

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Educational Opportunity & Enrichment, Select  
For HJR 1

Compiled on: Friday, November 10, 2023 10:10 AM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

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Hearing Date: November 10, 2023 9:00 AM

Ann Thompson, Mrs.  
Retired Public School Educator  
Hurst, TX

Thank you for supporting measures which secure school safety and making sure these measures or mandates are funded adequately.

Jessica Scott  
Self  
Houston, TX

Hello, I am a parent of a child in Spring Branch ISD and a supporter of public education. It is the duty of our elected officials to fully fund the Texas public school system. All children in Texas deserve access to a free and appropriate education. I am asking you fully fund public schools first before considering vouchers to subsidize private education with public funds. Cutting funds not only affects the students but it affects the access to school choice programs.

Emily Russell  
Public schools  
Haslet, TX

No vouchers, no ESAs, no public funds for private schools!

Kay Lunceford  
Self  
Dallas, TX

We don't need vouchers

Frank and Nancy Schultz  
Self. Retired public schoolteacher  
Spring, TX

As a retired teacher, I do not want vouchers. Public schools need our support.

TERESA LOPEZ

Cornerstone Church School Choice  
San Antonio, TX

Requesting your support for school choice. I cannot afford to send my children to a private school without the financial support this bill would provide.

Dawn Sand  
Self, teacher  
Bryan, TX

We should have more lock down drills and fewer fire drills. We have far more students killed in schools each year by active shooters than fires.

Aleisha Fuller Moore  
Self  
Lantana, TX

I am opposed to using public dollars to fund private school vouchers. Our public schools deserve to be funded at an increased rate. I DO NOT support the establishment of an education savings account plan! Do NOT use public dollars to provide wealthy families with funds to send their children to private/religious schools. Our country has had a stained history with withdrawing students from public schools as a way to avoid having certain children (typically affluent) to attend school with more diverse populations in public schools. When segregation was no longer legal and public schools became integrated, a large number of prejudiced/racist families removed their children from public schools. They created "Christian" academies to ensure that their children would not attend school with diverse children. Fast forward to our current situation. There is a heavily funded movement to cater to those who would prefer to see public schools privatized. It all comes down to money. If we follow the money trail then we really will see why our governor would be so insistent on vouchers. Families who choose to send their children to private/religious schools, have every right to do so. They SHOULD NOT be given access to an educational savings plan. I DO NOT support educational savings plans/VOUCHERS! I am a proud public school educator who believes that ALL children should have access to a quality, well-balanced public education.

Judd Oats  
Self  
Honey Grove, TX

No to vouchers

Jennifer Pederson  
Self  
Sulphur Springs, TX

Vote no on any and all bills that would take public funds and give them to private schools or for homeschool use. Vote no to vouchers. Put Texas teachers and students first. Increase teacher pay and fund public schools.

Maria Trevino  
Self Teacher  
MCALLEN, TX

Education is going through a crisis. There are too many teachers retiring or changing careers due to the lack of support, low pay, excessive workload, and stressful environment. Teachers must earn HIGHER PAY and equitable benefits to balance their economy. Let's put the money where it belongs: in the public school system. WE SAY NO TO VOUCHERS. NO MORE TESTING, and let's focus on teaching and learning.

Helen Panzera

Self

Plano, TX

I strongly oppose this and any voucher bill. Please restore education funding after the severe cuts in the late 2000s.

Martha Eberle, Ms

self -- R.N., retired

Dripping Springs, TX

To clutter up an already cluttered TX Constitution, with provisions that are solved by not passing HR 2, is the way to go.

Ronald Cunningham, Mr.

self/retired

Willis, TX

I support this bill

Mary Eidson

Retired Asst. Supt. 30 years in TX Public Ed.

Pinehurst, TX

Public dollars belong in public schools!

Hunter Lopez

Seneca- TX Freedom Network

San Antonio, TX

Keeping tabs with others has shown people who are super-rich (Super Majority×Simple Minority) havemade it clear they will talk one before they lose a boat or charter/ guns in school. No to the Super-Luxury tax or to the super-rich in general, sorry but stay away from teachers and their funds let the professors declare their children as a region or if about the Church their Hostel or Brotheral seeing trans running out prisons for women and men acting for the wives you run state babies through an orange face and guess what MCarthy had to keep under wraps open units in state system in all of america because of Mexico and Russia supports Fedral doors for family while leaving state systems and church to kick out the old US, memory servers well Orthadox Stance was as old as Russia rejecting the church know Southpaw vs. Orthadox... Family de 13 y 18 or snakes(14 and spiders of those dead deeds killing the states and allow SA[South America] to stay in with Russia(Polly Petrova and all other A-F or a-q degree marks w/ no percentiles %100-%1 and transit/visa men or transexual 5 Letras, sorry to My other culuture showing you all have done too much now to no more numbers just Letras or Upper(major/Minor)or lower(aq or upside down water symbol a-q)21 or 22 catch.

Paula Mercado, Cpt

Self

Converse, TX

Please, no school vouchers for Texans! This will siphon funds away from our public schools and they will collapse. We already have Charter Schools, which are public schools for kids that need a greater challenge. Let's put more money into our public schools to make them stronger for all Texans.

Delcie Thomas

Self, Teacher

Beaumont, TX

Please vote yes, and collaborate to make this happen. Thank you!

Lars Kuslich  
self  
Dayton, TX

Why would you need a constitutional amendment for this? Are y'all trying to avoid financial accountability? Reject this.

