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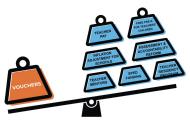
>>>>> MAKING AN IMPACT <<<<<



**Bob Popinski** Senior Director of Policy

89th Legislative Session

## 89th Legislative Session Timeline



#### 88th Legislative Session

School funding stalls due to voucher debate



'At what cost?': Many Central Texas districts make cuts as they face million-dollar deficits

#### **School Budget Shortfalls**

Districts begin to cut programs, close campuses,, adopt deficit budgets



#### Session Begins: New Speaker, Legislative Priorities Announced

Burrows wins securing votes from 46 Democrats and 39 Republicans.









#### **State Revenue Estimate**

Comptroller announces: \$23.8 beginning balance



### Texas Two-Step: Vouchers and School Funding

\$1 Billion voucher program and \$8.5 billion for public schools





Senate Republicans gained a seat, shifting the body to 20R/11D; House Republicans gained two seats, changing the body to 88R/62D. 11 of the 15 Abbott endorsed candidates cruised to victory.



## 89th Legislative Session

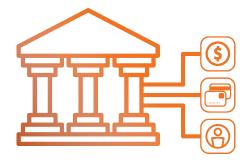


January 14, 2025 – June 2, 2025

140 days every two years



1,200+ education bills
100+ passing every session



**\$23.8 billion** beginning balance

Leave with **\$3.9 billion** remaining under the pay-as-you go limit





## **The Big Picture**



**\$338.0** billion

for 2 years state budget

(All Funds)







Bills Vetoed ??



## **Key Education Themes from Legislative Session**

- **1. \$8.5** billion in new school funding, greatly appreciated support, but short of inflation-adjusted needs
- 2. Investment in teachers and teacher preparation pipelines
- 3. Movement on overhauling STAAR and A-F accountability, but will have to wait until 90th Legislative Session to try again
- 4. Major new voucher program established
- 5. Increase in state mandates for public school classrooms
- 6. Focus on parental rights, DEI bans, library materials
- 7. Property tax relief continues to be major legislative priority



## Governor Greg Abbott's Emergency Items

- Property Tax Reform at least \$10 billion
- ✓ Water infrastructure
- **Teacher Pay**
- Expanding Career Training
- School Choice
- Bail reform
- 🖊 Texas Cyber Command



#### What is an emergency item?

According to the Texas Constitution, the House and Senate can't pass legislation during the first 60 days of a regular session. There are only two exceptions: When four-fifths of either chamber votes to suspend that rule or if the governor declares the matter an emergency. This session's 60th day is March 14.



EMERGENCY ITEM:
RAISE TEACHER
PAY



## Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick's Education Priority Items



- SB 2 (**ESAs)**
- SB 4 (property tax relief)
- SB 10 (10 Commandments in schools)
- SB 11 (prayer in schools)
- SB 12 (parental rights)
- SB 13 (library materials)

- SB 19 (taxpayer-funded lobbying ban)
- SB 24 (anti-communism curriculum)
- SB 26 (teacher pay)
- S<del>B 27</del>/HB2 (teacher rights)





## Two-Year State Budget (2026-27 Biennium)

(IN MILLIONS)	ESTIMATED/BUDGETED	CCR SB1	BIENNIAL	PERCENTAGE
ALL FUNCTIONS	2024–25	2026-27	CHANGE	CHANGE
Article I – General Government	\$21,639.1	\$11,908.4	(\$9,730.7)	(45.0%)
Article II – Health and Human Services	\$100,854.2	\$105,732.8	\$4,878.6	4.8%
Article III – Agencies of Education	\$123,475.2	\$134,664.7	\$11,189.5	9.1%
Public Education	\$90,965.0	\$100,300.0	\$9,335.0	10.3%
Higher Education	\$32,510.2	\$34,364.7	\$1,854.5	5.7%
Article IV – Judiciary	\$1,241.2	\$1,232.0	(\$9.2)	(0.7%)
Article V – Public Safety and Criminal Justice	\$19,485.3	\$19,771.9	\$286.6	1.5%
Article VI – Natural Resources	\$11,055.8	\$8,063.7	(\$2,992.0)	(27.1%)
Article VII – Business and Economic Development	\$49,832.2	\$48,477.9	(\$1,354.3)	(2.7%)
Article VIII – Regulatory	\$5,891.9	\$6,695.6	\$803.7	13.6%
Article IX – General Provisions	\$0.0	\$930.1	\$930.1	N/A
Article X – Legislature	\$520.8	\$540.3	\$19.5	3.7%
Total, All Articles	\$333,995.6	\$338,017.2	\$4,021.6	1.2%





## School District Budget Shortfalls

#### **Challenges Facing Public Schools**

- Double-digit inflation since 2019
- COVID-19 funding cliff
- Enrollment decline in some school districts, increased pressure from charter expansions
- Increased school safety requirements
- SPED funding (identification)
- Political pressure of recapture ballooning
- Funding Complications: Comptroller Property Value Study/Formula Transition Grant Expiration/SHARS funding
- Inaction by 88th Legislature

\$19.6 billion needed to have same purchasing power as 2019







## House Bill 2 by Buckley/Creighton (Funding)

\$8.3+ billion
increase in
public education
funding for the
biennium

## Texas has to fund two years at once

\$4.0+ billion 2025-26 school year

\$4.3+ billion 2026-27 school year



## Texas Public Education: The Funding Gap







## **Key Takeaway**

230+ page school funding bill that provides teacher pay raises and other much needed funding for public schools through new allotments and programs

- **Basic allotment change:** Basic allotment is increased from \$6,160 to \$6,215, freezes golden penny
- **Teacher pay raises** based on district size and years of experience
- New Support Staff Allotment
- Allotment for Basic Costs: Provides \$1.3 billion for new allotment to relieve budget pressures on certain operational costs
- Other Funding Formula Changes: \$2.2 billion for special education, full-day pre-K, early learning, school safety, and Career & Technical Education (CTE) funding, Teacher Incentive Allotment, math and literacy academies





