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 [Texas Matters](#)

Texas Matters Principle

Education is about more than schools.

It begins long before a child enters a classroom—with families, caregivers, and early childhood experiences that help children learn, grow, and thrive.

It continues through excellent schools, career and technical education, colleges and universities, apprenticeships, military pathways, and lifelong learning that prepare Texans for meaningful careers and responsible citizenship.

An exceptional education system develops future teachers, nurses, engineers, farmers, entrepreneurs, skilled tradespeople, healthcare professionals, first responders, business owners, innovators, and community leaders.

It also strengthens today's workforce by helping parents participate in the economy, supporting employers in finding skilled workers, and creating opportunities for businesses to grow and prosper.

Education is one of the strongest foundations for economic opportunity, strong families, thriving communities, and a prosperous Texas.

An exceptional education system gives every child the opportunity to reach their full potential while preparing the workforce that will shape the future of Texas.

What Matters Most to...?

ME

How do we give every child the opportunity to reach their full potential while supporting families and preparing them for a successful future?

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. Strong families, quality early learning, excellent schools, and meaningful educational opportunities help prepare young Texans for college, careers, military service, skilled trades, entrepreneurship, and lifelong success.

Whether you are a parent, grandparent, employer, educator, taxpayer, or community member, education helps shape the opportunities available to every Texan.

US

How do strong schools, early learning, and workforce development strengthen our communities and economy?

An exceptional education system benefits everyone.

It prepares future teachers, healthcare professionals, engineers, farmers, entrepreneurs, skilled tradespeople, first responders, business owners, military service members, and community leaders.

It also supports working families by helping parents participate in the workforce, provides employers with the skilled talent they need to grow, and strengthens local economies across Texas.

When education and workforce development work together, communities become stronger, businesses become more competitive, and families have greater opportunities to succeed.

TOMORROW

How do we prepare today's children and tomorrow's workforce for the future of Texas?

Texas continues to grow, and so do the opportunities and challenges facing the next generation.

The choices we make today will shape the workforce, economy, innovation, and quality of life that future generations inherit.

An exceptional education system helps ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed and that Texas remains one of the best places to live, work, raise a family, and build a future.

Why This Matters

Education is one of the most important investments Texas can make in its future.

Strong schools prepare students for successful careers, military service, higher education, skilled trades, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning.

They also strengthen our workforce, attract employers, encourage innovation, and help create thriving communities.

Whether or not you have children in school, education affects every Texan.

Understanding how Texas educates its children helps citizens participate thoughtfully in one of the state's most important responsibilities.

1. How Many Children Attend Texas Public Schools?

Answer

More than **5.5 million students** attend Texas public schools each year, making Texas home to one of the nation's largest public education systems.

Those students attend more than **9,000 campuses** across over **1,200 independent school districts and charter school systems**.

As Texas continues to grow, schools must prepare increasing numbers of students for success in an evolving economy.

Why It Matters

Texas' public education system prepares the next generation of workers, innovators, and community leaders. Understanding the size of this system helps Texans evaluate education policies, investments, and outcomes that shape our workforce, economy, and future—and **vote with confidence**.

2. How are public schools funded in Texas?

Answer

Texas public schools are funded through a combination of **state funding, local property taxes, and federal funding**.

- **State funding** provides a significant portion of school budgets through formulas established by the Legislature.
- **Local property taxes** collected by school districts also support public education.
- **Federal funding** represents a smaller share and often supports programs serving students with disabilities, students from low-income families, school nutrition programs, and other targeted initiatives.

Because property values vary across Texas, the state uses funding formulas designed to help provide educational opportunities across school districts, although school finance remains an ongoing topic of public discussion.

Why it matters

How Texas funds its public schools influences educational opportunities, teacher recruitment, student success, and workforce preparation across the state. Understanding how school finance works helps Texans evaluate education policies, funding priorities, and long-term investments in our future—and **vote with confidence**.

3. How does education affect Texas' economy?

Answer

Education and the economy are closely connected. A well-educated workforce helps businesses grow, attracts new employers, and supports innovation across industries.

Workers with education, technical training, or specialized skills are often better prepared for high-demand careers. Businesses benefit by having access to qualified employees, while individuals may have greater opportunities for career advancement and higher earnings.

