

Universal School Choice: *Empowering Parents to Cut the Chains of Government*


The Problem

Government education spending and school property taxes are out of control. From 2012 to 2022, spending on Texas government schools **increased by 73% (\$32.3 billion)**; this reflects a 22% increase per student adjusted for inflation. School property taxes increased even faster, up 91% (\$20.9 billion) over that period. At the same time, **less than half** of Texas government school students exhibited grade-level proficiency in English, math, science, and social studies.


School Year	Expenditures	School Tax Levies
2012-13	\$53,356,468,730	\$22,965,265,816
2022-23	\$92,414,047,078	\$43,947,280,443
Increase	\$39,057,578,348	\$20,982,014,627

Most Texas children are trapped in these failing schools and have little hope of finding better options. School choice would bring competition to Texas K-12 education and empower parents to send their children to better-performing schools. This competition


GRADE 3-8 TEXAS STUDENTS WHO FAIL TO MEET ACADEMIC STANDARDS:




51%
SOCIAL STUDIES



58%
SCIENCE



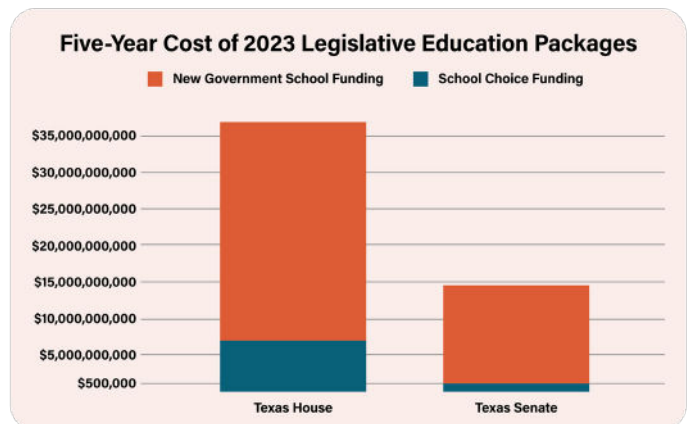
59%
MATH



57%
ENGLISH

would also increase the quality of currently poor-performing government schools.

Three times in 2023, a majority of the Texas Legislature opposed efforts to provide parents with greater opportunity to get their children out of Texas' high-cost, low-performing government schools. Not only did the Legislature fail, but the plans they came up with put billions more of taxpayer dollars into public education than they did into school choice.



The massive increase in government education funding included in these bills was a failed attempt to court the support of Legislators controlled by the government school monopoly. Because Texas politicians must answer to voters, not to school boards and education unions, almost all of the Republicans who voted against school choice will not be returning to Austin in 2024.

The Solution

For school choice to be effective at cutting the chains of government, it must meet three key criteria:

School Choice Should Empower Parents

Education Savings Accounts should put consumers—parents—in charge of their children’s education. Parents should be able to tailor educational services to their child’s unique needs by selecting from one or more of a variety of services such as government schools, private schools, virtual (online) education, tutoring, special education, or home-schooling.

School Choice Should be Universal

All Texas children should be eligible to participate in school choice programs. The plans last year were touted as “universal,” but this was not true. The funding and other elements greatly restricted how many students would have been able to participate. Every student is as valuable as the next. All of them should have access to school choice so they

can escape failing government schools and government indoctrination.

School Choice Should Foster Competition and Reduce the Cost of Education

Competition increases quality and lowers the price of everything it touches. The 2023 school choice legislative proposals greatly increased the cost of education even though the \$10,000 per student funding for school choice was much less than the [\\$17,966 per student cost](#) of Texas government schools. This was because the legislation included large funding increases for government schools and allowed most school districts to keep their funding even if they lost students. School districts should not be compensated for students they are not educating. A universal school choice plan adopted by the Texas Legislature should save taxpayers money.



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