85

New TEA staff to implement HB 2 provisions

**135+** new TEA staff for all legislation

28 new Comptroller staff for ESA program



Funding Breakdown of HB 2	Amount
Teacher Compensation	\$3.7 Billion
Other Staff Compensation	\$500 Million
Teacher Preparation	\$135 Million
Special Education	\$850 Million
Early Learning	\$433 Million
Bluebonnet	\$243 Million
CTE	\$153 Million
School Finance Reforms	\$430 Million
Safety	\$430 Million
Charter Facility	\$200 Million
Small/Mid Allotment	\$318 Million
Fixed Costs Allotment	\$1.3 Billion
Other Funding Adjustments	\$300 Million



School District Category	FY 2026 (\$)	FY 2027 (\$)	
50,000 and over	589	595	
25,000 to 49,999	676	608	
10,000 to 24,999	604	554	
5,000 to 9,999	591	541	
3,000 to 4,999	886	832	
1,600 to 2,999	1008	958	
1,000 to 1,599	1224	1168	
500 to 999	1535	1466	
Under 500	1772	1679	
Major Urban & Major Suburban	616	581	
Other City & Peripheral Suburban	689	646	
Town	832	786	
Non-metropolitan	986	925	
Rural	1760	1701	
Charters	759	697	
Non-Taxing Districts & Charters	765	707	
STATE TOTAL	\$724	\$681	

HB 2:
Average per
Student
Funding Increase





## Teacher Pay Provisions

Teacher pay increase based on size of district and years of experience:

#### School districts with 5,000 students or less:

- At least three but less than five years of experience: \$4,000
- Five or more years of experience: \$8,000

#### School districts with more than 5,000 students:

- At least three but less than five years of experience: **\$2,500**
- Five or more years of experience: \$5,000

This allotment is not a one-time bonus. It continues in subsequent school years as an allotment.

Effective date 2025-26 school year



Adjusting for inflation, the median Texas teacher earned roughly

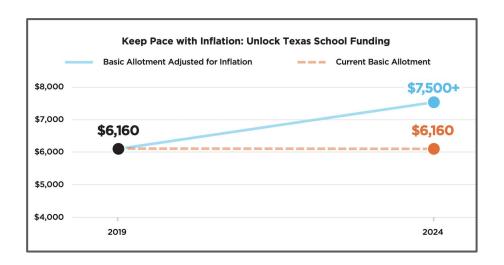
\$5,000 less in 2023 than in 2020

Source: Charles Butt Foundation 2024 Texas Teacher Poll





### Basic Allotment Increase



- Basic allotment is increased from \$6,160 to \$6,215.
- This **\$55** increase occurs by freezing the current golden penny yield in place and using what was supposed to be an increase in that funding mechanism to fund the basic allotment. This incremental adjustment will occur every biennium based on growth to the yield.
- Repeals provisions requiring ISDs to use 30 percent of new revenue in a year in which the basic allotment is increased to provide compensation increases



## Support Staff and ABC Allotments

- Support Staff Allotment: Each district is entitled to \$45 per regular program average daily attendance (ADA) to provide salary increases for non-administrative staff
- Allotment for Basic Costs: Provides \$1.3
  billion for new allotment to relieve budget
  pressures on certain operational costs
  (transportation, fees related to rehiring
  retired teachers, insurance, payroll taxes,
  employee benefits and contributions,
  utilities, and property and casualty
  insurance). This will provide \$106 per
  enrolled student to each school district or
  charter.

Staff Category	Full-Time Equivalents	Avg. Base Salary
Teachers	374,922	\$62,463
Campus Administration	25,836	\$86,738
Central Administration	9,488	\$116,028
Professional Support	86,316	\$73,758
Total Professionals	496,562	\$66,713
Paraprofessionals	88,258	\$24,963
Auxiliary Staff	191,701	\$33,173
Total Staff	776,521	\$53,688



## Pre-Kindergarten Provisions

- Districts must seek private provider partnerships before building or leasing new pre-K space.
  - Qualified providers include: Texas Rising Star (3+ stars), Head Start, nationally accredited, Texas School Ready.
- Pre-K partnership intermediaries (up to 4 designated by TEA) verify if qualified providers are unavailable.
- Private partners must receive at least 85% of district funding per student (waivers allowed).
- Tuition-based pre-K allowed only after intermediary determines no qualified providers available.
- Redistribute FSP funding provided under the Early Education Allotment to provide funding for full-day prekindergarten to districts operating a full-day prekindergarten program. Any remaining funds would be distributed back to school districts through the Early Education Allotment





## HB 117 by Schoolcraft (Early Education)

#### Governor's Task Force on Governance of Early Childhood Education and Care

#### **Purpose**

- Establishes Governor's Task Force to address governance and operational challenges in early childhood education and care
- Task force attached to Texas Education Agency (TEA).

#### • Key Responsibilities

- Examine current governance and regulations across state and federal programs.
- Recommend high-quality pre-K standards.
- Review agency roles (TEA, HHSC, TWC) to improve efficiency.
- o Consider large-scale redesign of early childhood program administration.
- Align agency data systems, metrics, and strategic plans.

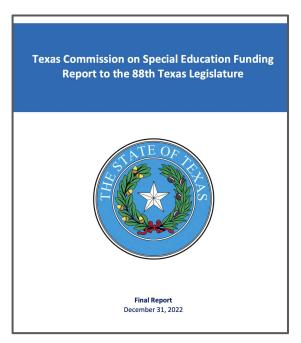
#### **Reporting Requirement**

Submit policy and budget recommendations to Legislature by December 1, 2026.