Delcie Thomas  
Self, Teacher  
Beaumont, TX

We need to fully fund public schools. No to vouchers, no to  
Yes to teacher pay raises, yes to para pay raises.

David Pate  
self, CFO  
Rowlett, TX

I am opposed to ESA's/vouchers. Public funds should not be given to private schools or home school families without the exact same financial and educational accountability requirements that public schools are subject to. If the financial and educational accountability requirements are necessary for school districts with publicly elected boards then private schools and home schoolers should be subject to them as well.

Sincerely,  
David Pate

Charles Byrn, Mr  
Self  
Abilene, TX

First, thank you for the opportunity to speak about these issues. Second, HJR1, why do we keep putting decisions on the backs of taxpayers instead of doing the job we sent you to Austin to do. We just approved several new funds in this last election for many different things, the House needs to live within the means as we do as Texas residents.

Gary Stiles, Chief of Police  
GISD Police  
Gatesville, TX

I have been working in Texas in law enforcement for 34 years, the last 5 working in schools. There are difficulties in funding a district police department from the budgeting process through the State, because you are competing for monies used to educate children, pay teachers, fund transportation...etc. Most people who oversee the budget process have no background in law enforcement, hiring, recruitment, training or retention. Many look at diverting money to school safety at a campus where they have never experienced at threat as a waste of money. Our department is currently full staffed because I can match or exceed local police agencies in salary and benefits. However, I have been working with adjacent rural districts to attempt to place school resource officers at their campuses under our agency. The \$15,000 stipend per campus severely underfunded the requirement to place an officer at every school campus. These small districts cannot afford to hire an officer in the current environment for police agencies who are understaffed across the State. In example, one neighboring district has one campus that houses K through 12 (total number of students is about 200). The Superintendent is working with me to place an officer there under our licensing and training. Their ISD received \$15,000 for school safety and does not have enough funding to hire or equip a school resource officer. I could hire an officer to fill that slot and retain them long term for a salary in the mid \$50,000 range, but hen you have to be able to purchase a police vehicle, and uniforms, and equipment. The rural districts do not currently have the money available in their budgets to be able to do this. Thank you for allowing me to comment, and I hope this was helpful. Chief Stiles, Gatesville ISD Police

Mary Myers  
Self, Texas Realtor  
PLANO, TX

How can Texas see continued growth if we have an inferior public school system! Vote NO to VOUCHERS, YES to PUBLIC SCHOOLS!! Yes to funding public school teachers, staff and retirees! NO to vouchers!!! Texas should not be known as one of the lowest paying teacher salaries in the US! Texas should not be known for taking taxpayer money to fund private schools that most people can't afford! NO to vouchers for private schools! Keep our taxpayer money where it is needed in public schools!!!

Robin Metting  
Self retired teacher  
Victoria, TX

Public school safety should be high priority.

Beverly Cherry, Sister and Guardian  
Representing on behalf of my brother's rights  
Houston, TX

I feel this is a necessary bill to be approved to protect our love ones at BSSLC.

Paul Dunk  
self teacher  
Katy, TX

If you agree that it is improper for the Governor to hold school funding hostage to his voucher dictates then stand up to him by separating the two issues and insist he fund public schools before the voucher discussion is continued. The school choice game, not choice for all, is all about politics and has nothing to do with helping our kids.

Pamela Elliott

SELF, parent, data analyst of 24 years with Apple

Austin, TX

I am writing to you as a parent of two children in Austin ISD Elementary school and an Austin resident since 1999 to urge you to vote AGAINST HB1 AKA The Voucher Scam that would expand school voucher programs in our state.

School vouchers are a harmful policy that divert public funds from public schools to private schools, without improving student outcomes

or accountability. Some of the reasons why I oppose school vouchers are:

- School vouchers weaken public education by reducing the resources and support available for public schools and students. Public schools serve all children, regardless of their background, ability, or need.

They are the backbone of our democracy and our communities. Taking away public funds from public schools undermines their quality and equity.

- School vouchers do not guarantee better academic results for students. According to several studies, students who use vouchers to attend private schools do not perform better than their peers in public schools, and in some cases, they perform worse. School vouchers also do not improve graduation rates, college enrollment, or civic engagement.

- School vouchers lack accountability and transparency. Private schools that receive voucher funds are not subject to the same standards and regulations as public schools, such as academic testing, teacher qualifications, curriculum, health and safety, anti-discrimination, and special education. They can also deny admission or expel students based on their academic, behavioral, or religious criteria. Parents and taxpayers have little or no say in how voucher funds are spent or how private schools operate.

As a Mom and PTA Executive Board member and also not an absolute Monster, I care deeply about the education and well-being of ALL children in our state. I believe that public funds should be invested in public schools, not in private schools that serve a select few.

I ask you to stand with me and the majority of your Texas residents who overwhelmingly oppose school vouchers and support public education.

Please vote NO on HB1 Voucher Scam. Thank you for your service and your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Pamela Elliott, 5101 Dusty Trail Cv, Austin, TX 78749

HELEN WRIGHT

Individual Texan

Lago Vista, TX

I support public schools and an equal education for all. No vouchers. The funding of vouchers reduces public education funding.

Karen Collins

Self

Roanoke, TX

Reject vouchers

Richard Collins  
Self  
Roanoke, TX  
Reject vouchers

Rebecca Yezak  
BSSLC  
Bryan, TX

I support the bill to ensure Parental Freedom for parents to determine the appropriate setting for their child.