As Texas continues to grow, employers will increasingly rely on schools, community colleges, universities, apprenticeships, and workforce training programs to prepare future workers.

Why it matters

Education helps strengthen Texas' workforce, improve economic competitiveness, and create opportunities for individuals and families.

4. What role do parents and families play in education?

Answer

Parents and families are a child's first teachers. Research consistently shows that family involvement can positively influence attendance, academic achievement, graduation rates, and overall student success.

Family engagement may include reading with children, communicating with teachers, attending school events, encouraging good study habits, and supporting learning at home.

Schools, families, and communities all share responsibility for helping students succeed.

Why it matters

When schools and families work together, students are often better prepared to reach their full potential.

5. What is an Education Savings Account (ESA)?

Answer

An ESA is a state-funded account that eligible families can use to pay for approved educational expenses instead of, or in addition to, attending a traditional public school.

Approved expenses may include:

- Private school tuition and fees
- Textbooks and curriculum
- Tutoring
- Educational therapies
- Certain testing fees
- Transportation (in some circumstances)
- Approved homeschooling expenses

The funds follow the participating student rather than going directly to a public school district.

Why it matters

ESAs give participating families additional educational options while raising questions about funding, accountability, and access.

6. What is the difference between an ESA and a voucher?

Answer

People often use the terms interchangeably, but there is a difference.

A **traditional voucher** typically sends public money directly to a private school to pay tuition.

An **Education Savings Account** places public funds into an account that parents manage for a range of approved educational expenses. Families can use the money for private school tuition, tutoring, therapies, curriculum, or other eligible costs.

Because ESAs allow more flexibility than traditional vouchers, many states have adopted this model.

Why it matters

Understanding the distinction helps explain why Texas refers to its program as an Education Savings Account.

7. How much money does a participating student receive?

Answer

For the 2026–27 school year:

- **Private school students: \$10,474 per year**, equal to 85% of the statewide average state and local public-school funding.
- **Students with disabilities:** Up to **\$30,000**, depending on educational needs.
- **Homeschooled students:** Approximately **\$2,000** for approved educational expenses.

Why it matters

The amount available varies depending on the student's educational setting and individual circumstances.

8. How many Texas children will participate?

Answer

The Legislature initially appropriated **\$1 billion** for the program.

Based on funding levels, analysts estimated the program could support **roughly 90,000 students** in its first year, although the actual number depends on how many students receive larger awards, such as those with disabilities.

Why it matters

Texas educates more than **5.5 million** public-school students, so even a large ESA program initially serves a relatively small percentage of all K–12 students.

9. How much does the program cost?

Answer

The Legislature initially funded the program with **\$1 billion**.

Future costs will depend on:

- Legislative appropriations
- Student participation
- Eligibility
- Average account amounts

The Legislature may increase, decrease, or modify funding in future sessions.

Why it matters

As participation changes over time, lawmakers will continue evaluating the program's costs and outcomes.

10. How might ESAs affect public schools?

Answer

This is one of the central questions in the policy debate.

Supporters argue that:

- Families should be able to choose the educational setting that best meets their child's needs.
- Competition may encourage innovation.
- More educational options can benefit students with diverse learning needs.

Others express concerns that:

- Public-school districts may lose funding when students leave.
- Smaller or rural districts may be more affected if enrollment declines.
- Private schools operate under different accountability requirements than public schools.

The actual impact may vary by community depending on participation, available private-school options, and future legislative funding.

Why it matters

The program affects families, public schools, taxpayers, and communities in different ways.

11. Are participating private schools regulated like our public schools?

Answer

Participating schools must meet requirements established in the ESA law, but they are generally governed differently than public schools.

Public schools are subject to statewide accountability systems, open-meetings requirements, and other laws that do not apply to private schools. The private schools do not participate in the state accountability system including taking the STARR tests and other assessments that public schools have to meet and be graded on.

The ESA program includes oversight for participating accounts and approved expenses, but the governance differs from that of public school districts.

Why it matters

Understanding accountability helps families compare different educational options.

12. What are the potential benefits?

Answer

Supporters believe ESAs can:

- Expand educational choice
- Give parents greater flexibility
- Support students with specialized learning needs
- Encourage innovation
- Increase competition among schools
- Allow funding to follow the student

Why it matters

Many families seek educational options that match their child's unique needs and learning style.