## Special Education Funding (HB 2/SB 568)



- Beginning in fiscal year 2027, the bill would amend the special education allotment to provide funding based on service groups and tiers of intensity of service to be defined by the commissioner. The commissioner would be required to submit proposed weights for each tier to the LBB for the upcoming biennium.
- Increases special education college, career, and military readiness outcomes bonus amount to \$4,000 per student (from \$2,000).
- Creates an allotment of \$1,000 per full initial special education evaluation
- Increases transportation weight





## More on Special Education

- Special Education Oversight: TEA must provide technical assistance.
- Residential Placement Materials: HHSC, with TEA and stakeholders, must develop materials about educational residential placements for eligible students.
- Approved Placement List: The commissioner must create rules and a list of approved facilities for residential or day placements
- Parent-Directed Services for Students
  Receiving Special Education Services
  (PDSES) reworked. Establishes a waitlist
  if applications exceed available
  funding.

Commissioner required to flow **\$250 million** through <u>new</u> formulas during the 2026-27 school year





## Expanded CTE Program

- TEA will establish and update (every 5 years) a measurable statewide goal for career readiness, including credentials earned in high school.
- High school graduates enrolled in P-TECH or R-PEP can continue dual credit courses at no cost if still enrolled in the program.
- JROTC courses count as approved CTE programs.
- More dual credit options embedded in CTE programs.
- Expanded focus on industry-recognized credentials and workforce alignment.





## Additional Days on the School Year

- Expands the incentive for Additional Instructional Days to include districts offering 30 days of half-day instruction for students in prekindergarten through eighth grade and would reduce the required minimum number of minutes of operational and instruction time from 180 to 175 instructional days.
- Provide a 50 percent increase to the incentive amount for districts offering at least 200 full days of instruction to students in prekindergarten through eighth grade.
- TEA must establish **a grant program** to support districts and charters in qualifying for the Additional Instructional Days incentive, prioritizing those aiming to maximize use of the extended calendar.





## Other Funding Provisions

- The school safety allotment is increased from \$10 to **\$20 per student** and from \$15,000 to **\$33,540 per campus.**
- Increases charter facilities funding. An annual per ADA allotment equal to the lesser of the state average interest sinking fund tax rate imposed by school districts for the current year multiplied by the guaranteed level of state and local funds per student per cent of tax or the Basic Allotment multiplied by 0.06. The bill would remove the \$60 million cap on charter facilities funding
- Updates to the Bilingual Education Allotments
- Creates a Regional Insurance Cost Variation allotment





## Math and Literacy Programs

- Math Achievement Academy Requirement: By 2030–31, all K–3 math teachers and campus leaders must attend a state-supported mathematics academy; TEA must assist districts, monitor implementation, and report progress to the legislature.
- Reading Tutoring Grant Program: Establishes a \$250 Early Literacy
   Intervention Allotment under the FSP for certain K-3 students receiving reading interventions (excluding those already counted under the dyslexia allotment), capped at 10% of enrolled K-3 students; also creates a \$400 Supplementary
   Supports Grant per eligible student, with future FSP entitlement reductions beginning in FY 2031 for districts whose students received the grant but failed third grade reading or entered special education



## Early Education Assessments

- Foundational Reading and Math Instruments: The commissioner must adopt, update, and publicly post approved diagnostic tools for K–3 reading and math, including a process for districts to submit tools for approval and ensure multiple options are available.
- Adaptive Vocabulary Pilot Program: TEA must develop and implement an adaptive vocabulary assessment for K–3 students to measure and support vocabulary development



## What Funding Formulas **Did Not** Make It?

• Fine Arts Allotment

 Adding pre-K to the Early Education Allotment

- Comptroller Property
   Value Study Adjustment
- High School Advising Allotment

- Compensatory Education Allotment Increase
- Eligibility for pre-K: special education students





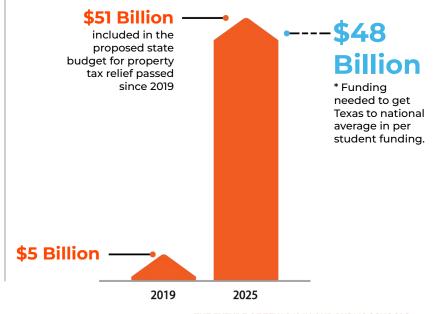
## Property Tax Relief

#### SB 4 (and others)

- Increases the homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000
- Increases the 65 and older exemption from \$10,000 to \$60,000,
- Expands the business personal property tax exemption from \$2,500 to \$125,000.

Note: **\$3.5 billion** to maintain existing property tax relief passed by the 88th Legislature (2023). **\$3.9 billion for new** relief (homestead exemptions), another **\$2.6 billion** for ongoing tax rate compression.

## The Legislature knows how to pass bold, complex, and costly measures when it's a priority



## Bills with Shorter-Term Implementation Requirements



## Shorter-Term Implementation

- 1. Instructional Transparency & Posting Requirements (SB 12)
  - Syllabi and instructional plans must be posted online before each semester, school club provisions, grievance policies
- 2. Standardized GPA Calculation (SB 1191)
- 3. New student discipline policy (HB 6)
  - TEA must prepare a report listing all new or amended school discipline laws by the start of the 2025-26 school year to be distributed to parents
- 4. Cell Phone Policy (HB 1481)
- 5. Library Materials (SB 13)
- 6. 10 Commandments and School Prayer (SB 10, SB 11, SB 965)
- 7. Teacher Certification Provisions (HB 2)
  - TEA plan





## SB 12 by Creighton (Parental Rights)

- Requires parental notification and written consent for mental health screenings, surveys, medical procedures, and sex education.
- Prohibits school employees from assisting students with "social transitioning" (name/pronoun changes, gender expression).
- Bans instruction, programming, or guidance on sexual orientation and gender identity (PreK-12).
- Prohibits any district-level **Diversity, Equity, and** Inclusion (DEI) duties related to hiring, training, or programming.
- **Student Clubs:** Prohibits clubs based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Requires written parental consent for student participation in all school-sponsored clubs.

