

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Appropriations
For Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 8:00 AM
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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.

COMMENTS FOR Overview of Public Education Funding and the Foundation School Program

Theron Smith, Mr.
Self - Public Education Building Manager
Elgin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will be competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching. Please pay our teachers what they deserve.

Michelle Bedrosian

self, parent of two elementary school children

Austin, TX

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Lacey Morris

Lacey Morris, Texas Mom

Austin, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Georgia Polley
Self
Houston, TX

Please ensure that our public schools have the resources they need.

Sarah Bancroft
Self
Austin, TX

Texas children are the state's future. Funding education is funding our future. Defunding education is only fueling poverty, crime, and high birth rates to unwed undereducated teenage parents. What do you want for the future of our state and its residents? I want educated children who grow into educated adults. Fund public education for the health, wealth, and safety of all Texans. Thank you.

Lisa Kuehl, Dr.
Self
Austin, TX

Our public schools are grossly and embarrassingly underfunded. Cutting funding in 2011 was a severe blow to educators, our children and their future. Since then there has not been a significant increase in funding without expensive mandates attached, despite a global pandemic and a the years of painful inflation that followed,

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Rachel Thompson
AISD
Austin, TX

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Jessica Turner, Concerned parent, resident, and voter
Self, including all public school teachers
Marquez, TX

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P Bell
self, manufacturing
Argyle, TX

I do not support SB2. There is no way to provide ESAs in a way that does not harm our public schools or does not betray conservative values. The issue lies in accountability. If we do not have any accountability, then we create a situation where our public schools are unduly harmed because we are financial incentivizing schools that are not accountable to provide a quality education. This creates a vacuum where schools can provide subpar education, especially in the wake of the push for vendor-based online learning, and run to the bank with their more-than-the-public-school-student allotment. The Senate recognized this and so they put credentialing and vendor lists in place to add some accountability to the process. Yet, these measures defy all conservative principles. Not only does the bill inject the government in learning environments that have been normally protected from governmental intrusion so that parents actually have choice over the curriculum their child is learning, but the bill also sets up a billion dollar bureaucracy to oversee the intrusive efforts. The million dollar vendor opportunities to "oversee" the ESA program, as well as opportunities for vendors to make money when private schools and homeschools must choose curriculum off a vendor-approved list, defy conservative principles and have the potential to divert funds to private companies that want to profit off our children. This is bad for our children, bad for conservatives, and bad for our state. Fully fund the public education system and fully fund incentives for public schools to provide more choice.

Sahalie Mitchell

Self

Dallas, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Casey Bradley

Proud Texas Public School Graduate with a BS/Current Rural Texas Public School Parent and Board Member Spouse/Concerned Texas Citizen

Groesbeck, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of all Texas children.

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Also, letting private schools take government money and not have the same requirements as public schools who also get the same money is outright ridiculous! The teachers are required to be certified like public school teachers, they don't have to accept ANY student no matter the students issues and the students and teachers aren't subjected to a ridiculous state test that essentially grades the school and ties to funding. You want to give them FREE money while continuing to burden public schools that MUST follow TEA regulations. How in the world could anyone believe that this will fix public education? I doubt 1/2 this very Committee attended/graduated from or even send their own kids to the local public school. Please listen, public school parents don't want it, homeschool parents don't want it and private school parents don't want it, no one wants more government control in education.

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of all our Texas children.

Michelle Gallas, Dr
self, Pediatrician
Austin, TX

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rene ramirez
Self
Austin, TX

Please fund our schools. Vote against the vouchers.

Jillian DeLaTorre Copeland
Mother of 4
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I hope you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Please honor your constitutional responsibility and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Signed a very concerned mother of 4

Amanda Bossert
Sled
Katy, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the public purse on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when education funding was cut by \$5.4 billion. This was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Currently, our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources received in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. You can change this!

Please use the surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to put the money back into our public schools. This can be done through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Please represent and do the right thing for our Texas children, families, and communities. Support public school funding.

Sarah Jayroe
Self— banker
Livingston, TX

As a parent of three school-age children in the public school system in the state of Texas, I am extremely concerned for the future of our education system. Defunding public schools to provide money to private schools is absolutely outrageous. My children deserve to have the absolute best education that they possibly can. We have a responsibility as the parenting generation to provide the best for our children. Why are we even considering taking funding away? We should be funding more. We should be funding more teachers we should be funding more schools. We should be funding more students we should be paying for more for our kids take the funds away from unimportant things and put them towards our children. I don't understand why we have teachers buying school supplies out of their own pockets. I don't understand why it's even being proposed that we get rid of 504 plans for children in need I do not understand and I do not agree. the children should come first, and I don't know why we have this mindset lately of what can we do to save money save money save money but not provide for our own. It's disgusting. It's shameful and it's embarrassing. We as Americans need to invest in our future, and our children are the future. Religion does not belong in schools. It does not belong in the government, but you know what does belong in our schools? Proper funding.

