

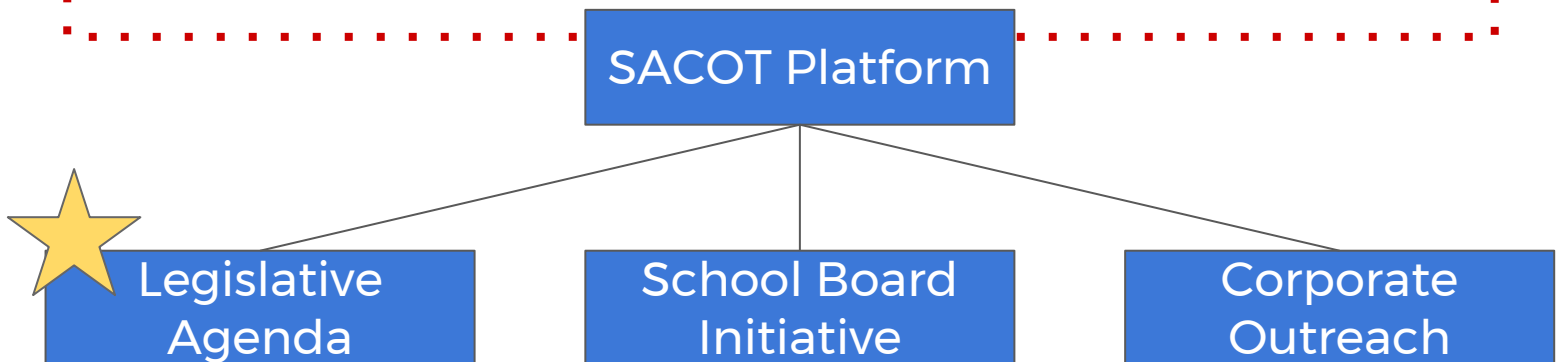


The STEM Advocacy Conference of Texas

SACOT 2017 Legislative Platform

As an organization, the mission of SACOT is to give high school students a voice in their own STEM education, and through our platform we stand to accomplish that mission together. With the SACOT platform, we establish our long-term goals that are not simple; they are complex problems without clear and immediate solutions. However, through the collaboration of some of the brightest high school students in Texas, they will prove easier to solve together.

The SACOT platform consists of three planks. In a legislative session year, which is every odd numbered year, one plank consists of our legislative 'ask' promoting STEM education through legislation. Along with our legislative agenda, we also have two other planks for educating school boards across the state about the importance of STEM and expanding high school internships at STEM corporations throughout Texas.





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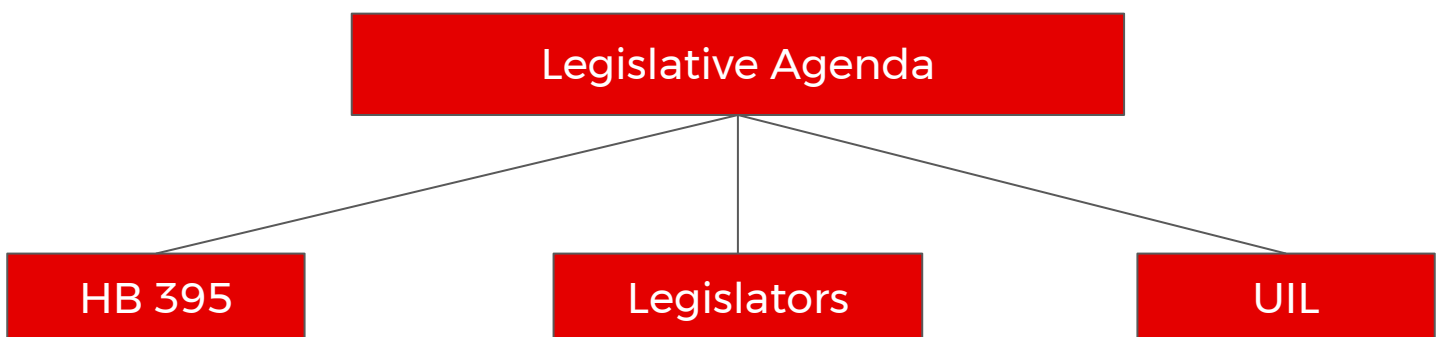
SACOT 2017 Legislative Platform

This current year is 2017, an odd numbered year which means that one of the most important planks this year is our legislative agenda. This plank consists of all the actions we want to take involving the Texas Government.

Legislative Agenda:

SACOT's legislative agenda this year involves three major parts:

1. Informing legislators about SACOT and the importance of improving STEM education in Texas
2. Advocating for the SACOT Bill of the Year, HB 395 sponsored by Representative Cecil Bell Jr.
3. Educating legislators about UIL Robotics, and the funds that are available, but unused by districts





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Ask Your Legislator

1. Advocate for support of HB 395.
 - ❖ This House Bill is sponsored by Representative Cecil Bell Jr, who has also supported SACOT's goal.
 - ❖ The bill consolidates Career & Technical Education Courses (CTE) such as Environmental Technology and Technical Application Courses (TAC) such as Computer Science and Robotics into one weighted funding group
 - ❖ Ensures that the certifications for teaching a course are aligned with the rigor of the course; this means **that teachers are properly qualified to teach their STEM skills and classes**
2. Spread awareness of UIL partnership with FIRST Robotics.
 - ❖ More funds are allocated for school districts to improve or start robotics teams
 - ❖ **Huge growth potential for STEM**
3. Help Texas Legislators understand SACOT and the importance of STEM.
 - ❖ We are a collective group of high school students advocating for STEM in Texas to legislators, councils, and school boards
 - ❖ Hosting a yearly conference at the Texas State Capitol
 - ❖ The number of STEM jobs is growing drastically, STEM education needs to be improved for Texas to keep up with the demand



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SACOT School Board Initiative:

We encourage every SACOT member to have a meeting with their own school board, advocating at the local level for why STEM is an important issue that schools need to be addressing now.

Why is the School Board Initiative Important?

- It impacts **YOU**.
- Advocating at the **LOCAL LEVEL** allows for the possibility of visible benefits at the start of the next school year.

What will the School Board Initiative do?

- Push for better allocation of resources into technology and science courses
- Educate districts about the need for STEM education

An example of an issue we could speak about is SB 6, from 2011, which gave districts more control over required instructional materials for all classes. However as a direct result of passing the bill, technology spending has decreased from \$270m to \$57m in 2014 - 2015.

What do I do?

1. Meet with your superintendent or principal and explain SACOT
2. Meet with your school board with help from who you contacted before, explain why SACOT is important to you and your school
3. Stay connected to your school board and continually help them to make educated decisions about STEM issues



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Corporate Outreach:

One of our planks at SACOT for the 2017 year is to **increase the amount of internships** offered by large STEM companies. By getting real world experience in a field that a student is interested in, that student can gain invaluable experience that he would never be able to learn anywhere else.

A STEM business would want to create a high school internship program to...

- Find the brightest young STEM students and encourage them to join the company in the future
- Increase company perspective by having a set of fresh eyes
- Prepare for **HB 595** by Paul Workman, which proposes tax breaks for companies employing students in paid internship or similar programs

What do I do?

1. Research corporations in your local area that provide internships for high school students in the STEM field
2. Contact and meet with the internship coordinator of those companies and explain SACOT, STEM, and why this internship would be important to you
3. Inform them about HB 595 and how it would benefit them as well