Lewis Lepore  
Self / Teacher  
Sugar Land, TX

I am for Texas House Bill 2.

Lewis Lepore  
Self / Teacher  
Sugar Land, TX

I am for HJR 1.

Marissa Randolph  
Self - retired teacher  
Rhome, TX

The only way to protect schools, our children and our teachers, is to put a limit on the sale of automatic weapons. Period.

Sharon Bennett  
Self, retired  
New Braunfels, TX

No, put the money toward undoing Abbott's lax gun control laws. We need better background checks, mandatory requirements for gun safety training and mandatory licensing. Mental health history needs to be included or mental health assessments done. Personal references should be required. There should be a longer waiting period to purchase a gun, rifle, semiautomatic. This bill is nothing but reactive. Solutions to gun violence and school safety need to be proactive.

Maritza Wong, Mrs.  
Self - Stay at home mom  
Manvel, TX

This approach to school safety is completely backwards. Please address the guns. There are several bills proposed in this special session that would help keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them. The measures that would do this are not complicated, it is only a lack of political will to pass legislation that would ACTUALLY make students and all Texans safer. The money, the energy, the focus being directed toward hardening measures is mentally exhausting as a parent of two public school students. Address gun violence before it has the chance to occur. Thank you.

Stephanie Ellis  
Self  
San Antonio, TX  
Vote Yes

Allen Ahern, Mr  
Self  
San Antonio, TX

We need this! Put Texas on the map and support parents!

Alayna Siemonsma  
Self  
Conroe, TX

As a member of the Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching, a 501(c)(3), I urge you to continue to designate National Board Certified Teachers as “recognized” or to designate them as “exemplary” under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).

House Bill 1 proposes that, under the Teachers Incentive Allotment (TIA), National Board Certified Teachers automatically earn a “nationally board certified” designation, equivalent to a new, fourth level of designation, “acknowledged.” Under HB 1, National Board Certified Teachers would continue to generate \$3,000-\$9,000 in allotment funding.

This is concerning because, currently, National Board Certified Teachers earn a “recognized” designation, which is the third level of designation. Under HB 1, the “recognized” designation would have an increased allotment of \$5000 - \$15,000. This change would devalue the incentive that seeks to reward and retain Texas educators who demonstrate exemplary teaching practices and increased student outcomes.

The House Committee on Public Education’s 2022 Interim Report recommended that National Board Certified Teachers be designated as “exemplary.” This esteemed group recognized that the upper levels of the TIA designations are more aligned with the high level of teaching National Board Certified Teachers have demonstrated.

National Board Certified Teachers have met the “gold standard” for teaching. Research shows that National Board Certified Teachers produce 1-2 months of additional learning for their students compared to their peers. To earn National Board Certification, teachers undergo a rigorous process where they demonstrate their content knowledge through an assessment, submit samples of student work and videos of their teaching, and analyze their own instruction.

Designating NBCTs as “Recognized” or “Exemplary” is the best way to reward and retain outstanding Texas teachers, particularly in high-need and rural schools.

Stacey Garcia  
Self-Counselor  
Houston, TX

Please consider this bill to offer private education

Leilani Plougmann  
self / Senior Director at Visa  
Austin, TX

Please, I urge you to vote NO on vouchers (HB1). This will ultimately hurt our severely underfunded Public Schools. Keep Public \$\$\$ in Public Schools! My kids go to public schools and they are fabulous yet the money should stay with public school. Vote NO!

Christine Nguyen

Self- Member of PTA of Bunker Hill Elementary and Cornerstone Academy in Houston, TX

HOUSTON, TX

Vouchers hurt children! Until you have adequately funded children and teachers in public schools, there is no room for ESAs or Vouchers. I believe nothing is more fundamental to making every child's potential a reality than strong public schools. I support policies and policymakers who ensure all children have access to high-quality, adequately funded, and appropriately regulated public schools. It is criminal to have such a huge surplus in the billions of dollars, yet our lawmakers keep prioritizing their own interests rather than the future of our society. It is by educating our young people that we can rise above all of the crime, poverty, and bad choices that individuals are inclined to make without positive influences in their lives, good teachers, and a better school environment. It is at our public schools where our children are supposed to have a refuge to feel safe and learn. Shame on you governor for continually putting your own political interests ahead of the needs of our children.

Kelly Lwakatare

Self

Houston, TX

We do not want school vouchers! Please vote against school vouchers.

Michele Hunt

Self / Educator and parent

Frisco, TX

Please do right by our students and teachers and consider public education funding and vouchers separately. Your insistence on them being tied together is damaging our education system and you risk further detriment by forcing teachers out of the profession.

Christine Matz

Self

Austin, TX

I urge you to vote NO on vouchers. This will ultimately hurt our severely underfunded Public Schools. Keep Public \$\$\$ in Public Schools."

Kathryn Mujezinovic, Self - President of Private Organization

Bunker Hill Elementary - PTA Member

Houston, TX

Vouchers hurt children! Until you have adequately funded children and teachers in public schools, there is no room for ESAs or Vouchers. I believe nothing is more fundamental to making every child's potential a reality than strong public schools. I support policies and policymakers who ensure all children have access to high-quality, adequately funded, and appropriately regulated public schools.

