

WE STAND FOR THE FUTURE

WE STAND FOR ALL



Equity and innovation will create a world-class public school system for all Texans.

Here is Where We Stand on Public School Funding

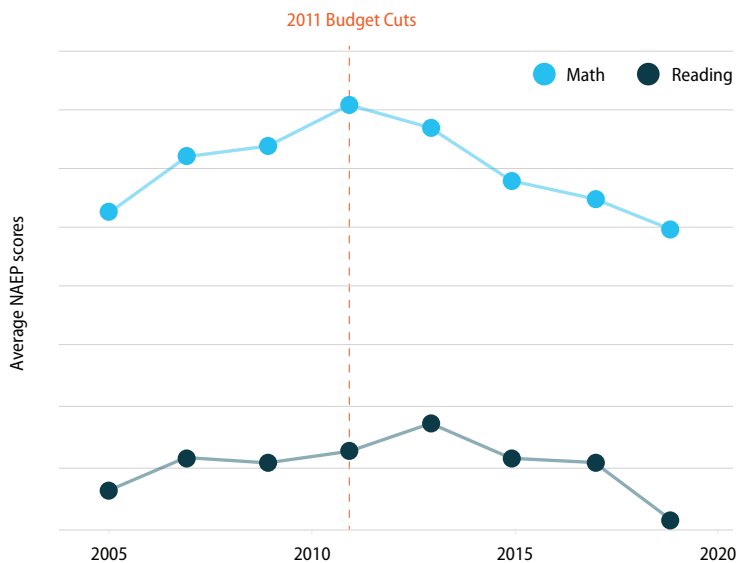
Public Schools Need Our Support Now More Than Ever

In 2019, the Texas public education system received a much-needed funding boost. House Bill 3 (HB 3) made investments in teacher pay raises, full-day pre-kindergarten, funding for an optional extended-year program, and additional dollars for low-income students. These new policies will positively affect our teachers, students, and economy for generations to come, but Texas still has work to do. It still ranks in the bottom 10 states in per-student funding.

Less than a year after the Legislature made this historic commitment, COVID-19 changed the education landscape of Texas and slowed the state's economy. Many now fear a repeat of the detrimental public education budget cuts of 2011. At that time, Texas faced a \$28 billion budget shortfall and cut \$4 billion from the Foundation School Program (FSP), plus another \$1.3 billion in education grants. The reduction to the FSP negatively affected teachers and students by increasing class sizes and lowering national test scores. The cuts also affected pre-kindergarten expansion, teacher incentive pay, optional-year programs, and services for at-risk students.

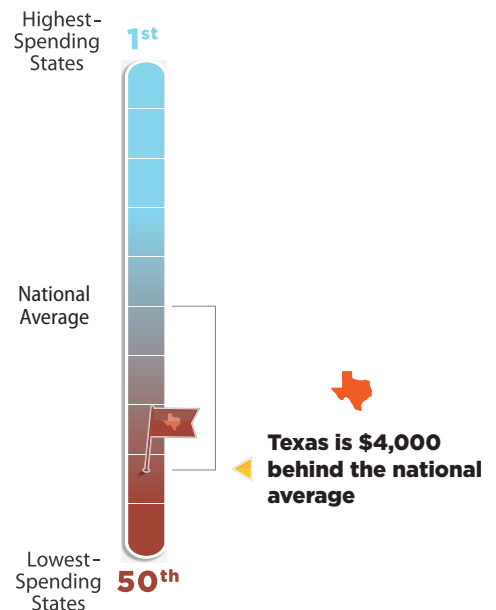
The Budget Cuts from 2011 Affected a Generation of Public School Students

Since the cuts, Texas' eighth-graders have seen a steady decline in NAEP scores.



Source: The Nation's Report Card. <http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>

Texas Still Ranks in the Bottom 10 in Per-student Funding



Source: Quality Counts 2020 (Education Week)

COVID-19 Will Put an Additional Strain on School Budgets

The global pandemic will alter districts' approach to instruction, health and safety, and food services. Districts will also have to address student and teacher connectivity issues, adopt schoolwide learning management systems, and plan for safely operating schools. Simply implementing the health and safety protocols for reopening campuses will cost an additional \$485 per student for an average school district¹, nearly the same amount as the HB 3 funding increase.

The 2020 stimulus, the federal CARES Act, provided Texas with additional funding for public education, including \$1.3 billion for low-income students. The Texas Education Agency used these funds during the 2019-20 school year

to offset state funding. During the 2021 session, that "savings" should be used to avoid cuts in the Foundation School Program and not to plug other holes in the state budget.

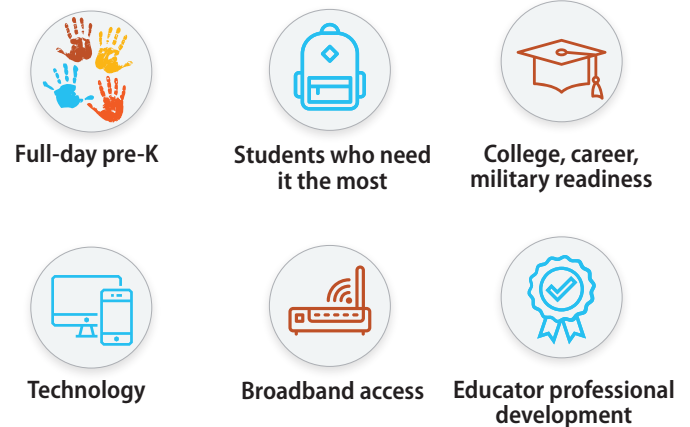
Now, due to COVID-19, districts will need additional funding to safely and effectively serve all students. This is a time to continue the state's investment in our public schools, to fully implement HB 3, and to ensure our students can safely return to their classrooms. A well-funded education system is essential—both to our economic recovery and to our future. We must continue to make every legislative session an education session and provide our educators and students the resources they need.

COVID Will Cost Schools More Money, Not Less



Sources: Association of School Business Officials International and AASA, The School Superintendents Association

Smart Investments for the Future



Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Protect all investments made in House Bill 3 (2019), including the funding for full-day pre-Kindergarten.
- ▶ Ensure that federal dollars used to supplant state funding for COVID-19 are used to increase public education funding.
- ▶ Continue to invest in our students and address issues of quality, equity, and long-term sustainability, with the goal of reaching at least the national average in per-student funding.

¹ Association of School Business Officials International. Retrieved from <https://www.asbointl.org/asbo/media/documents/Resources/covid/COVID-19-Costs-to-Reopen-Schools.pdf>