

# Where We Stand

Policy priorities for the future  
of Texas public schools

**RAISE**<sup>®</sup>  
YOUR HAND TEXAS



## **We Believe**

The organizational values of Raise Your Hand Texas are rooted in creating a world-class school system that fuels a brighter future for all Texans. For this reason, we have established seven core policy priorities that guide our long-term work, strengthening and supporting public schools in Texas.

## **Our Vision**

Raise Your Hand Texas® envisions a world-class public school system that fuels a brighter future for all Texans.



**Educate. Engage. Activate.**



# Public Dollars Must Remain in Public Schools

Only public schools, which educate 90% of students in Texas, can effectively and efficiently meet the state's demands for a well-prepared workforce and well-informed citizenry.

## Challenge

Vouchers divert scarce public education funds to private schools, which are not required to comply with federal protections for students with disabilities or report and track spending and student performance.

### A comparison of district schools and private school vouchers

	Public School Districts	Private School Vouchers
Required to accept all students	✓	✗
Require annual assessment aligned to state curriculum to track student performance	✓	✗
Public reporting and accountability for use of taxpayer funds	✓	✗
Public reporting and accountability for student performance	✓	✗
Require closure or state management for multiple years of low performance	✓	✗
Comply with federal protections for students with disabilities	✓	✗

## Where We Stand

N We support keeping education tax dollars in public schools and investing in quality public school choice and innovative programs.

# Money Matters in Education

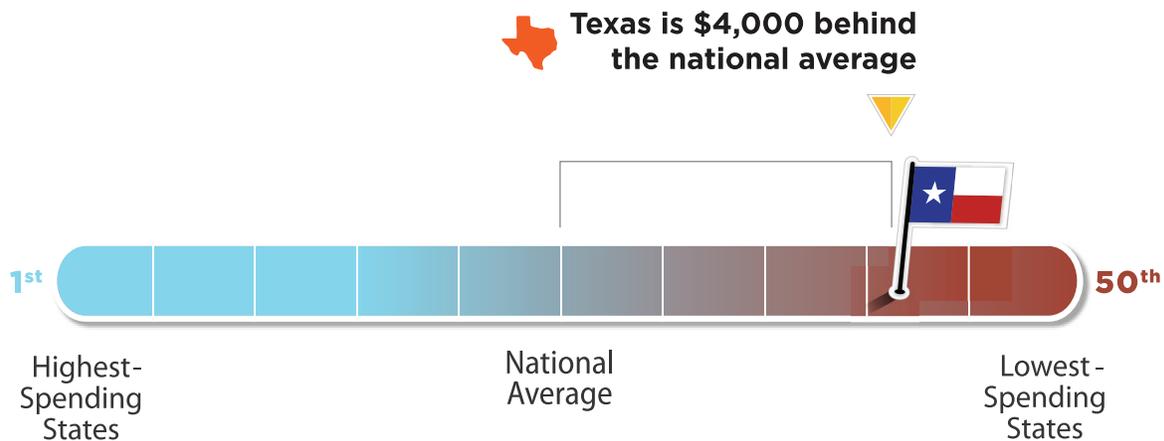


A high-quality and well-funded public education system is essential to help every child reach their full potential.

## Challenge

Texas ranks in the bottom 10 states in per-student funding, coming in at 42<sup>nd</sup>.

**Even after HB3 (2019) increased investment in public schools, Texas still ranks in the bottom 10 for per-pupil spending.**



## Where We Stand

We support an equitable school finance system that, at the very least, funds Texas students at the national average.