School vouchers hurt education equality, forces at least two school closure in Spring Branch ISD. Other examples of this can be seen with the following situations SBISD faces, if passed:

Student to teacher ratio will increase hurting education in our children and teenagers.

The cost of pre-k will cost families more forcing some families to explore other options.

And special programs will be cut

Taxpayers and parents deserve better. I strongly oppose ESA's and vouchers.

Stacie Schnabel

Self

Argyle, TX

Nov. 9, 2023

Dear Chairman Buckley and House Public Education Committee Members,

This is an URGENT message as we know the Public Education Committee meets tomorrow at 9:00 am! As a member of Argyle ISD, this is my personal written testimony regarding HB1 and how it might best meet the needs of public schools and Argyle ISD.

As you meet tomorrow and in the days ahead, we urge you to adequately address the following as you consider public school finance needs:

Please provide an increase to the basic allotment to match inflation. \$6,700 is a great start, but is not enough to offset the impact of significantly-rising costs. Rising fuel and utility costs, competitively compensating highly-qualified teaching staff, managing fast-growth, and the cost to fund award winning programs for students have put a critical strain on our school finances and ability to effectively operate.

Reconsideration of an ESA program. As a public school advocate, I cannot support a program with such significant administrative costs which will be coming from taxpayer dollars that could be supporting our public schools at a time when they are severely under-funded. Not only that, but the currently-proposed \$10,400 in ESAs is significantly more than the proposed increase to \$6,700 in basic allotment, which is foundationally inequitable.

Additionally, we need solutions for districts impacted by the expiring Formula Transition Grant. While this was a solution in 2019 for some districts that did not receive additional funding by the school finance reform, the FTG expires this year and several school districts, including Argyle ISD, face a major funding cliff. For Argyle ISD, this is 6% of our operating budget and as it currently stands, there is no solution for extending or replacing the FTG. There are less than 100 districts impacted by the FTG, however, it is significant for all of us and must be addressed!

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we need to be able to compensate our teachers fairly. Texas lags behind the national average in teacher pay. We need an increase in funding to give our teachers much-deserved raises. As you consider teacher stipends, please revise these provisions to be permanent rather than one-time payments, as a lack of continuing support will leave our schools unable to sustain fair compensation for our teachers.

As you take these needs into consideration, we hope you will recognize that these challenges are affecting all Texas schools, including high-performing, highly-rated districts like Argyle ISD.

Stacie Schnabel

Daisy Reyes  
Self - bookkeeper  
Corpus Christi, TX

Dear Members of the House Select Committee on Educational Opportunity and Enrichment:

I am writing to express strong opposition to House Bill (HB 1). As a member of The Arc of Texas, and an ally of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), I'm deeply concerned about the negative impact this bill would have on students with IDD.

HB 1's authorization of education savings accounts could divert crucial resources from public schools, affecting the education of students with disabilities. Private schools, lacking accountability and specialized programs, may deny admission or fail to provide adequate support, hindering the academic and social growth of already marginalized students.

I am also greatly concerned about the state supported living centers (SSLCs) provision in Section 29.0056 of HB 1(88(4)) and the negative impact this could have on students with IDD as it could increase the number of institutionalized children with disabilities, posing a detrimental impact on these children and their families.

Both the federal government and the state of Texas recognize that SSLCs are the most restrictive residential placement for children with disabilities. Institutions are not family homes, and children should grow up with their families whenever possible. This principle is acknowledged by the federal government through the Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. OC* and by our state through Texas Government Code Section 531.0245 (SB 368, 77R).

It is inappropriate for school district personnel or the ARD committee to provide parents of students with disabilities information about SSLCs when discussing possible residential options. Local IDD Authorities are the most informed and appropriate entities to provide such information.

Even an additional three students with disabilities residing in an SSLC, as a result of this provision, would incur significant financial burden to the state, costing over a million dollars each year. SSLCs cost Texas approximately \$28,300 per month per resident, significantly more than alternative options such as the Home and Community-based Services (HCS) Waiver Residential program, which costs taxpayers approximately \$6,600 per month per individual. By highlighting SSLCs specifically as an option, there is a risk of influencing families to choose the most costly and restrictive setting.

There already exists a comprehensive residential options brochure, rendering the creation of another brochure a duplication. [Existing brochure: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/services/disability/residential-options-brochure.pdf>]

In conclusion, I urge you to oppose HB 1 and protect the rights of students with disabilities to receive quality, inclusive education. Your rejection of this bill is vital in ensuring that our public education system survives. (At minimum, please remove the SSLC provision from HB 1.)

Sincerely,  
Daisy Reyes

Angela Blackburn

Self

Huffman, TX

I am opposed to this bill and any voucher bill that would infringe on the rights we already have to choose to freely educate our home and private school children. Why has the Republican Party (I am a Republican) tried to get school choice measures passed for 3+ decades? Too many of us know this has become an opportunity to capitalize off of our children rather than allowing their parents to freely educate them. We already have homeschool freedom and parent empowerment in Texas. It is the right and liberty to educate our children without government influence (i.e., the Leeper Decision)

Why has there never been a bill written or presented that is not tied to the mandated assessments?

And those assessments are ALL aligned to the FEDERAL (indeed, Global) standards.

Why is there not a single mandated assessment that is not aligned to the FEDERAL (indeed, Global) standards? I did the research myself.

This looks like another vendor and money funneling scheme to run through our public schools.

We see that you are shoving pork all in this bill, hoping we don't have time to figure out what's in it.

Well we have it figured out!