13. What concerns have been raised?

Answer

Some educators, parents, and policy organizations have expressed concerns about:

- Long-term public-school funding
- Accountability and transparency
- Rural access where few private schools exist
- Whether tuition may exceed ESA amounts
- Equity for families with fewer resources

These concerns continue to be part of the public discussion as the program is implemented.

Why it matters

Evaluating both potential benefits and potential challenges helps citizens understand the full policy discussion.

14. What is Career and Technical Education (CTE)?

Answer

Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides students with practical skills and hands-on learning that prepare them for careers in high-demand industries.

CTE programs may include:

- Health care
- Information technology
- Advanced manufacturing
- Construction trades
- Agriculture
- Energy
- Aviation
- Public safety
- Business
- Engineering

Many students earn industry certifications while still in high school, allowing them to enter the workforce immediately or continue their education.

CTE is one of several pathways that can prepare students for successful careers alongside college and military service.

Why it matters

Texas employers need skilled workers across many industries. Career and technical education helps connect students with meaningful employment opportunities while supporting the state's growing economy.

15. How do community colleges and universities contribute to Texas' future?

Answer

Higher education institutions prepare students for careers in healthcare, engineering, education, business, technology, agriculture, public service, and many other fields.

Community colleges provide affordable education, workforce training, and technical certifications, while universities support research, innovation, and advanced degrees.

Together, these institutions help develop the workforce needed to support Texas' growing economy.

Why it matters

Community colleges and universities help prepare the workforce that drives Texas' economy and supports our communities. Understanding their role in education, workforce development, research, and innovation helps Texans evaluate higher education policies, workforce investments, and opportunities that strengthen our state's future—and **vote with confidence**.

16. What is “Outcomes-Based Funding” for Texas community colleges?

Answer

Yes. Texas has largely shifted community college funding to an outcomes-based model, and colleges do receive funding when they achieve the outcomes established in state law.

The change was made through **House Bill 8 (HB 8)**, passed in 2023, and further refined by subsequent legislation and rules. Instead of funding colleges primarily based on the number of hours students spend in class, the new system rewards colleges for helping students reach milestones that support Texas' workforce and higher education goals.

Examples of funded outcomes include:

- Students earning workforce certificates and degrees
- Students earning credentials in high-demand fields
- Students successfully transferring to a four-year college or university
- High school students successfully completing college-level dual credit coursework
- Students completing workforce training aligned with regional employer needs

The funding formula also provides **additional funding** for outcomes achieved by certain student populations, including many economically disadvantaged students and adult learners, recognizing that these students may require additional support to succeed.

Why This Matters

Texas is investing in student success as well as student enrollment. Understanding outcomes-based funding helps Texans evaluate how higher education prepares the workforce, supports economic opportunity, and uses taxpayer resources to achieve measurable results—and **vote with confidence**.

17. Are Community Colleges receiving the funding they earn under “Outcomes-Based Funding”?

Answer

Yes—but funding depends on both college performance and legislative appropriations.

Under HB 8, community colleges earn funding based on the student outcomes they achieve. However, the amount colleges ultimately receive depends on the funding appropriated by the Texas Legislature. As colleges produce more successful outcomes, some higher education leaders have raised concerns that future appropriations may need to increase to fully fund the formula. All HB 8 funding remains subject to legislative appropriations.

Why It Matters

Texas' outcomes-based funding model is designed to reward colleges for helping students succeed and preparing the workforce needed by a growing economy. Understanding that the formula depends on both student performance and legislative funding helps Texans evaluate higher education priorities, workforce investments, and how the state uses taxpayer dollars to achieve measurable results—and **vote with confidence**.

18. Why Are Quality Childcare and Early Childhood Education Important?

Answer

Quality childcare and early childhood education provide benefits that extend far beyond the classroom. They help prepare children for success in school while supporting working families, employers, and Texas' economy.

For **children**, high-quality early learning experiences help develop:

- Language and communication skills
- Early reading and math skills
- Social and emotional development
- Problem-solving and critical thinking
- Healthy relationships and self-confidence

These early experiences can help children enter kindergarten ready to learn and build a strong foundation for future success.

For **families**, access to reliable, affordable childcare allows parents and caregivers to work, pursue education or job training, and provide financial stability for their households.