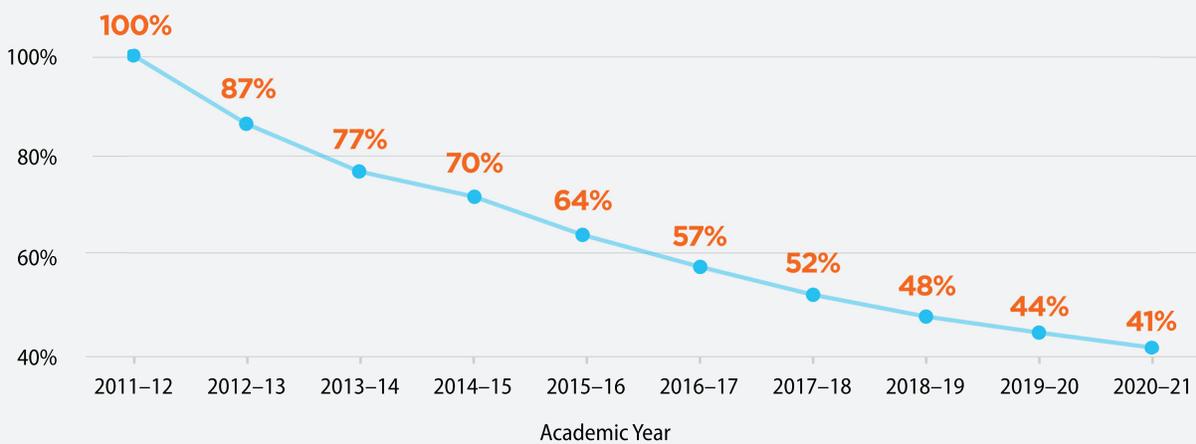
# Teachers Make the Difference

The quality of our education system and the long-term viability of our economy are inextricably linked to the effectiveness and diversity of our teachers.

## Challenge

Inadequate pay, lack of respect, and stressful work conditions are pushing teachers out of the profession and attracting fewer new teachers into the field. Compounding this challenge are the needs for better teacher preparation and less reliance on alternative certification programs.

**Ten-Year Teacher Retention (2011-12 Cohort of First-Year Teachers)**



## Where We Stand

We support enhancing teaching as a career, attracting and preparing a strong teacher workforce, and retaining quality educators in the field.

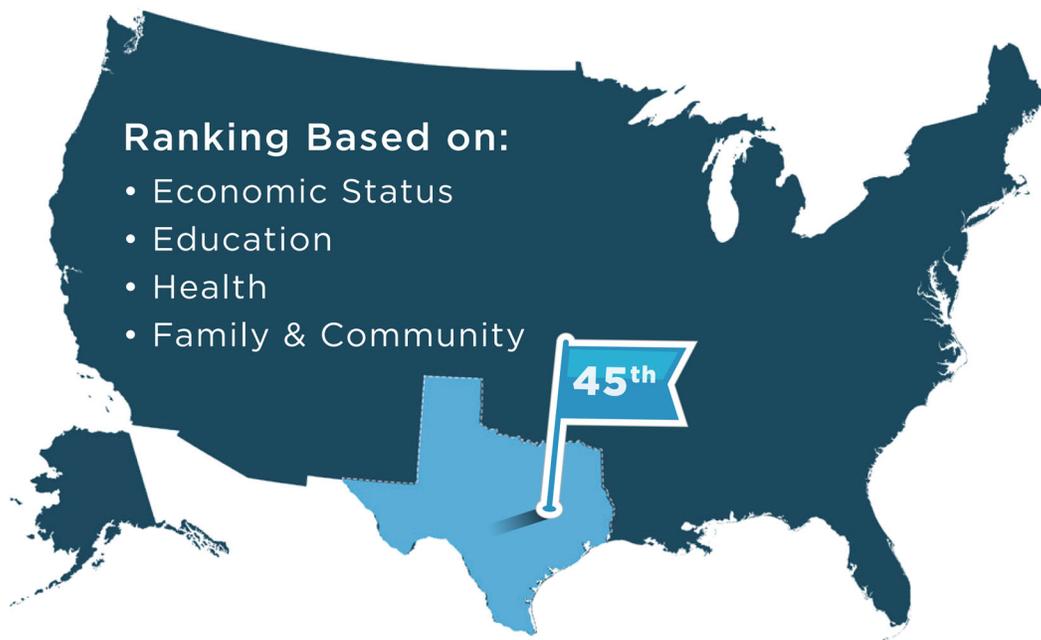
# Serving the Whole Child Promotes Learning



Every Texas student needs a safe and healthy educational environment in order to meet their full academic potential.

## Challenge

Texas is ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in overall child well-being, including indicators related to economic status, education, health, and certain family and community traits.



## Where We Stand

We support meeting the individual needs of students through equitable and high-quality pre-kindergarten, mental wellness, and wraparound programs.

