

# It's A Wrap...

## What a Session...

- ❖ The largest shortfall in Texas history
- ❖ One of the largest House Freshmen classes in history, many of whom came with an agenda to cut, cut, cut
- ❖ A governor considering a run for president
- ❖ A Lt. Governor considering a run for U.S. Senate or governor
- ❖ A speaker under fire from the far right
- ❖ A mandate for no new taxes and no increases in taxes



# Class Size

- ✓ 22-1 maintained in K-4
- ✓ Parental notification requirement maintained
- ✓ ISDs will now be allowed to use reduction in state funding for the next biennium as a qualifying reason for a waiver of class size limits.



# Other Priorities...

- ❖ **BULLYING-** The bullying law is strengthened. HB 1942, by Diane Patrick
  - ✓ Established a definition of bullying and includes cyberbullying
  - ✓ Requires boards of trustees to adopt policy/necessary procedures to address bullying /harassment.
  - ✓ Students engaging in cyberbullying will be disciplined if it takes place on school property, at school-sponsored or school-related event, or vehicle operated by ISD.
  - ✓ Board of trustees of ISD may transfer victims **or student who engaged in bullying** to another classroom or campus, with special transfer requirements for students who receive special education services.
  - ✓ Requires SBOE to adopt (within the health curriculum) essential knowledge and skills that include practices to effectively address bullying/harassment of students.



# Healthy Lifestyles

As a member of the Partnership for a Healthy Texas, Texas PTA worked to protect existing statutes related to obesity in children and youth

- ✓ School Health Advisory Committees were maintained; 1 member can be a domestic violence professional
- ✓ Non-profits can partner with schools to receive agriculture ed grants
- Fitnessgram will now only be assessed in grades 3-12 in PE classes
- High School PE credit, lost last session, was not re-instated
- Statewide Smoke-free Workplaces law was stricken as it neared passage, although it would have saved the state \$30 million health care cost reductions.



# K-2 BANNED

Possession of K-2, SYNTHETIC CANNABIS, is banned. Also known as Spice, this synthetic cannabinoid is quite potent and legally sold as incense.



# Environmental

- ❖ **Clean Buses, Clean Air** - The Clean School Bus Program is no longer funded because school districts are no longer in need of funds to retrofit their older diesel school buses. Success!
- ❖ **School Siting** – A bill to require a study of school siting policies was filed, but in a session with such a large deficit, many current statutes were stricken that require state agencies to conduct studies such as this one. The bill was not considered.



# State Board of Education

- ❖ New districts were drawn for the State Board of Education
- ❖ Gov. Perry appointed Barbara Cargill to serve as Chair of the SBOE when Gail Lowe failed to be confirmed by the Senate this session
- ❖ \$60 M – supplemental science materials
- ❖ \$39 M – prekindergarten systems
- ❖ Textbook Allotment Program changes



# Instructional Materials Allotment

- ❖ The textbook allotment is now called the Instructional Materials Allotment (IMA).
- ❖ TEA Commissioner must maintain an IMA account for each ISD, and to deposit in the account, an annual allotment from the IMA for each enrolled student
- ❖ Commissioner must annually adjust IMA allotment of districts that are experiencing high enrollment growth
- ❖ Allows IMA funds to be used for technological equipment, training of educators, and salary of employees who provide tech support, to support instructional materials
- ❖ Allows ISDs to carry forward unused IMA balances.



# Other Important Legislation

- ✓ Improvements were made to the assessment program for students in grades 5 or 8 who take advanced classes
- ✓ Sales Tax Holiday is preserved; date is changed
- ✓ Applied STEM classes are authorized
- ✓ Seat belts on buses will only be required if the state appropriates money for their purchase
- ✓ State's Permanent School Fund (PSF) bond guarantee to be extended to financially sound charter schools to help them construct public school buildings
- ✓ Sexting – Minors are not automatically charged under adult pornography laws for sexting. The law creates a graduated penalty structure for minors who engage in sexting.



# PTA's Number ONE Priority -

## SCHOOL FINANCE

- ❖ School funding was cut by \$4 billion dollars over the next two years
- ❖ Grants and other programs were cut by \$1.3 billion over the next two years
  - ❖ In 2012 all ISDs will be equally cut by approximately 6%
  - ❖ In 2013 all ISDs will be equally cut again by approximately 1.5%, for a total of \$500 million
  - ❖ Remaining cuts for 2013 will be made to target revenue/hold harmless ISDs for a total of \$1.5 billion
  - ❖ An interim committee will meet before January 2013 to create a new school funding plan
  - ❖ Funding for Pre-K programs was reduced
  - ❖ Funding for the Arts was cut by 50%
  - ❖ Many important changes in law were made that impact professional contract protections, rules for RIFs, declaration of financial exigency, furlough policies



# School Finance

## Libraries

- Funding for K-12 database programs for school libraries was completely eliminated
- TexShare database will receive \$2.5 million over the biennium (Received \$8 million last biennium.)
- Grants to local public libraries were eliminated
- ✓ Discounted telecommunication services provided to educational institutions, libraries, hospitals, and health centers are continued until 2020
- ✓ State Library is authorized to create an Adopt-A-Library Program



# This Session Texas PTA...

- ❖ Reviewed over 6,000 bills
- ❖ Tracked over 500 bills
- ❖ Submitted more than 100 cards of support during House and Senate hearings on bills
- ❖ PTA members gave oral testimony before legislative committees more than 20 times
- ❖ Staff and volunteers distributed educational flyers and spoke to legislators throughout the session

# This Session Texas PTA...

PTA members around the state participated in the process by:

- ❖ Visiting your legislators both in your hometowns and in Austin
- ❖ Making phone calls to your legislators
- ❖ Testifying before committees
- ❖ Participating in Texas PTA Rally Day at the Capitol
- ❖ Sharing information with others



# Texas PTA Leaders...

On your behalf Texas PTA leaders

- ❖ Traveled the state urging Governor Perry to Fund our Future
- ❖ Made unprecedented numbers of visits to the capitol and calls to legislators
- ❖ Sent out more targeted alerts for your action than in any previous legislative session



# What Now?

- ❖ If your legislators support Texas PTA initiatives, call or email them to say “thank you” for their support of the Texas PTA Legislative Agenda.
- ❖ A quick call or email to say “thank you” reinforces the relationship you are developing with your legislators and reminds them that you are invested in the process and aware of their actions to support PTA priorities.
- ❖ To find your legislators:  
<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>



# What Now?

- ❖ Your School Board is meeting NOW to decide how to manage the cuts to school funding.
  - ❖ Attend those meetings and participate in those decisions!
- ❖ Make an appointment to meet with your legislator once school begins
- ❖ Invite your legislators to a PTA meeting
  - ❖ Review Texas PTA's legislative agenda with your legislators.



# What Now?

- ❖ Share information with your members about new laws passed this session
- ❖ Meet with your PTA membership and identify issues you would like to address at a state level.
- ❖ Contact Texas PTA Legislative Action Committee to submit suggestions for priority consideration for the next session of the Texas Legislature.



# For More Information...

- ❖ For more complete information about legislation tracked by Texas PTA this session visit our website at [www.txpta.org](http://www.txpta.org) or refer to *your handouts*.
- ❖ Watch for Legislative Updates sent by email with more information about new laws. To sign up for these emails visit [communications@txpta.org](mailto:communications@txpta.org).

