Preview of Special Education Issues Before Texas Legislature

with Steven Aleman, Disability Rights Texas

About This Webinar

The 86th Legislative Session begins in January, 2019 and runs until May, 2019. This year state lawmakers will consider several topics that are important to students with disabilities. Parents and students play an important role in the legislative process. Your input matters!

Today's webinar will cover:

✓Overview of Legislative Process

✓How to be Informed and Engaged

✓Selected Issues Affecting Special Education and Students with Disabilities in Texas Public Schools

Legislative Process and Leaders on Education

Texas Legislative Process

Two-Year Cycle

The Texas Legislature only meets in **regular session** every other year – in odd numbered years – for a limited period to pass a state budget and consider, debate and adopt bills.

Texas Legislative Process

Two-Year Cycle

Two-part process:

Regular Session – first phase (odd-numbered year)

- Public hearings
- Enacting legislation

Interim Session and Special Session – second phase (even-numbered year)

- Staff research
- Public interim hearings
- Interim Committee reports
- Enacting interim legislation

Even Number Year

Interim Session

Special Session

Focus: preparing for upcoming Regular Session

Odd Number Year

Regular Session

(January – June)

Focus: introducing and passing budget & bills

Odd Number Year

Special Sessions

(July – Dec.)

Focus: issues not addressed during Regular Session

Even Number Year

Interim Session

Special Session

Focus: cycle repeats, prep for upcoming Regular Session

Odd Number Year

Regular Session

Special Sessions

Focus: cycle repeats

Texas Legislative Process

Selected Key Dates for 86th Legislature

- **Monday, November 12, 2018**: Lawmakers allowed to file bills and resolutions
- **Tuesday, January 8, 2019**: Regular Session of 86th Legislature called to order
- **Friday, March 8, 2019**: Last day lawmakers may file bills and resolutions* (*certain exceptions)
- **Monday, May 27, 2019**: Last day of Regular Session of 86th Legislature

Texas Legislative Leadership

Texas Senate

- **Lt. Governor Dan Patrick**: elected statewide office

Texas House of Representatives

- **Speaker of the House**: elected by state representatives on first day of regular session

Senate Education

Leadership – 85th Legislature

Chair Larry Taylor

- Friendswood Republican
- Senate Ed member since 2013

Vice Chair Eddie Lucio, Jr.

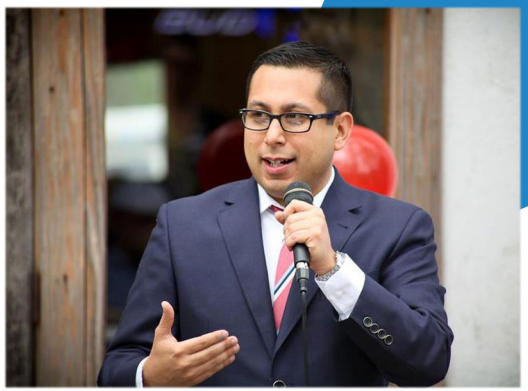
- Brownsville Democrat
- Senate Ed member since 2013

House Public Education

Leadership – 85th Legislature

Chair Dan Huberty

- Houston Republican
- House Pub Ed member since 2011



Vice Chair Diego Bernal

- San Antonio Democrat
- House Pub Ed member since 2017

Legislative Resources and Public Involvement

Texas Legislative Resources

Resources to Keep Track of Process

Texas Legislature Online

https://capitol.texas.gov/

State website on details of bills filed, schedule of hearings, key legislative dates

Visit Texas Legislature Online

https://capitol.texas.gov/

Search for bill texts, member information, and video archives.

Texas Legislative Resources

Resources to Keep Track of Process

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities

http://www.tcdd.texas.gov/

State agency that advocates on behalf of people with developmental disabilities

Texas Tribune

http://www.texastribune.org/

Public interest news source on legislative issues, players, developments

Participation in Legislature

Committee Hearings

Public testimony is encouraged and allowed but it does take effort and preparation to be involved. Both oral and written testimony are accepted.

The most difficult part of the process is knowing when the bill you are interested in will be considered in hearing

Hearing schedules are not made available to the public until the week before at best. Best source of hearing schedules is Texas Legislature Online website.

Participation in Legislature

Office Visits

Meeting in person with elected officials and their aides is a regular part of the process for paid lobbyists. Regular people can do the same thing!

Meetings can be arranged in the community at a district office, or in Austin at the Texas Capitol. An appointment is usually better for a meeting at the district office. Going to an office at the Capitol without an appointment is ok!

Sometimes meeting with the aide is more effective.

Participation in Legislature

Public Rallies and Capitol Days

Many organizations host their members and allies for activities at the Texas Capitol as a planned event during the regular session.

Capitol days often include training about issues and advocacy, press conferences, and distribution of literature to elected officials.

Check with the organizations that you belong to or affiliate with for any events planned for 86th Legislature.

Bill Preview

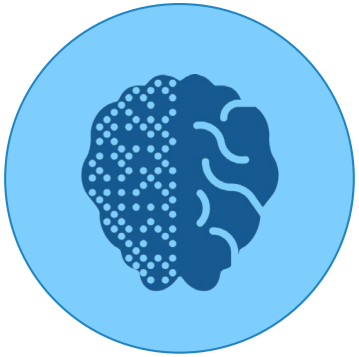
Preview of Issues

School Finance

Child Find

Safety

Mental Health

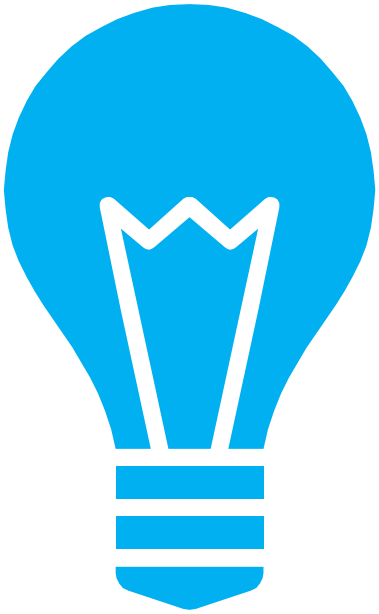


Transition

Discipline

Special Pops

Curriculum



Questions?

This presentation is for informational purposes and not intended to provide legal advice. If you believe that you are directly affected by violations of law or have questions about your specific rights, we encourage you to seek legal counsel as soon as possible.

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