

## School Voucher Program



- Let us be unequivocal: **Texas Democrats vehemently oppose Republicans' school voucher program**, and we will do everything in our power this Legislative Session to stop it in its tracks – and ensure *a//* Texas kids are able to receive the education they deserve.
- Republicans' school voucher program would be one of the greatest transfers of wealth in Texas history from the state's poor and middle class to the richest Texans.
- Republicans plan to take public tax dollars away from already-underfunded public schools and funnel them toward private, often-religious, wealthy schools. **We cannot and will not let this happen.**
- By further gutting Texas public schools – especially those in rural and urban school districts – of the resources they desperately need, we would only be **further exacerbating education inequality in Texas** and making it even more difficult for Texas' most vulnerable children to succeed.

- But don't just take our word for it: listen to the San Antonio Express-News editorial board, which [wrote](#) that a school voucher program "would be a seismic change in policy that would **defund public schools, shift tax dollars to private schools and, research suggests, assist wealthy families.**"
- Look no further than the school where Governor Abbott laid out his school voucher plan last week:
  - A private, Christian school in Corpus Christi that's nearly 60% white (compared to 12% in Corpus Christi ISD)...
  - Where tuition costs nearly \$10,000 a year per student...
  - **Across the street** from two public elementary schools with over 80% economically disadvantaged kids.
  - *Those two public schools* would further lose funding under Abbott's plan.
- And the facts matter: Texas [public education advocates](#) note that school voucher programs that have been implemented in other cities and states have led to:
  - **No improvement** in student outcomes
  - **Ballooned state costs**
  - **Exacerbated lack of accessibility** to children with special needs and disabilities
  - **Inability to cover entire cost** of expensive private schools
  - **Reduced accountability** from schools and teachers
- As the Houston Chronicle editorial board [noted](#) today, "Lawmakers advocating for what they consider choice ignore the fact that their primary responsibility as state officials is to keep public schools whole. That means **paying teachers a decent salary.**"

*Speaking of which, we need to...*

## **Raise Teacher Pay!**

- Texas Democrats are rallying support for Rep. James Talarico's new bill that, if passed, will provide **the biggest teacher pay raise in Texas history.**
- **40% of Texas teachers work a second job to pay the bills. Thousands are leaving the profession. In Texas, teacher salaries are \$7,500 behind the national average -- putting us in the bottom half of states.**

- Teacher quality is the #1 school-related factor influencing student success. We ask a lot from our teachers. In the aftermath of COVID, they are facing historic learning loss and an escalating mental health crisis.
- Teachers are also the latest target in the culture wars -- and due to our broken firearm policies, we ask them to be bodyguards from mass shooters.
- Texas has more teachers than any other state in the country. Texas has \$47 billion in unspent funds between our budget surplus and the "Rainy Day Fund."
- We can be in the Top 10 states for teacher pay and still have HALF of the unspent funds left over. Our bill will help us retain our best teachers and recruit the best and brightest into Texas schools.
- Funding schools is true property tax relief. Increasing school funding at the state level is the only sustainable way to significantly bring down local property taxes.