Camille Brower
Self. Concerned citizen
Austin, TX

I appreciate your commitment to our state and its citizens, and I urge you to carefully consider how you allocate our resources, especially concerning our children's future.

Since 2011, when \$5.4 billion was cut from education funding to balance the budget, our public schools have struggled. Given that nearly 90% of those funds directly support classroom staff, this reduction has had a profound and lasting negative impact on our students.

While there was a record investment in 2019, it didn't even restore funding to pre-2011 levels, especially when factoring in inflation. Furthermore, we haven't seen a truly meaningful increase in funding without accompanying, costly mandates, even amidst a global pandemic and subsequent years of significant inflation.

The consequences are clear: our teachers earn significantly less than their counterparts in other states, our students receive far fewer resources than their future competitors in the job market, and our counselor-to-student ratios are drastically below recommended levels. This situation begs for your attention and action.

I beg you to use the power you have to to change this. We have a surplus; you have access to the rainy day fund. I implore you to fulfill your constitutional duty and use these resources to provide our schools with the funding they desperately need. A substantial increase in the basic allotment, unlike a teacher stipend, would benefit all school professionals who support our children.

Thank you for prioritizing the future of Texas and the well-being of our children.

Joe Tacchino
Self
The Woodlands, TX

"FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools. Vouchers are a joke. Every single one of these private schools has enough endowment to sponsor kids who can't attend. They chose not to. I've been to fundraising events for private parochial schools in The Woodlands. The amount of money raised is dumbfounding. Don't fall for the strong armed tactics our Governor is pushing to appease his billionaire benefactors who benefit from a less educated population. Do the right thing. The money is there. Fund the public schools now.

Vouchers sound great: "I don't send my kid to that school, I should get to spend my tax money at the school I want". All very personally responsible. But that's not how taxes work. Do I get a refund from the ESD because I've never had to call the Fire Department? Do I get a refund from Harris County because I've never stepped foot in the library? Do I get a refund because my kid doesn't qualify for lunch benefits? No, that's not how taxes work. That's an implied contract you sign when you purchase property in a taxing district. You don't get to pick and chose which taxes to pay, or how they are spent. That's what our elected MUD board, ESD board, and school board officials are for. We vote for them to enact our public wishes. We don't get to act directly, that's not how our government works despite what Governor Abbot would have us believe.

Thank you.

Stacey Gould
Texas parent
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Ash Malina
Self
Austin, TX

Our schools are in desperate need of more funding. How is Texas supposed to remain a competitive economy with failing public schools? We all win when we lift everyone up. Also, Texas has failed all special education students. They deserve to learn just like all Texas children.

Elizabeth Mesta
Self/Texas Mom
Garland, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state. I hope and pray you will use your power to protect Texas children and the public schools so many of them attend.

Texas public schools have been underfunded since 2011. The money that has been given back to education doesn't account for inflation or expensive mandates the state has set forth.

Texas teachers are getting paid \$10k less than teachers in other states and students are receiving far less resources. It is time for you to change this. You do not want to look back on this and see the grave mistake of not investing in our public schools. It is a disservice to our children, state, and country. The future of Texas depends on our public education system. If our education system isn't adequately funded we will all suffer.

Please take your constitutional responsibility seriously and truly invest in the public schools.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Bao Vo
Self, Fixed Income Specialist
Northlake, TX

One of the biggest reasons our family chose to move to Argyle was due to the highly ranked public schools. It has had a tremendous impact on our children. They have grown so much academically and personally since we've moved here. Increased funding for our schools would help future generations. By investing in our youth, we are investing in the future of our community and the great state of Texas. The returns on investment would be astronomical. We could ensure Argyle continues to attract future residents and make Argyle a highly sought after community. This would increase our home value as well. We could fund the investment with an increase in property taxes. We could also issue new bonds backed by these ad valorem property taxes. I have four children, and I would be happy to pay my share of the investment, because I know the returns are well worth it!

Sincerely,
Bao Q. Vo

Morgan Handel
Self
Austin, TX

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You should take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, to get the money back into our schools. They deserve an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children. Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Jennifer Thomas
Self, mom of 2 children currently in Texas public schools, and graduate of the Texas public school system
Austin, TX

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Steven Schmidt
Public school children in Texas
Argyle, TX

Texas public school children deserve the best education and teachers who make a difference in the lives of our children. Abbott doesn't care about our children and his withholding of public school funding is ruining public education. Closed schools and laid off teachers are all accountable to Abbott. He is doing this for funding from rich supporters who are funding his 2028 presidential bid. Sad that our governor has been bought out and is crooked. Say no to vouchers and do right for our public school students.

Sarah Espiritu

Self- Texas Mom and concerned citizen

Austin, TX

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Megan Keifer

Concerned parent

Austin, TX

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It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Leslie Johnson

Self

Magnolia, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools.

You cannot funnel money away from public schools while not expecting the private and homeschooling crowd to not have any checks or balances. What a disgraceful and shameful bunch of conservatives

Meredith Sealy

Texas mom and PTA member

Houston, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Amanda Barber

Self/Mom(and former teacher)

Argyle, TX

Top reasons my family supports vouchers:

More choices (curriculums, ability to have religious studies, and format (in person, online, hybrid, or private school) Schools would be able to cater to certain types of kids (ADHD and various learning (dis)abilities/gifted, as well as technical, blue collar, white collar type training.