For **employers**, childcare helps recruit and retain workers, reduce absenteeism and turnover, and strengthen the workforce. Many businesses identify access to affordable childcare as an important factor in attracting and keeping employees.

For **Texas' economy**, early childhood education helps prepare the future workforce while supporting today's workforce. As Texas continues to grow, ensuring families have access to quality childcare can contribute to higher workforce participation, stronger economic growth, and long-term prosperity.

Why It Matters

Quality childcare and early childhood education benefit children, families, employers, and communities alike. Understanding their role in preparing the next generation, supporting working families, and strengthening Texas' workforce and economy helps Texans evaluate education policies, workforce investments, and family-support initiatives—and **vote with confidence**.

19. Who has responsibility over education?

Answer

The governor sets education priorities and appoints the Education Commissioner. The Texas Legislature allocated education funding to the schools and directs TEA. The Education Commissioner and TEA implement education laws and policies passed by the legislature. The State Board of Education sets what students are expected to learn and chooses instructional materials and textbooks. Your school is where education policy comes to life.

Vote with Confidence

Education is one of the most important investments Texas makes in its future. The decisions made today will influence the opportunities available to children, the strength of our workforce, the competitiveness of our economy, and the quality of life enjoyed by future generations.

As you evaluate candidates and education policy, consider asking thoughtful questions such as:

Student Success

- How will this proposal help every child reach their full potential?
- How should Texas measure student success beyond standardized tests?
- How will we know whether students are graduating prepared for college, careers, military service, skilled trades, or entrepreneurship?
- What steps can improve early literacy, particularly third-grade reading proficiency?

Families & Early Childhood

- How can Texas strengthen early childhood education and school readiness?
- What role should affordable, high-quality childcare play in supporting children's development and helping parents participate in the workforce?
- How can schools, families, and communities work together to improve student success?

Teachers & Public Schools

- How can Texas recruit, support, and retain outstanding teachers and school leaders?
- How should public schools be funded to meet the needs of a growing and diverse state?
- What resources do schools need to provide safe, effective learning environments and prepare students for future success?

Education Savings Accounts & School Choice

- What goals should the Education Savings Account program achieve?
- How should the state measure whether the program is improving educational outcomes for students?
- How should Texas balance educational choice with strong public schools?
- What accountability measures should apply to all educational programs receiving public funding?
- How can families receive clear, accurate, and transparent information when comparing educational options?

Workforce Development & Higher Education

- How can Texas better prepare students for high-demand careers?
- What role should Career and Technical Education, apprenticeships, community colleges, universities, and military pathways play in workforce development?
- How can Texas ensure employers have access to the skilled workforce needed to support continued economic growth?
- How should outcomes-based funding for community colleges be evaluated to determine whether it is improving student success and meeting workforce needs?

Accountability & Results

- How should Texas measure the success of its education investments?
- What outcomes should taxpayers expect from education funding?
- How will leaders evaluate whether education policies are producing meaningful improvements for students, families, employers, and communities?
- What evidence supports the proposed approach, and what tradeoffs should Texans consider?

Reasonable people may support different approaches to improving education. Understanding the goals, evidence, tradeoffs, and expected outcomes can help Texans thoughtfully evaluate education policy and **vote with confidence**.

Texas Matters Takeaway

Education is about more than schools—it is about preparing the next generation, strengthening families, developing the workforce, and creating opportunities for every Texan.

Whether the conversation focuses on early childhood education, public schools, teachers, educational choice, Career and Technical Education, higher education, or workforce development, the shared goal remains the same: **helping every child reach their full potential while preparing the workforce that will shape the future of Texas.**

By understanding how Texas' education system works, exploring the choices before us, and evaluating policies based on measurable outcomes, Texans can help build an exceptional education system that supports strong families, thriving communities, and a prosperous future.

Explore what matters most to everyday Texans.

Understand the choices.

Vote with confidence.

Trusted Resources

- [Texas Education Agency \(TEA\)](#)
 - [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#)
 - [Texas Workforce Commission](#)
 - [Texas 2036](#)
 - [Commit Partnership](#)
 - [Raise Your Hand Texas](#)
 - [Education Research Center at Texas A&M University](#)
 - [Local independent school districts](#)
 - [Community colleges and universities](#)
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