#### Key Takeaway

Expands parental rights over education decisions, medical consent, access to student records, and health services. Adds annual certification requirement that districts are complying with parental rights and content restrictions.





## SB 12 (Parental Engagement)

Districts must adopt a parental engagement policy that:

- Creates an online portal for parents to submit comments to district leaders.
- Requires the school board to prioritize and present parent comments at the start of each board meeting



## SB 12 (Instructional Plans)

#### **Instructional Plans Must Be Posted Online**

- Each semester, districts must post online:
  - An instructional plan or course syllabus for every class offered.
  - Teachers must submit syllabi or plans to the district before the semester starts.

#### **Instructional Materials Access**

- Districts must post a notice on their homepage informing parents of their right to:
  - Review all instructional materials, including lesson plans, reading lists, library materials, and other content.
  - Submit requests to access this material.

#### **Library Book Check-Out Records**

 Parents gain access to records showing which books their child has checked out from the school library.





## SB 12 (Updated Grievance Policy)

#### **Multi-Level Appeal Process**

- Campus principal or central office administrator.
- Central office appeal (if district policy allows).
- Superintendent or designee.
- Full school board (or board committee of at least 3 trustees).

#### **Procedural Guarantees**

- Parents have at least:
  - o 60 days to file a grievance from when they knew or should have known of the issue.
  - 20 days to appeal decisions at each level.
- Hearings must occur within 10 days of filing; written decisions must be issued within 20 days of hearings.
- Board must hear final appeals within 60 days; decide within 30 days
- If a district loses five or more grievances in a year, the superintendent must testify before the State Board of Education





# SB 12 (Facility Usage Report)

- Districts must annually report square footage, land acreage, and enrollment capacity for each facility and campus.
- Report includes current enrollment by grade level, facility usage type (instructional, admin, CTE, etc.), and lease vs. ownership status.
- TEA will publish statewide reports; sensitive data may be withheld for security.
- Commissioner can adopt rules to define student capacity using staffing and facility data.



# SB 1191 by Creighton (Standard GPA)

- Requires TEA commissioner to develop a statewide standard method for calculating high school GPA.
- GPA calculation must apply equal weight to AP, IB, OnRamps, and most dual credit courses.
- Allows separate weight for dual credit courses included in the Workforce Education Course Manual.
- All school districts must adopt and use the standard GPA calculation.
- Commissioner must develop and implement the method as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date



# HB 6 by Rep. Leach (Discipline)

- Suspension Rules: Out-of-school suspension capped at 3 days; in-school suspension is not capped. Principal must review every 10 days and document
- Virtual DAEPs: Schools may establish virtual DAEPs Allows virtual DAEP placement <u>only</u> <u>when no</u> JJAEP alternative exists.
- Parental Involvement in School Disciplinary
   Placements: School boards may adopt a
   policy to involve parents in school disciplinary
   placements. If the parent and student comply
   with the behavioral agreement, the student
   may receive a reduction in the disciplinary
   placement period.

#### **Key Takeaway**

Provides more flexibility to manage student discipline. Teachers may remove a student from the classroom after a single incident of disruption or misconduct. The student cannot return to the teacher's classroom without the teacher's written consent, unless a return-to-class plan is developed through a conference where the teacher participates.





# HB 1481 by Fairly (Cell Phone Policy)

- Requires school districts and charter schools to adopt a written policy restricting student use of personal communication devices (cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, etc.) during the school day on school property.
- Allows districts to ban devices entirely or require them to be stored during the school day; districts may confiscate devices and dispose of them after 90 days if unclaimed.
- Mandates exceptions for students who need devices for medical reasons, IEPs, 504 plans, or other documented health and safety needs.
- Defines "personal communication device" broadly but excludes devices provided by the school itself.
- TEA must publish model policy language to help districts implement the new requirements.
- Board must adopt no later than 90 days after effect of legislation.





# SB 13 by Paxton (Library Materials)

### Key Takeaway

Gives parents broad control over what library materials their child can access, while imposing strict state standards, public review, and expanded parental oversight of all school library acquisitions and challenges.

- have **online access** to their child's school library catalog and can submit lists of materials they do not want their child to access. Schools must block student access to these materials for that child.
- Local School Library Advisory Councils: School boards may create parent-majority advisory councils to review acquisitions and challenges. Councils become mandatory if petitioned by 10% of district parents or 50 parents, whichever is fewer. Councils review acquisitions and challenges before board action.



# Library Materials, continued

- **Board Approval for Acquisitions**: All new or donated library materials must be reviewed and approved by the board of trustees in a public meeting after a 30-day public review period. Exceptions apply only for replacements or additional copies of existing, previously approved materials.
- **Challenge & Appeal Process**: Parents, staff, or residents may formally challenge library materials. Challenged materials are immediately restricted until review is complete. Board must rule on challenges and appeals in open meetings, considering council input and expert reviews on age appropriateness
- **Library Standards & Content Restrictions**: All school library materials must comply with **state-adopted standards**. Prohibited materials include harmful material (per Penal Code), sexually explicit content, indecent or profane content, and links to prohibited websites. Standards must be reviewed at least every five years.