I am opposed.

Keep home and private schools free as they already are.

Please vote this down!

I am out of time!

Olga Rosino

self TEACHER

Conroe, TX

I stand in firm opposition to any attempt to implement private school vouchers in Texas.

I ask you to stand by your words of support for public education and reject vouchers soundly, once and for all.

Taxpayer-funded private school vouchers have failed in Texas because they're bad policy and bad politics. The state of play is no different today than it was during the regular session when a bipartisan coalition stopped multiple attempts to force vouchers through the legislative process.

No bargain on any form of vouchers is worth diverting Texans' hard-earned tax dollars to unaccountable private schools and risking the damage to our public schools, which are the foundation of our Texas workforce.

There are critical investments that must be made in Texas public schools. Legislative leaders and Gov. Abbott must not hold critical funding for our students' neighborhood public schools and their teachers hostage in an effort to pass a voucher scheme that will defund those schools down the road.

My message as a Texas voter is clear: do not use teachers and public schools as an excuse to bargain on vouchers.

Thank you.

Dina Kuhlman

Self

Argyle, TX

I am sending this public comment about HB1 to voice my unequivocal concerns and disapproval of the Proposed establishment of ESA programs. Public education is already underfunded in Texas and this proposed bill will paralyze the equity for ALL students and fundamental right for education of ALL children in Texas. We trust you'll uphold your oath to protect children - especially the most vulnerable with special needs and in poverty - and ensure access to quality education for all.

Fernanda Razo

Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching

Houston, TX

As a member of the Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching, a 501(c)(3), I urge you to continue to designate National Board Certified Teachers as “recognized” or to designate them as “exemplary” under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).

House Bill 1 proposes that, under the Teachers Incentive Allotment (TIA), National Board Certified Teachers automatically earn a “nationally board certified” designation, equivalent to a new, fourth level of designation, “acknowledged.” Under HB 1, National Board Certified Teachers would continue to generate \$3,000-\$9,000 in allotment funding.

This is concerning because, currently, National Board Certified Teachers earn a “recognized” designation, which is the third level of designation. Under HB 1, the “recognized” designation would have an increased allotment of \$5000 - \$15,000. This change would devalue the incentive that seeks to reward and retain Texas educators who demonstrate exemplary teaching practices and increased student outcomes.

The House Committee on Public Education’s 2022 Interim Report recommended that National Board Certified Teachers be designated as “exemplary.” This esteemed group recognized that the upper levels of the TIA designations are more aligned with the high level of teaching National Board Certified Teachers have demonstrated.

National Board Certified Teachers have met the “gold standard” for teaching. Research shows that National Board Certified Teachers produce 1-2 months of additional learning for their students compared to their peers. To earn National Board Certification, teachers undergo a rigorous process where they demonstrate their content knowledge through an assessment, submit samples of student work and videos of their teaching, and analyze their own instruction.

Designating NBCTs as “Recognized” or “Exemplary” is the best way to reward and retain outstanding Texas teachers, particularly in high-need and rural schools.

Nasreen Rouin

PRINCIPAL intern at DVISD and parent of kids in AISD

AUSTIN, TX

I urge you to vote NO on vouchers. This will ultimately hurt our severely underfunded Public Schools. Keep Public \$\$\$ in Public

Karma Yoakem, Reverend

self

Manor, TX

I am against any bill that will give public tax dollars to private schools and institutions. School vouchers do not give parents choice or power, they only enrich private schools that have no accountability to the public.

Laura Davis

Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching  
Manchaca, TX

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Designating NBCTs as “Recognized” or “Exemplary” is the best way to reward and retain outstanding Texas teachers, particularly in high needs or rural schools.

Lindsey VanDyke, Dr.  
self, physician  
Mansfield, TX

under no circumstances do I want public school monies to be allocated to private schools, especially religious affiliated schools. Public schools deserve the resources that we have put into them. Families who want private school deserve to make that decision independently and fund it personally.

Rachel Shaffer  
Self  
Katy, TX

I do NOT support vouchers or ESA’s of any kind in Texas. Keep public education monies in public education.

Amanda Kiehle

Self - teacher

Schertz, TX

Action needed today!

Dear friend of accomplished teaching,

As you might have seen, a 4th special legislative session convened this week to consider education issues and state funding.

The newly filed HB 1 would automatically recognize NBCTs as "acknowledged," a fourth level, below the recognized designation. NBCTs would continue to generate the same allotment, \$3,000-\$9,000, while teachers with a recognized designation would see an increase in the allotment they generate.

We encourage you to submit comments through the legislature's portal today or tomorrow urging the legislature to designate NBCTs as recognized or exemplary. Select HB 1 as the bill you want to comment on.

You can use the template comments pasted below in whole or in part.

The sooner the better. The comment portal may close tomorrow.

We invite you to encourage others to this very important cause today. Our collective action will make a difference!

In partnership,

Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching

Comment Template — Feel free to use these comments as is, in part, or not at all!

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Designating NBCTs as "Recognized" or "Exemplary" is the best way to reward and retain outstanding Texas teachers, particula

Amy Drake  
Self  
Lubbock, TX

As a member of the Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching, a 501(c)(3), I urge you to continue to designate National Board Certified Teachers as “recognized” or to designate them as “exemplary” under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).

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Shelley Keating  
PTA  
Katy, TX

Say NO TO VOUCHERS! We need to fully fund public schools before we can even think about giving money to private schools. Out public school teachers are underfunded, please show them they are not undervalued! Tax dollars belong in public schools! Say Yes to CTE funding.