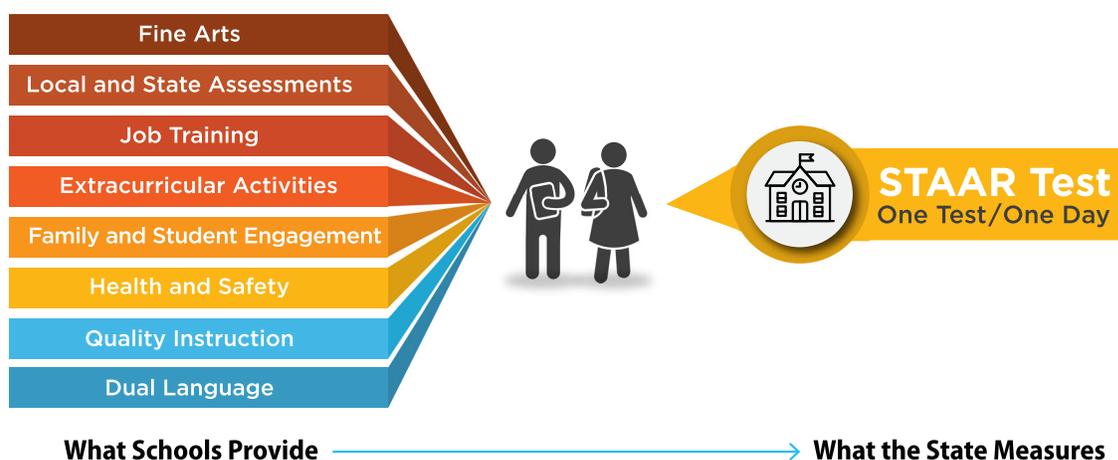


# Student Growth and Performance Should be Measured Fairly

Texas public schools should be held to appropriate standards of quality by a comprehensive accountability system that accurately reflects academic performance and other measures of student progress.

## Challenge

The state's accountability (A-F) system is disproportionately based on a single end-of-year test that does not adequately consider a student's academic growth. Additionally, it is the only measure of accountability ratings in grades 3 through 8.



## Where We Stand

We support real-time assessments that inform instruction, measure individual progress, and serve as one of multiple measures reflecting a student's entire educational experience.



# Texas Families Deserve an Equal Playing Field

Charter schools and traditional schools should be held to the same high standards while serving all students in their communities.

## Challenge

Charter schools offer the opportunity to foster innovation in public education, especially for our most at-risk students. However, rapid expansion of charter schools is creating tax inefficiencies, unequal access for students, and a parallel system of publicly funded schools.



**Charter Schools**



**School Districts**

Charter schools receive approximately **\$1,000 per student** in additional funding and have fewer regulations compared with neighboring urban and suburban school districts.

## Where We Stand

N We support equitable funding, expansion and accountability policies that require all publicly funded schools to equally serve every student in their communities.

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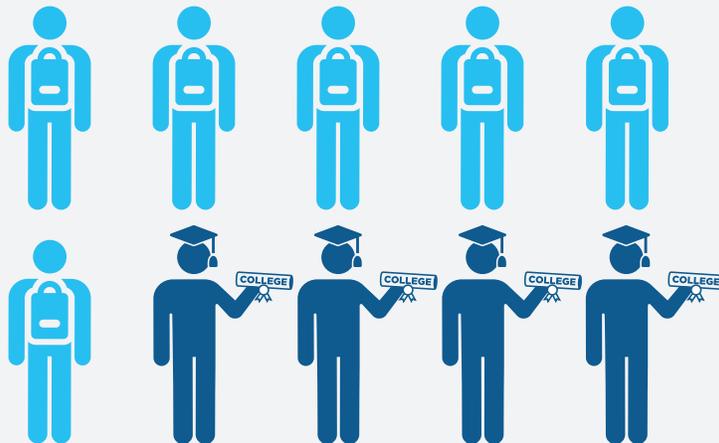
# Prepared Students Ensure a Brighter Future for Our State

Texans deserve a public school system that creates a highly skilled workforce capable of meeting tomorrow's challenges.

## Challenge

Less than half of Texans ages 25-34 hold a postsecondary certificate or degree. Texas is struggling to keep pace with 21st century workforce demands. Texas cannot rely solely on importing talent from other states.

**Less than half of Texans age 25-34 have postsecondary certificates or degrees.**



## Where We Stand

We support pathways that ensure every student is on track for college, career, or military readiness.

THE  
FUTURE OF  
TEXAS  
IS IN OUR  
PUBLIC  SCHOOLS

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