# 10 Commandments and Prayer in School

- **SB 10 by King** mandates that all public elementary and secondary school classrooms in Texas display a durable poster or framed copy of the Ten Commandments in a conspicuous place. The posters must meet specific size and formatting requirements, containing only the text of the Ten Commandments in a legible font. Schools that do not have such a display must accept privately donated posters that meet the bill's criteria, though they are not required to purchase them with district funds. The law is set to take effect in the 2025-2026 school year.
- **SB 11 by Middleton** requires school boards to vote on a resolution to implement a policy ensuring that every campus provides students and staff the opportunity to pray or read the Bible, or another religious text. Additionally, parents must submit a consent form that waives their right to file a legal claim under state or federal law related to the adoption of this policy.
- **SB 965 Parker** prohibits a school or another state governmental entity from infringing on the right of a district or school employee to engage in religious speech or prayer while on duty, unless the infringement is necessary to further a compelling state interest.



# HB 100 by Wilson (Instructional Materials)

- Prohibits schools from purchasing or using instructional materials on the *State Board of Education's rejected list*.
- SBOE must publish a proposed rejected list at least 45 days before final rejection, allowing publishers time to revise materials.
- Applies to all instructional materials, including *Open Education Resources* (*OER*).
- Districts may use *local funds* for instructional materials not on the rejected list.
- Effective beginning 2026-2027 school year.

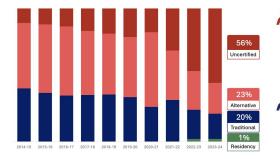




### **Teacher Certification**

#### **First-Time Teacher Hiring**

Texas public schools hire approximately 50,000 teachers annually, with about one-third being rehires of experienced teachers. Among the estimated 30,000 hires that are new to the profession each year, an increasing number are uncertified.<sup>15</sup>



Retention Varies with Preparation







#### **Teacher Certification & Hiring Requirements**

- General Rule
  - School districts may not hire uncertified teachers as teacher of record for foundation curriculum courses (core subjects under Section 28.002).
- Temporary Flexibilities
  - District of Innovation (DOI) Flexibility
  - For the 2026-2027 school year only, DOI districts may hire uncertified teachers for:
    - Courses outside of reading language arts and math
    - Grade levels above grade 5 (i.e., grades 6-12)
    - This provision expires September 1, 2027.







### Submit Plan To TEA

### **Commissioner Delay Option**

- A district may submit a plan to the Commissioner to delay full implementation of the certification requirement.
- The plan must show a reasonable timeline and strategy to comply.
- Delays may be approved through the 2028-2029 school year.
- This delay authority expires September 1, 2030.





### Certification Incentive

#### **Teacher Certification Incentive**

- TEA will provide a **one-time \$1,000** incentive payment per eligible teacher to school districts.
- To qualify, teachers must:
  - Have been hired as a first-year teacher in 2022-2023 or 2023-2024.
  - Have been uncertified as of January 1, 2025.
  - Earn a standard certificate by the end of the 2026-2027 school year.
  - Remain continuously employed by the district since hire.
- This incentive program expires **September 1, 2028**.





# HB 27 by King (Financial Literacy)

Adds **personal financial literacy** as a required course for high school graduation.

- Students must complete ½ credit in personal financial literacy plus 1 credit in economics, world geography, or world history
- SBOE must allow AP courses with similar content to count toward the personal financial literacy requirement.
- TEA will maintain a list of **free, open-source curriculum options** for districts to use.
- Applies to students entering 9th grade starting in 2026–27 school year.
- Phases in gradually students already in high school before 2026–27 follow previous graduation requirements.





# SB 25 by Kolkhort (Nutrition and Health)

### K-12 Education Changes

- Continues requirement for daily physical activity for students in pre-K to grade 8 (30 minutes/day or weekly alternatives) for ISDs and charters
  - Four semester for grades 6-8, not six as proposed
- Prohibits using recess or PE restrictions as discipline.
- Updates health curriculum K-8 to include nutrition education aligned to Texas Nutrition Advisory Committee (TNAC) guidelines.
- Requires high schools to offer elective course on nutrition and wellness (1/2 credit).



# SB 24 by Campbell (Communist Regimes)

Requires new social studies curriculum standards (grades 4–12) on communist regimes and ideologies.

#### **Topics include:**

- History of communist movements in the U.S.
- Atrocities of communist regimes (e.g. Soviet Union, China, Cambodia, Cuba, Latin America).
- Comparative analysis: communism vs. U.S. founding principles (freedom, individual rights, free enterprise).
- Modern threats posed by communist regimes.
- Common precursors to communist revolutions.
- Tactics used to spread communist ideology (propaganda, censorship, forced conformity).
- First-person accounts from victims of communism.
- SBOE must consult victims of communism and national organizations while developing standards.
- Applies beginning 2026–27 school year.





# HB 20 by Gates (Applied Science)

- Creates the Applied Sciences Pathway program to allow high school students (grades 11-12) to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an industry certificate through partnerships between school districts and higher education institutions.
- **Targets high-wage, high-growth industries** such as welding, HVAC, information technology, cybersecurity, transportation, robotics, construction management, and more.
- Allows career and technology courses to substitute for certain graduation credits, if the student passes required end-of-course exams for prerequisite subjects.
- Requires districts to open participation to all eligible juniors and seniors and maintain dual credit agreements with higher education partners.
- Counts participation toward full-time student funding (ADA) and is set to expire September 1, 2031 unless reauthorized.







# HB 2 (Teacher Training and Certification)

#### **Educator Preparation Programs**

- Strengthens approval, renewal, and curriculum standards for all EPPs.
- Board may review curriculum any time for compliance with updated standards.
- Programs must integrate inclusive practices, evidence-based instruction, and flexible instructional planning for all students.
- Board must review EPPs at least every 5 years (can require more frequent reviews).
- Commissioner to create instructional materials and faculty training for EPPs

### Key Takeaway

HB 2 transforms Texas' teacher pipeline by creating new certification pathways, expanding residency-based training, adding salary incentives, and increasing state oversight and support for educator preparation programs.





# Preparing & Retaining Educators Through Partnership Programs

Establishes **Preparing and Retaining Educators through Partnership (PREP) Programs** to provide preservice classroom experience through partnerships between districts/charters and educator preparation programs (EPPs).

