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**ARE TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS FINANCIALLY TRANSPARENT?**

Transparency has become a popular topic at all levels of government, especially as it relates to school districts. Texas school districts are arguably the most transparent of all local entities, however, some critics accuse districts of withholding information or misleading their local voters.

**This criticism is far from the truth.** Below is a list of financial reporting requirements for every school district in Texas.

Many districts also go beyond these requirements voluntarily, creating even more transparency on behalf of their local communities. The Texas Comptroller has praised Texas school districts for their voluntary transparency efforts through the Texas Comptroller Leadership Circle which seeks to “recognize local governments across Texas that are striving to meet a high standard for financial transparency online.”

The Fast Growth School Coalition welcomes a continued conversation about financial transparency. We also support the reduction of unnecessary reporting requirements as well as the revision of existing requirements. Our ultimate goal is meaningful transparency on behalf of our students and communities.

**UPDATE:** Meaningful transparency took a major step forward in 2015 with the passage of HB 1378 by Flynn. The new law requires extensive annual reporting by school districts regarding their total outstanding debt (principal and interest), details on each debt obligation, and the district’s current credit rating. The information must be available at all times on the district’s website or through a link on the Comptroller’s website.

**Reporting Requirements for Texas Public School Districts Related to Financial Transparency**

- *Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (TEC §§ 39.081-.083, .102; TAC Title 19 Part 2, Chapter 109 Subchapter AA)*
- *Notice of Maintenance and Operations Tax Rates (TTC, § 26.05(b))*
- *Reporting of Tax Rates (TTC, § 26.16)*
- *Annual Financial Management Report, Notice, and Hearing (TEC, § 39.083, TAC Title 19, Part 2, Chapter 109, Subchapter AA, § 109.1005)*
- *Hearing Regarding Use of High School Allotment Funds (TEC § 42.160, TAC Title 19, Part 2, Chapter 61, Subchapter II, § 61.1092, .1099)*
- *Notice of Proposed Budget and Tax Rate (TEC, §§ 44.002, .004)*
- *Budget Summary Report (TEC, § 44.0041)*
- *Filing of Adopted Budget (TEC, § 44.005)*
- *Posting of Adopted Budget (TEC, § 39.084)*

## Financial Transparency *(continued)*

- *Expenditure and Revenue Report (TEC, § 44.007)*
- *Report of Instructional Expenditures Ratio and Instructional Employees Ratio (TEC, § 44.0071)*
- *Annual Audit Report (TEC, § 44.008(d))*
- *Audit of Purchasing Contracts (TEC, § 44.031(c))*
- *Notices Required for Purchase Valued at \$50,000 or More (TEC, § 44.031(a), (g))*
- *Notices Required for Awarding Competitive Bidding Contracts for Purchase (TEC, § 44.031, LGC, §§ 271.025, .026)*
- *Report of Management Fees under Purchasing Contracts (TEC, § 44.0331)*
- *Construction Contract for Facilities – Competitive Bidding (TGC, §§ 2269.101–.105)*
- *Construction Contract for Facilities – Construction Manager-At-Risk (TGC, §§ 2269.251, .253, .255)*
- *Construction Contract for Facilities – Competitive Sealed Proposals (TGC, §§ 2269.151, .153–.155)*
- *Construction Contract for Facilities – Design-Build Method (TGC, §§ 2269.306–.308)*
- *Posting of Proposals, Public Comment, Public Access to Procurement Records (TGC, § 2267.066)*
- *Awarding Job Order Contracts (TGC, §§ 2269.403, .405)*
- *Notice of an Election (TEC, §§ 4.003–.004, .007, .008)*
- *Notice of Boundary Change to Voter Registrar (TEC, § 42.0615)*
- *Notice of Information Redacted in Response to Open Records Request (TGC, § 552.024)*
- *Notice of Request for an Attorney General Opinion Regarding Public Information Request (TGC, § 552.301)*
- *Public Information Involving Official Business of Governmental Bodies (TGC, §§ 552.002(2-a), 2252.907)*
- *Written Electronic Communication Between Trustees (TGC, § 551.006)*
- *Falsification of Records (TEC, § 42.255)*
- *Failure to Provide Notice of Proposed Budget and Tax Rate Meeting (TEC, § 44.004(e))*
- *Failure to Comply with Budget Requirements (TEC, § 44.052(b)–(c))*
- *Failure to Make a Treasurer’s Report (TEC, § 44.053)*