

Act Now for Our Future 2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

#ActNowForOurFuture



The future of Texas - our economy, communities, and citizenry - depends on how well we prepare our students today. To achieve the results Texans expect, we must do more: **invest in our students, encourage innovation, and improve college and workforce readiness.** We must act now. Because the future of Texas is in our public schools.



INVEST

Texans have high expectations for student achievement and public school performance. With additional resources, we can give all 5.3 million Texas students a fair shot at success in school and life.

Increase Funding for Texas Public Schools

In our school funding system, as local school taxes increase, state funding decreases, leaving per-student funding flat. Over time this has saved the state billions of dollars—additional funding not being reinvested in public schools for innovative programs or high-quality teachers. By 2019, the state share of funding will be only 38 percent and without reinvestment, it will continue to decline.

Recommendations:

- Increase the state's overall investment in quality education programs.
- Increase the state share of the Foundation School Program to 50 percent.

#FundTheFuture

Keep Public Dollars in Public Schools

Legislative action has brought greater autonomy to our public schools, allowing them to customize education based on student, community, and industry needs. Private school vouchers are a failed experiment in educational autonomy. Research shows vouchers do not deliver improved outcomes or educational innovation. Vouchers lack transparency in the use of taxpayer dollars and public accountability for educational outcomes.

Recommendations:

- Support quality school choice and innovative programs within the public school system.
- Oppose any form of taxpayer subsidy to private schools and vendors, such as: Tax Credit Scholarships, Education Savings Accounts, and vouchers for students in special education.

#vOUCHersHurt

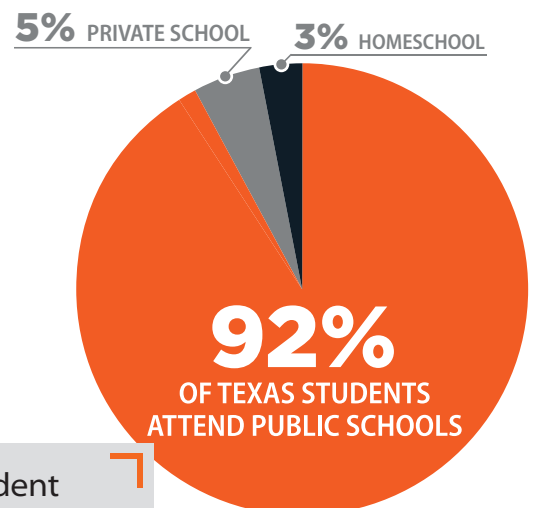
Fund Pre-K the Right Way

Despite overwhelming research that full-day pre-K paves the way for student success, the state's lack of full-day funding and inconsistent support has short-changed an early learning foundation for kids who need it most.

Recommendation:

- Provide formula funding for high-quality, optional full-day pre-K for currently eligible students.

#FundPreKTheRightWay



Only **public schools** can educate the large and diverse student body of Texas in a transparent and accountable system.



INNOVATE

To equip our students to meet the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities of the 21st century, public schools must think outside the box. Texas educators need freedom and strategic state support to pursue and scale promising practices.

Allow for Greater School Autonomy and Innovation

To serve the diverse and ever-changing needs of students and to support a strong future workforce, districts need freedom from unnecessary state mandates to innovate and collaborate.

Recommendation:

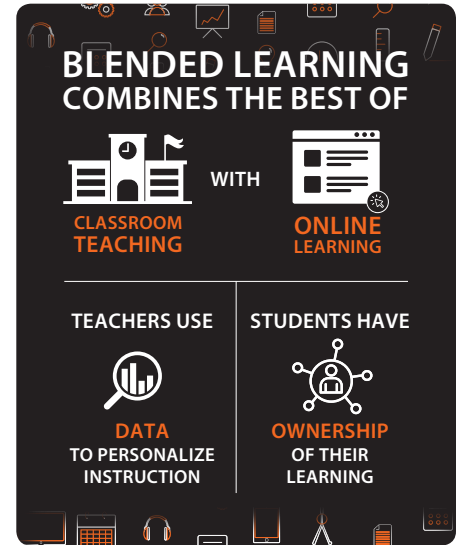
- Support a level playing field for traditional districts, charter schools, and district/charter partnerships.

Support Quality Blended Learning Programs

The effective use of technology in Texas public schools has the potential to transform teaching and learning, and improve student achievement. Blended learning is personalized, data driven, and encourages student ownership of their learning.

Recommendation:

- Leverage existing examples of high-quality implementation of blended learning.



IMPROVE

The state's educator preparation programs, dual credit programs, and full-time virtual schools need to be more transparent and accountable to meet the needs of educators, students, and families so they may make informed choices.

Strengthen the Teaching Pipeline

To meet the growing needs of our student population, Texas must recruit diverse and high-achieving students into quality teacher preparation programs. Effective recruitment requires transparent and accessible data that identifies quality within the 131 teacher preparation programs in Texas.

Recommendations:

- Increase transparency and accountability in the state's educator data system.
- Support research-based improvements in Texas' teacher preparation programs.

Create a More Transparent Dual Credit System

Dual credit courses provide students an efficient and proven path toward career and college, with benefits for families, employers, and ultimately our entire state. We need a process that allows students and families to better understand and benefit from these programs.

Recommendation:

- Implement a coherent set of policies to align dual credit programs among high schools and two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

Ensure Transparency and Accountability for Full-Time Virtual Programs

Full-time virtual education relies on technology, but does not provide students quality interactions with teachers and the school environment. The poor performance of some full-time virtual education programs demonstrates it is not always an effective approach to digital learning.

Recommendation:

- Oppose expansion of full-time virtual programs until academic performance improves.
- Improve accountability and transparency for current full-time virtual programs.