TEA must provide **technical assistance and support** to participating districts and EPPs.

#### Creates a **PREP Program Allotment**:

- Districts receive base funding of **\$8,000 to \$24,000 per teacher candidate**, depending on program type.
- Additional \$1,000 to \$3,000 per candidate based on high needs and rural factor (max factor = 4.0).
- Extra **\$2,000 bonus** for candidates in special education or bilingual certification.

\*Allotments are limited to **40 individuals** per district per year for teacher residency, grow-your-own, and mentorship programs and to **80 individuals** per district per year for teacher candidates completing traditional or alternative preservice hours.





### **New Teacher Certifications**

State Board must adopt rules to create four main certificate types:

#### Standard Certificate:

Earned through traditional or alternative teacher prep programs.

#### • Enhanced Standard Certificate:

• Earned through teacher residency preparation programs.

#### • Intern with Preservice Experience Certificate:

 1-year certificate for candidates in preservice alternative routes who have enough practice hours to serve as teacher of record, but haven't finished full certification.

#### • Intern Certificate:

- 2-year certificate for candidates in alternative routes who meet all other requirements to serve as teacher of record but haven't completed full certification
- Pedagogy tests may only be required if tied to specific subject/grade content.
- Board may also create additional specialized or other certifications





# Minimum Salary Schedule for Certificates

### **New Salary Minimums for Certain Certificates:**

- \$3,000 salary bump for standard and preservice intern certificates.
- \$6,000 salary bump for enhanced standard (residency) certificates.
- Salary differentiation prohibited after 5 years of experience.



### Teacher Incentive Allotment Details

- Adds a new designation levels to the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).
- Changes how **nationally board-certified teachers** are designated under TIA.
- Directs the commissioner to identify and designate certain campuses as "Enhanced TIA Schools."
- Expands TEA's role in providing technical assistance for local optional teacher designation systems.
- Creates a new grant program for districts and charter schools to support the expansion of local optional teacher designation systems.
  - Grants must align with individual district needs and help build regional leadership capacity





# New Designations and Allotments

Designation	Base Amount (Old)	Base Amount (New)	Max Amount (Old)	Max Amount (New)	High-Needs/ Rural Bump (Old)	High-Needs/ Rural Bump (New)
Master Teacher	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$32,000	\$36,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
Exemplary Teacher	\$6,000	\$9,000	\$18,000	\$25,000	\$3,000	\$4,000
Recognized Teacher	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$9,000	\$15,000	\$1,500	\$2,500
Acknowledged Teacher (new)	N/A	\$3,000	N/A	\$9,000	N/A	\$1,500
National Board Certified (new)	N/A	\$3,000	N/A	\$9,000	N/A	\$1,500



### National Board Certified Teacher Review

- The **State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)** is authorized to periodically **review and revoke or reauthorize** the **National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT)** designation to ensure alignment with Texas law. This includes prohibitions on Common Core, non-phonics literacy methods like three-cueing, and compliance with state curriculum standards.
- A mandatory review of NBCT standards must be completed by **December 31, 2026**; failure to act by then results in **automatic revocation** of the designation. This provision expires **September 1, 2027**.
- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) must contract with a third party to provide liability insurance and guidance on teachers' rights and duties. Districts cannot interfere with a teacher's access to these services.
- Contractors may not use state funds for political activity or advocacy related to public school policy but must respect teachers' First Amendment rights.



### **Enhanced TIA**

To qualify for **Enhanced TIA System designation**, a district or charter school must implement a **comprehensive evaluation and support system approved by the commissioner**.

#### The plan must:

- Use a **commissioner-approved performance-based evaluation** for principals and assistant principals.
  - Ensure **nearly all classroom teachers**, regardless of subject or grade, are eligible for designation.
- Adopt a **TEA-approved performance-based compensation system**—not across-the-board raises (except inflation adjustments).
- Include a **local plan approved by TEA** to place highly effective teachers at high-needs campuses

#### **Funding:**

• Districts designated as Enhanced TIA receive **a 10% funding boost**. The commissioner increases their TIA entitlement by multiplying it by 1.1





### HB 2: Other Teacher Workforce Provisions

- Provides free pre-Kindergarten for children of teachers. TEA estimates 6,000 newly eligible FSP kindergarten students would generate 2,790 students in ADA
- Allows TEA to contract with third party for program to provide
  liability insurance to teachers and assistance in understanding the
  teacher's rights, duties, and benefits. TEA estimates the annual
  liability insurance cost would be \$125 per educator with the
  educator contributing \$25 and a \$100 subsidy from the state.





# Other provisions

- TEA to provide school districts with information and technical assistance regarding staffing models, scheduling, and teacher compensation models; programs that would encourage high school students to become teachers, including apprenticeships
- TEA to collect certain data from public schools to address teacher retention and recruitment
- Requires the SBEC to waive bilingual and special education certification
  application fees and exam fees for a candidate's first test attempt and would
  require SBEC to pay the vendor who administers the certification exams the fee
  associated with the exam for which the fee was waived.



# HB 2242 by Oliverson (Teacher Task Force)

Creates 13-member commission to study teacher job satisfaction and retention

- Appointed by Governor (5), Lt. Governor (4), Speaker (4)
- Includes classroom teachers, legislators, administrators, trustees

#### Commission duties:

- Recommend ways to reduce paperwork, administrative burdens, and compliance requirements
- Study discipline laws, administrator quality, and potential impacts of declining federal funding

TEA provides staffing, support, and contracting authority for commission work

Report due to Governor and Legislature by December 31, 2026







### What Gets Measured?

#### Student Achievement Domain

Elementary/Middle Schools	Weight
STAAR (Approaches, Meets & Masters Grade Level)	100%
High Schools	
STAAR	40%
College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)	40%
Graduation Rate	20%

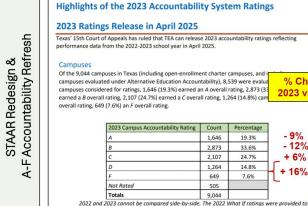
Source: TEA





# HB 4 by Buckley (Testing, A-F) FAILS to PASS

- Rep. Buckley passed HB 4 from House, 143-1
- Moves away from STAAR
- Adds additional indicators
- Gives more transparency



Source: https://tea.texas.gov/texasschools/accountability/academicaccountability/performance-reporting/2023accountability-rating-system

systems to reference alongside 2023.

