



The Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce has identified public education and higher education as two of the top concerns for the 82nd Legislative Session.

Corpus Christi Independent School District

- **Protect the Foundation School Program.** Funding reductions as we increase expectations on both students and teachers are detrimental. Reducing the number of teachers in the District would be a last resort. For perspective, however, a \$10 billion reduction to public education in Texas could result in as much as a \$36 million reduction locally – an amount equivalent to the average salary of 800 Corpus Christi ISD teachers.
- **Efficient Operations.** Remove provisions that substantially restrict school districts' ability to operate efficiently. Provisions such as class size requirements at the elementary schools, school calendar restrictions, and ineffective special education due process requirements should be reexamined to ensure local ability to devote resources to needs.
- **Accountability.** Ensure that the state continues to make positive use of a growth measure and fully implements the accepted definition of "drop out" in the accountability system. If the purpose of the accountability system is to promote continuous improvement and effectiveness, then a growth measure must be included to fairly gauge performance and to encourage continual efforts to teach all students. Definitions impacting completion rates and graduation rates should recognize circumstances beyond district control.

Higher Education

- **Success-based Funding.** Proposals call for an undefined percentage of higher education's base operational funding to be awarded according to outcomes linked to state goals and a complex set of calculations. While Del Mar and A&M-Corpus Christi fully support accountability for meeting state goals, both institutions believe incentive funding should be awarded separately from base operational funding.
- **Student Financial Aid.** Cuts to the TEXAS, TEOG, B-on-Time, Top 10 Percent grants and State Work-Study would eliminate student financial aid for 900 students and \$1.3 million at Del Mar College and 500 students and \$3.6 million at TAMU-CC.

Del Mar College

- Del Mar College enrolls more than **12,000 credit students** per semester and graduation rates have increased nearly 20% in the past five years. Del Mar College is among the top 3% of community colleges in the nation granting associate degrees to Hispanic students.
- **Enrollment Growth Funding.** Del Mar College has increased enrollment to more than 12,000 credit students, a 10% increase from the last legislative session. Without the approximate \$2.4 million in state funding to serve this growth, the College will have to raise tuition or taxes or curtail educational opportunities.
- **Faculty Recruitment.** House Bill 1 cuts 85%+ from community college insurance coverage, roughly \$4 million in funding. This drastic cut in community college funding threatens the College's ability to attract and retain quality faculty in critical career fields such as nursing and aviation maintenance.

continued



Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

- **Maintain Base Funding.** Texas A&M University's highest priority is to maintain base funding by minimizing disproportionate cuts to two items: institutional enhancement and the engineering special item.
 - **Institutional Enhancement funding** is the successor to the South Texas Border Initiative and is critical to maintaining Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's momentum in programs, enrollment growth and research established over the past 20 years. It is base funding and should be treated as such. Cuts to it should be in line with cuts to formula funding (4 to 7 percent), rather than cuts to special items (25+ percent).
 - **The Engineering Special Item** is providing funding for a new engineering program at the University. The community raised \$3 million to match it during the last biennium. The program was projected to start with 25 students and now, in its second year, already has 112. Large cuts will be devastating to this program, which is of high importance to the community.
- The University appreciates the investment the state has made, and it has consistently delivered a robust return on the state's investment. Since adding freshmen and sophomores in 1994, enrollment has more than doubled to 10,032. At the same time, pass rates on licensing exams for nursing and teacher certification are exemplary and graduation rates are the highest in Texas among all Hispanic Serving Institutions. Externally funded research has grown from \$2.5 million to more than \$12 million. The direct benefit of A&M-Corpus Christi to the state is \$166 million annually.

**"When you shut off higher education,
you shut off the economy."**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE TODD HUNTER
Chair of the House Calendars Committee
during Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce Day at
the Texas Legislature, March 1, 2011

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