Melissa Swallow  
self, teach, NBCT  
Longview, TX

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Christopher Sebesta  
Birdville ISD  
Fort Worth, TX

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Luz Renteria  
Self  
Houston, TX

It is a disgrace for the State of Texas to continue using Public School funding as a pawn for political games. Fund our schools!

Public schools should be funded first and foremost before discussion of ESAs.

ESAs and public school funding should be voted on in separate bills.

Public School education is of utmost importance to this state and country and needs to be prioritized as such!

Respectfully,  
Luz Renteria

Kyle Wrather  
self - manager  
Austin, TX

Texas public schools and teachers already face funding challenges. Vouchers for private institutions will only make that worse. This will particularly threaten rural public schools in Texas. Oppose.

vicki Jinks  
Self  
Fort Worth, TX

I am NOT in favor of establishing an education savings account program (AKA vouchers for private school paid for by PUBLIC funds)

Meredith Maycotte

self, parent

Austin, TX

I urge you to vote NO on vouchers. This will ultimately hurt our severely underfunded public schools. Keep public \$\$\$ in public schools.

Rebecca Hart

Self, Behavior Analyst

Plano, TX

Vouchers will cost the government and people more. It will also cause a greater divide between socioeconomic classes. A better use of our funding for education should be to provide the districts more money to fund the actual cost of education.

Melissa Ortiz

Stone Oak Elementary school PTA

San Antonio, TX

I believe that vouchers like this will hurt our public school children. Until children and teachers in public schools are adequately funded, there is no room for ESAs or Vouchers. There is nothing more important than strong public schools. I support policies and policymakers who ensure all children have access to high-quality, adequately funded, and appropriately regulated public schools. They NEED socialization not more home schooling. My child can not do dual language immersion from a home school. Please push for the right thing here.

Stephanie Stoebe

Round Rock ISD, Teravista Elementary

Round Rock, TX

The newly filed HB 1 would automatically recognize NBCTs as "acknowledged," a fourth level below the recognized designation. NBCTs would continue to generate the same allotment, \$3,000-\$9,000, while teachers with a recognized designation would see an increase in the allotment they generate. National Board Certified Teachers lead the nation in the highest and most distinguished certification possible. Please help us show the advanced education and training we have worked so hard to attain.

Please urge the legislature to designate NBCTs as recognized or exemplary.

Dr. Rebecca Palacios, Educational Consultant  
Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching  
Corpus Christi, TX

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Lindsey Stevens  
Self, Teacher  
Woodway, TX

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Kristi Robishaw

self

Houston, TX

I am a native Houstonian who attended private schools. My 3 boys have attended the public schools in our district from K to 12th grade, with our middle son attending a private school for only middle school. Two of my boys are dysgraphic (simply put a disconnect between relaying info from their brain to their hands). One son received help from a Neuhaus therapist outside of his public school day. We paid my middle son's school extra to enter their program which had the same Neuhaus therapy. My point to all of this is that simply going to a private, parochial or charter school isn't always the answer. Some of these schools require extra funds to help a child if they have special needs beyond traditional learning. A voucher wouldn't help that. I am not a proponent of vouchers but I am a proponent of choice and compromise. Level vouchers and public education to the same scrutiny for state regulations. Give public schools the increased amount per student allotment to equal today's inflation. We want our kids interested in leading us in the future whether that is attending a career/technical center or a 2/4 year college. It takes a good foundation. That foundation can be a variety of school choices, but they must be equal. It will take work, but it also takes listening to those in the field, not PACs or special interest. We elected you to make hard choices for the good of our state. Help our state's future by moving us in the right direction...increase student allotment for public schools and make a level playing field between vouchers and public schools.

Nancy Henkes

TxNBCT, self, teachers

Hamilton, TX

As a member of Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching, I implore you to reconsider HB 1 giving NBCT teachers a designation of "acknowledged". National Board Certified Teachers have met the "gold standard" for teaching. Research shows that National Board Certified Teachers produce 1-2 months of additional learning for their students compared to their peers. To earn National Board Certification, teachers undergo a rigorous process where they demonstrate their content knowledge through an assessment, submit samples of student work and videos of their teaching, and analyze their own instruction.

My school district has been pursuing TIA for the last three years and has yet to achieve it. In the mean time, I have been pursuing NBCT so I can become a better teacher, support my students better, and gain the recognition that I deserve as a hard-working teacher that is invested in making my community and world a better place one student at a time. NBCT standards are at a higher level than most standards. To rank an NBCT as the lowest ("acknowledge") designated TIA level devalues the hard work that an NBCT achieves. The teachers that work 10 hours a day plus hours on the weekend, deserve more than to be "acknowledged." What about the districts that can't qualify for TIA? The NBCT that worked hard for designation only receives base acknowledgement? How is that equitable?

In December, I will find out if I have made the qualifications to be an NBCT. I've worked hard to achieve it included meeting all the demands that are put on me by the district and the state. And if I don't meet the National Board for Teaching Standards, I will try again, because that is what a good teacher does.

I ask for your support for teachers across the state of Texas. Students need good teachers, parents need good teachers, our community and nation needs good teachers. If our youth are the future, then our teachers are the foundation. Support that foundation. If a teacher qualifies as an NBCT, it is guaranteed that our future is in good hands.