22% or 1,913 campuses received a D or F rating. This is a 240% increase from the 561 D/F campuses in 2022.

% Change

2023 vs 2024

- 9%

- 12%

+ 6%



## House Version of HB 4 Compared to Current Law

Topic	Current System	CSHB 4
Assessment	STAAR test. A criterion-referenced test, meaning test assess how well students have mastered specific skills or knowledge within a defined curriculum	TEA shall adopt a nationally-normed referenced assessment instrument, applying to grades 3-8 only. Effective date: September 1, 2025 (2025-26 school year). A nationally-normed referenced test compares a student's performance to the performance of a large, representative group of students, often at a national level. The goal is to determine where a student stands relative to their peers. Aligns with Senate Bill 2 (ESA testing requirements)



### What are the benefits of a norm-referenced test?

- Parity with ESA program: If a nationally-normed test is good enough for private schools (and ESA students), then it should be good enough for public schools.
- **Broader, Meaningful Comparison:** Nationally normed tests allow Texas to compare student performance not just within the state, but also against national benchmarks—offering a clearer picture of how we're doing relative to the rest of the country.
- **Designed for Measuring Growth:** Tests like i-Ready and NWEA MAP are built to measure growth over time, enabling more intentional and consistent tracking of student progress throughout the year—unlike STAAR's post-hoc estimates.
- **Immediate (or Nearly Immediate) Results**: Nationally normed tests usually provide quick or immediate feedback, unlike STAAR's 4–6 week delay. This allows teachers to adjust instruction in real-time (immediate acceleration).
- **Greater Confidence in Results:** Tests like PSAT, SAT, i-Ready, and MAP are widely trusted for their validity. STAAR, in contrast, is often met with skepticism from parents and educators who question what the scores really mean.
- Less Testing Time: Nationally normed tests typically take only 2–3 hours per administration—much less than STAAR's 6–7 hour reading test and 3–4 hours for other subjects—freeing up valuable instructional time





# HB 4, continued

Topic	Current Law	CSHB 4
Subjects Tested	Multiple subjects including assessment not required by federal law: social studies and U.S. History	Moves 8th grade social studies and high school U.S. History to a local option (from being required to a local option)
Assessment Format	Multiple choice and extended constructed responses (ECR)	Places a 25% cap on tech-enhanced and constructed responses. 75% of the test will be multiple choice.
Writing Assessment  Extended constructed-response questions require students to write an extended response in their own words based on a reading passage.		Integrated writing within reading assessments. No separate/standalone essays/ECRs



# HB 4, continued

Topic	Current Law	CSHB 4
New Local Student Engagement and Workforce Development (SEWD) Indicators	Not included	Choose from one of five local indicators: % of students in school-sponsored extra- and co-curricular programs; Student participation in full-day PK; Literacy and math academy completion for K-5 teachers; CTE completion in 6-8 Advanced grade placement. Indicator must be ≥10% of achievement or progress rating.
Domain Weighting (3–8)	Heavy reliance on STAAR	At least 50% assessment, rest from growth and SEWD indicators
Domain Weighting (9–12)  100%: 70% CCMR/Grad, 30% STAAR		Max 40% STAAR; 40% CCMR, 20% graduation rate





# SB 2 by Creighton/Buckley (Vouchers)

Allows every Texas student, pre-K (3 and 4 year olds) through 12th grade, to apply for ESA whether in public school, private school, or homeschool

#### Prioritization:

- Children with disabilities in households under 500% of the federal poverty level
- Children in households under 200% FPI
- Children in households between 200-500% FPI
- Children in households over 500% FPI (limited to 20% of total expenditures)

# Private school vouchers are now law in Texas. Here's how they will work. Texas will give participating families about \$10,000 to pay for their kids' private schooling. Other details about the program, set to launch in 2026, are unclear. BY JADEN EDISON MAY 3, 2025 UPDATED: 2 PM CENTRAL SHARE REPUBLISH ✓ Gov. Greg Abbott signs legislation authorizing a private school voucher program into law at the Texas Governor's Mansion in Austin on May

3, 2025. Bob Daemmrich for The Texas Tribune





#### Annual ESA Amount

**\$1 billion** in funding for 2026-27 school year

\*5% allowed for Education Assistance Organizations 3% for Comptroller

- Each participating student will receive 85% of the state and local revenue a public school student receives under the Foundation School Program.
- Special education students would receive an amount based off of the individualized education program not to exceed \$30,000.
- Homeschool students would receive \$2,000.
- School district is entitled to receive an allotment in an amount equal to the basic allotment multiplied by 0.1 for the student's average daily attendance at the district or school for that school year



# Projected Cost Increase in Voucher Program



**2026-27** Fiscal Biennium

2026 = \$10,610,728 2027 = \$989,389,272



**2028-29** Fiscal Biennium

2028\*= \$3,072,133,443 2029\*= \$3,171,412,404



**2030-31** Fiscal Biennium

2030\*= \$3,980,883,053 2031\*= \$3,980,883,053





#### Eligible Private Schools, Vendors, and Expenses

#### **Expenses**

- Tuition and fees (private school, higher education, online courses, industry-based credential programs)
- Textbooks, instructional materials, and uniforms
- Public school classes/services (non-ADA eligible)
- Academic assessments
- Private tutoring or teaching services
- Transportation to education services
- Educational therapies (not covered by Medicaid, CHIP, or insurance)
- Computer hardware/software (capped at 10% per year)

