Discretionary Grants)
- Ongoing Crisis in Tax System Created by Previous Policy Changes
- Not an Aberration – Reality for the Foreseeable Future
- Expectation that Someone Else (Hold Up Mirror) Will Pick Up the Difference

# What does that mean for Texas school districts?

- Austin ISD loses \$95.5 million in 2012/2013
- Dallas ISD loses \$161.3 million in 2012/2013
- El Paso ISD loses \$39.5 million in 2012/2013
- Fort Worth ISD loses \$39.1 million in 2012/2013
- Houston ISD loses \$205.7 million in 2012/2013
- San Antonio ISD loses \$23.6 million in 2012/2013
- Waco ISD loses \$8.9 million in 2012/2013

Source: Texas Tribune

# What is the impact?

- Cuts to school districts will mean:
  - Teacher layoffs
  - School closures
  - Elimination of dropout prevention and CIS
  - Elimination of full-day pre-kindergarten
  - Fewer electives and BIGGER classes
- Local nonprofits will have more competition for less money from private sources.
- In response to budget cuts and shrinking revenue, local officials are more likely to raise taxes.

# How is that possible?

**\$27 billion shortfall**

**Great Recession**

**Structural Deficit of ~\$10 billion**

**No New Taxes Pledges**

**+ Refusal to Utilize Rainy Day Fund (2012/2013)**

**Really Awful Cuts to Public Education**

# **Foundations MUST Fund Advocacy**

## **– Now More than EVER Before**

- Foundations are losing flexibility to serve as incubators of innovation as basic needs take greater precedence over other grants.
- Foundations must maximize and justify every grant dollar now more than ever.
- Unless targeted action is taken, current strains on foundation resources will grow.
- Advocacy is MUCH more than lobbying.
- **Advocacy is a selfish act. (And that's OK.)**

# The Recipe for Advocacy Success

1. **Focus:** The Hardest and Most Important Step
2. **Research:** Know the Facts, Articulate them Well
3. **Unusual Suspects:** Messengers Matter
4. **Respect the Process:** Maximize Chance to Influence Policy by Understanding Politics
5. **Institutionalize:** Change Takes Time and Incremental Steps Forward are OK
6. **Rinse and Repeat**

# Who are the Education Players?

- **Advocates/Wonks/Self-Anointed Gadflies:** Center for Public Policy Priorities, Texas Public Policy Foundation, Empower Texans, Texas Institute for Education Reform, Texas Association for Business, Texas Public Education Reform Foundation
- **Education-Based Institutions:** Texas Association of School Boards, Texas Association of School Administrators, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association, Texas Charter Schools Association, Texas High School Project
- **Teachers' Associations:** Texas State Teachers Association, Texas Classroom Teachers' Association, Texas Chapter – American Federation of Teachers, Association of Texas Professional Educators
- **Parent and Community-Based Groups:** United Ways of Texas, Texas PTA, Friends of Texas Public Schools, Raise Your Hand Texas, Save Texas Schools, Stand for Children

# Groundhog School Finance Day

Court Decision	Legislative Response
San Antonio ISD v Rodriguez (1973)	House Bill 1126 (1975)
	House Bill 72 (1984)
Edgewood I (1989)	Senate Bill 1 (1990)
Edgewood II (1991)	Senate Bill 351 (1991)
Edgewood III (1992)	Proposition 1 FAILED (1993)
	Senate Bill 7 (1993)
Edgewood IV (1995)	System Found Constitutional
West Orange-Cove CISD v Alanis	None
West Orange-Cove CISD v Neeley	House Bill 1 (2006)

# What did he just say?

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Carrier Pigeon: Left at the Oak Tree