Sincerely,

Nancy Henkes

Hamilton Junior High

8th Grade RLA

Tasca Shadix

Self - teacher

Austin, TX

NO ON HB1 -- NO VOUCHERS! -- As a teacher, mother, and 5th generation Texan, I am strongly against vouchers, which will further harm our public schools. Keep our taxpayer money in our PUBLIC schools. NO VOUCHERS!

Kathy Trinh  
Self - Self-Employed  
Houston, TX

Our district has had to pay a hefty recapture payment over the past few years and now we are \$35M in deficit for our upcoming budget. The \$5M cut that the district is proposing affects the preschools, special programs for gift children, and the closing of a few elementary schools. This does not cover the other \$30M deficit! We are taking away resources and opportunities from children. Please consider raising the basic allotment per child. We need to account for teacher retention incentives, inflation, and the cost of learning for kids in today's society with the advances in technology and the speed of information from sources that are not provided within the schools. My child is enrolled in a very special GT school and she has expressed her concern that her school might be closing. She is worried that learning won't be fun and pulled out \$5 to help with the budget shortfall. Why should a 9-year-old have to worry about this? I strongly urge our representatives to push for more funding in public education.

Ruth Dalma Torres  
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards  
Heartland, TX

As a member of the Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching, a 501(c)(3), I urge you to continue to designate National Board Certified Teachers as “recognized” or to designate them as “exemplary” under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).

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Designating NBCTs as “Recognized” or “Exemplary” is the best way to reward and retain outstanding Texas teachers, particularly in high-need and rural schools.

Tatiana Valencia  
Teacher  
AUSTIN, TX

As a member of the Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching, a 501(c)(3), I urge you to continue to designate National Board Certified Teachers as “recognized” or to designate them as “exemplary” under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA). Research shows that As a National Board Certified Teachers produce 1-2 months of additional learning for my students compared to my peers. To earn National Board Certification, I underwent a rigorous process where I demonstrated my content knowledge through an assessment, submitted samples of my students work and videos of my professional practice, and analyze my instruction. Please I urge you to continue to designate National Board Certified Teachers as recognize or even better designate us as exemplary. Thank you

JP Fugler  
Self - Teacher  
Mineola, TX

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Patricia Entwhistle  
Bendwood Elementary SBISD  
Houston, TX

Public schools must be funded fully before vouchers redirecting taxpayer money to private education could be considered. Yes to teacher pay raises.

Laura Betancourt  
Texas Partners in Policymaking  
Levelland, TX

Dear Members of the House Select Committee on Educational Opportunity and Enrichment:

I am writing to express strong opposition to House Bill (HB 1). As a member of The Arc of Texas, and an ally of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), I'm deeply concerned about the negative impact this bill would have on students with IDD.

HB 1's authorization of education savings accounts could divert crucial resources from public schools, affecting the education of students with disabilities. Private schools, lacking accountability and specialized programs, may deny admission or fail to provide adequate support, hindering the academic and social growth of already marginalized students.

I am also greatly concerned about the state supported living centers (SSLCs) provision in Section 29.0056 of HB 1(88(4)) and the negative impact this could have on students with IDD as it could increase the number of institutionalized children with disabilities, posing a detrimental impact on these children and their families.

Both the federal government and the state of Texas recognize that SSLCs are the most restrictive residential placement for children with disabilities. Institutions are not family homes, and children should grow up with their families whenever possible. This principle is acknowledged by the federal government through the Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. OC* and by our state through Texas Government Code Section 531.0245 (SB 368, 77R).

It is inappropriate for school district personnel or the ARD committee to provide parents of students with disabilities information about SSLCs when discussing possible residential options. Local IDD Authorities are the most informed and appropriate entities to provide such information.

Even an additional three students with disabilities residing in an SSLC, as a result of this provision, would incur significant financial burden to the state, costing over a million dollars each year. SSLCs cost Texas approximately \$28,300 per month per resident, significantly more than alternative options such as the Home and Community-based Services (HCS) Waiver Residential program, which costs taxpayers approximately \$6,600 per month per individual. By highlighting SSLCs specifically as an option, there is a risk of influencing families to choose the most costly and restrictive setting.

There already exists a comprehensive residential options brochure, rendering the creation of another brochure a duplication. [Existing brochure: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/services/disability/residential-options-brochure.pdf>]

In conclusion, I urge you to oppose HB 1 and protect the rights of students with disabilities to receive quality, inclusive education. Your rejection of this bill is vital in ensuring that our public education system survives. (At minimum, please remove the SSLC provision from HB 1.)

Sincerely,

Laura Betancourt  
1911 Ave. H  
Levelland, TX 79336

Jennifer Brown

Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching

Corpus Christi, TX

As a member of the Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching, a 501(c)(3), I urge you to continue to designate National Board Certified Teachers as “recognized” or to designate them as “exemplary” under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).