#### **Private Schools and Vendors**

- Requires private schools to be accredited and be in operation for two consecutive years before being eligible provider.
- Vendors must be pre-approved by Comptroller





### Testing and Transparency Requirements

- For enrolled participants in grade 3-12 an annual administration of a nationally norm-referenced assessment instrument or the appropriate assessment instrument required under Subchapter B (STAAR).
- Students returning to public school mid-year would be excluded from A-F accountability
- **No A-F accountability** requirements of private school or vendors

The **State Auditor** is responsible for making sure certified Educational Assistance Organizations SB 2 provisions, including:

- Verifying that students are eligible to participate in the program.
- Making sure funds are only used for approved educational expenses.
- Analyzing individual spending transactions
- Randomly auditing 10% of all applications.
- The Comptroller must share their annual report, including test data, with the Commissioner of Education.







### SB 401 by Paxton (UIL Participation)

- Requires public schools participating in UIL activities to allow non-enrolled students (such as homeschool students) to participate if they meet eligibility requirements, unless the district or charter school adopts a policy opting out, not later than date specified under league rule.
- Non-enrolled students must participate at the school they are zoned to based on residence and must provide standard proof of residency.
- If a student's zoned school has opted out, they may participate at the **nearest school that allows** non-enrolled student participation.





### SB 569 by Bettencourt (Virtual Schools)

- Creates New Chapter 30B to replace the repealed Virtual School Network (Chapter 30A), authorizing virtual and hybrid courses, programs, and campuses with detailed requirements for curriculum, funding, student rights, and teacher protections.
- Requires Commissioner Authorization for any full-time hybrid or virtual campus, including a year of planning, academic and operations plans, and performance evaluation metrics. Revocation procedures are defined for underperformance or misuse.
- Protects Student & Teacher Rights: Students cannot be forced into virtual/hybrid instruction (unless at a charter school). Teachers cannot be coerced into dual-modality instruction and must receive specific training



#### SB 571 by Bettencourt (Do Not Hire Registry)

- Requires expanded reporting of employee and service provider misconduct to SBEC and TEA; creates criminal penalties for failure to disclose in affidavits.
- Authorizes TEA and SBEC to temporarily suspend or restrict certifications and employment based on arrests or misconduct allegations; SOAH must hold expedited hearings.
- Expands TEA's authority to review district investigations and directly investigate certain misconduct cases.



#### HB 4623 by Little (Liability)

### Applies to public schools and open-enrollment charters; includes wide range of school employees and board members.

- Schools can be held liable if grossly negligent, reckless, or engage in intentional misconduct in hiring, supervision, or employment
- Liability applies if employee commits:
  - o Sexual misconduct (defined by multiple Penal Code sections).
  - Fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Lawsuits must name both the school and the employee involved.
- Maximum actual damages capped at \$500,000 per claimant.
- Prevailing party entitled to court costs and attorney's fees.
- Remedies under this law are in addition to existing legal remedies.
- Waives governmental immunity for schools and eliminates official immunity protections for employees in these cases.
- Applies to acts or omissions occurring on or after September 1, 2025





### HB 3372 by Metcalf (Personal Services)

#### Bans administrators from receiving financial benefit for personal services to:

- Vendors doing or seeking business with their district
- Education businesses (curriculum/admin services)
- Other districts, charters, or ESCs
- **Exception for Non-Superintendent Administrators:** Administrators (excluding board members, superintendents, or assistant superintendents) may receive personal financial benefits from contracts if the board approves.
  - a. Board Approval Required: The school board must determine the contract poses no harm or conflict of interest and that the services are performed entirely on the administrator's personal time.
- Disclosure and Penalty: Approved contracts must be publicly disclosed under state law, and violations carry a \$10,000 civil penalty per occurrence.





#### Other Bills Sent to Governor

- SB 314: Ban on certain food additives in school meal program
- **SB 207:** Excused absences for mental health appointments
- SB 991: Chronic absenteeism included in dropout risk and data reporting
- SB 2185: Changes to bilingual education allotment
- SB 2314:: Launch of the "My Texas Future" planning portal
- SB 843: TEA database for school district bond and tax data
- **HB 2674:**: Prohibits regulation of homeschool programs
- SB 2929: Removal of unruly spectators from school sports events
- HB 1586: Expanded exemptions from required school immunizations
- **HB 1851**: Surplus law enforcement equipment donation to school districts
- SB 1502:: Authority for districts to adopt tax rates above voter threshold
- SB 1415: Expands sales tax holiday for school-related items





#### Policies that **Did Not** Pass

SB 533: November only election dates for school bonds

SB 875: Stricter penalties for school board and superintendent electioneering

SB 19: Ban on taxpayer funded lobbying

HB 1249: Writing portfolio assessments

HB 2249: Aspiring teacher scholarship program

SB 686: Open student transfers among ISDs

HB 4814: FURRIES Act

SJR 12: Constitutional Amendment for parental rights SB 3061: Banning children of elected officials from participating in ESAs





#### What's Next?

- 1. Governor has **until June 22** to sign or veto bills; unsigned bills become law automatically
- 2. State agencies begin rulemaking and issuing implementation guidance
- 3. Teacher and staff pay increases start in the 2025-26 school year
- 4. **Headlines about school closures and staffing cuts** will continue
- 5. Begin to harness the **momentum** on major issues (funding and accountability) for the 90th Legislature.



## THANK YOU

**GET INVOLVED, GET ENGAGED, AND GET CONNECTED** 





SCAN TO SIGN UP FOR EMAIL AND TEXT ALERTS

#### **GET CONNECTED:**