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Ashley Lockridge

self-educator

San Antonio, TX

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Richard Grill

Self

Bandera, TX

At a time when the State is flush with money, money that is available now but may not be in the future, the legislature should be funding priority legislation that may only require one-time funding with possible future upgrades. The decision to buy down M&O tax rates is much appreciated, but can it be sustained each biennium? I am asking you to ensure all schools have the physical means to accomplish the safety and security of students and staff. Since Robb, the State has mandated numerous school facility enhancements to help protect the schools and some funding has been provided, however there is much work still to do. Each school has its own unique needs, and having the funding and flexibility to secure their buildings must be a priority. Providing \$10 per ADA is insulting and speaks very poorly of the priorities of the State leadership. Furthermore, requiring an armed security person on each campus is great commitment however \$15,000 per campus to hire a TCOLE certified security person is plainly not enough. Considering the cost alone prompts more attention to funding, but the legislature must also understand that there is a shortage of law enforcement officers in Texas; I know this as my father and brother are officers in a major metropolitan police department. This shortage and gross underfunding is causing the majority of rural and small districts to arm their employees. School staff are not adequately trained to take on this role; and they never will be as this is not their primary function. You must also consider why there is a teacher shortage, it is because they are being asked to do more with less resources and public support; now asking them to be armed to protect themselves and their students. PLEASE consider this fact: How well is the State Capital secured? There are multiple well-armed DPS Troopers at each entrance and these Troopers are paid with the same tax dollars as schools. Why are the lives of the legislators and State Leadership more important than the children of this State?

Patrice Shotwell, Ms

self

Austin, TX

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Olena Goryunova

self

Grapevine, TX

Hello,

As a homeschooling mom, I'd like to share my thought about HRJ 1. Clearly, the bill was crafted by individuals supporting school choice in the face of ongoing public school crisis. I understand currently Texas is on of the top states for homeschooling, and the main reason for it is the lack of government involvement in homeschooling. School vouchers sound like a great idea, until one realizes a string-attached situation is more likely to emerge when such constitutional amendment is implemented. That will result in contraction of rights of homeschoolers and deteriorate independence of families to educate their own children. There will be no wins in that situation for anyone, frankly. I am convinced that leaving Texas homeschooling as status quo is the best way of moving forward. Please vote NO on HRJ 1, please uphold FREEDOM. Thank you!

Jessica Brown

self, teacher

Lubbock, TX

As a member of the Texas National Board Coalition for Teaching, a 501(c)(3), I urge you to continue to designate National Board Certified Teachers as “recognized” or to designate them as “exemplary” under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).

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Amanda Lord, Mrs.

self / National Board Certified Teacher

kerrville, TX

As a National Board Certified Teacher, I know first hand the rigorous and difficult process. I also know the time commitment required and also the benefits it is now bringing to my classroom. I believe that National Board Certified Teachers should be designated as "Exemplary" or "Master" in the TIA. Anything less will NOT encourage more teachers to go through the process. We NEED to encourage more teachers to pursue NBCT. Each additional NBCT will strengthen the Texas School System. We need more National Board Certified Teachers, and we need to compensate them accordingly.

In addition, The House Committee on Public Education’s 2022 Interim Report recommended that National Board Certified Teachers be designated as “exemplary.” This esteemed group recognized that the upper levels of the TIA designations are more aligned with the high level of teaching National Board Certified Teachers have demonstrated.

Rose Zambrano

Self/Retired

Helotes, TX

NO, because vouchers weaken public schools including special education.

Private schools are exempt from having to offer special education. Without needed supports, things fall apart quickly.

Calista Herbert

Self/Retired

Houston, TX

I don't understand why monies proposed to be set aside for school safety would go to the economic stabilization fund and the state highway fund. This seems like an underhanded way to get money to other areas besides school safety.

Megan Huseman

Self, interpreter/ Deaf daughters rights to access educational setting

Wylie, TX

Hello, I am a certified ASL interpreter and have been practicing for over a decade. I relocated to Texas 2 years ago after covid. I previously resided in Oklahoma. My daughter is profoundly deaf and uses ASL to communicate effectively. Sadly, the 2 years here in Texas Public Schools she has been denied access to the educational setting because her ASL proficiency is higher than that of her interpreters in school. She has experienced language deprivation because of the low pay and unskilled interpreters in the educational setting. I have a multitude of research/fact based evidence to support my claim. On average a lower level/skilled certified interpreter can only effectively communicate 50% of the content, whereas a highly certified interpreter can effectively interpret 85-90% of the content correctly. These statistics are from the National institute of health on interpreter skills. My daughter has access to roughly half of the educational content that her hearing peers do. If you raise educational Interpreter pay to match pay rates out in the community you will raise Deaf children's access to the educational setting and native language giving deaf children a language rich environment which will benefit them to become proficient professionals in society. At the content level of pay most deaf children that rely on ASL to communicate are experiencing high levels of language deprivation that is detrimental to thier well being and futures.

Roslyn Kygar

Self - parent & Austin resident

Austin, TX

I do not support school vouchers, or taxpayer funding supporting any educational entity that is not part of the public school system in Texas. Private, charter, and religious schools do not have adequate oversight to ensure that taxpayer funds are being used to provide a broad, general education that meets the standards and needs of Texas children, and not just indoctrinating children with that institutions particular beliefs. Church and state are separated by our constitution to ensure the NO American or Texas citizen faces persecution for their beliefs, like our founding fathers did. Families that have strong religious and moral beliefs should be able to forego public school, but at their own expense. School vouchers are another way to weaken our public schools, which are already underfunded. Texas is a great state, and our children deserve a non-biased, non-partisan education that prepares them for their future as productive members of society. Our public schools should reflect how amazing our state is, so every child has the opportunity to thrive. One of the greatest things about Texas is the right to a free, safe, high quality public education. This bill would further reduce our schools and teachers ability to do that.

Do not pass the school voucher bill that will refund our already struggling public schools, make our children fall further behind, and strip them of future opportunities.