Mental health- I believe some students do well in busy, crowded, and schools with lots of students and others do better in smaller, quieter environments. No one should be forced to be in an environment that they dread. Adults have the option of changing jobs to suit them and kids should have the same.

Sports and extracurriculars- a lot of these should be privatized. It has gotten out of hand in the amount of tax dollars this requires and then it seems that mostly district employee's kids and booster/board parent's kids are making teams, as well as those people also are choosing/controlling who gets to use those facilities. There is too much unfairness. And the families of students that are going for scholarships end up spending more than college tuition on private/select training. Scholarships were supposed to be for kids that didn't have money, or so I thought. School sports should have more of an "everybody plays" approach whether or not they are good at it, or whether they are a teacher/staff kid, or just a kid with parents that work private sector jobs that don't pay as much. Especially since it is everybody's(or most people's) tax dollars that are getting used.

Additional comment: Please do not give tax abatements to businesses/companies moving to Texas. They are bringing in more people than we have roads and services for (including schools, teachers, and buses)!Developers of these huge Master planned communities need to be contributing more also. We should not be footing the bill for future residents. Make those future residents pay for all that stuff that THEY need.

Lawrence Lander
Architect, distressed Texas grandparent, and chronic voter
Austin, TX

I appreciate the chance to weigh in on this most pressing and important issue: Funding for our public schools. I appreciate your tackling this even as your colleagues debate ideas that strike at the foundations of our public schools. I would need more than 3000 characters to tackle self-congratulatory tweets about vouchers, nibbling tax rate adjustments, eliminating property taxes, or what books are to be kept in libraries, so I will limit my comments to the issue at hand.

Despite years of incredible state surpluses, public education remains increasingly underfunded. We do not need more theatrics: Counting state funds used to pay down property taxes as education dollars, using phrases like, “public education is being funded at its highest level ever,” ignoring the effects of state-required unfunded mandates, growth in student enrollment, inflation. Sadly, one of the richest states in the country has been consciously decreasing public school funding for the last fifteen years, all the while enjoying an economic boom. We need to truly fund our investment in tomorrow’s leaders.

In my years running a large architecture firm designing offices for Fortune 100 companies, we participated in confidential, high-level conversations about where and how to effect a corporate headquarters relocation. Invariably, the conversation came back to some basic questions: Will this be good for my employees? Are the schools great? Will tomorrow’s smartest employees—my most valuable resource—be available here? The caliber and quality of our schools have never been more important.

My own children are products of some of the best programs in the state’s largest public school district. That experience led directly to their graduation from our flagship university. I know the education they received and they treasure their public education everyday. The bar in our family high. Now, as their own children get ready to enter public school, the path forward seems cloudier to all of us, the opportunities for today’s children less available and more out of reach. In a state with so many riches, it doesn’t need to be that way.

Public schools are critical to our success as a state. It’s that simple. No priority outweighs the obligation to all our fellow Texans to provide the very best public education we can, not a watered-down, barely scraping by version. We’re all in this together.

In Austin, we overwhelmingly approved a measure last fall to raise our own taxes to help fund AISD knowing that cuts to programs and staff would come and more than half of the funds raised would simply go into the state’s coffers for planting wildflowers along state highways, opening the Capitol to wide-eyed schoolchildren, keeping the attorney general out of jail, or razor wire on the Rio Grande. If the state’s richest district can’t make it, I can only imagine what’s happening in less well-off districts. We all need your help, we are desperate, and we don’t see anyone listening. Here’s your chance.

Kianna Hogan
Self-Claims Processor
Northlake, TX

I have a 3 year old special needs daughter who is in the Argyle ISD. I am speaking out because funding for public schools will affect the special education program for children who really depend on these funds to thrive. Not only will this affect my daughter but other special needs children as well. Some students need special accommodations and extra support within the school system. Without the additional funding a lot of children may not be able to receive what they need within their school systems. These are disability rights and our innocent children should not be stripped of them nor should families have to worry if funding will be cut. The teachers who work hard within these school systems also deserve to be paid more. Our children are important. Our educators are too. We must advocate for them. I will never stop advocating for my daughter and I will never stop learning and unlearning to help her become the best individual she deserves to be. I hope and pray we do the right thing for our children. Thank you for hearing my voice.

Magen Arab, Mrs.
Texas mother
Austin, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Tyler Avary, Mrs.
Governor Abbott and family
Argyle, TX

We (me, my sister, my mom, my Papa, James B. Willis, 2 aunts, 3 uncles, 15 cousins) are so very thankful for you, Governor Abbott. You won't see this but I, Tyler Willis-Avary, had the amazing opportunity to learn how I could support you in Southlake, TX in 2004, with Mike and Carrie Moore (my dear friend) and the Wambgass fam (spelled wrong but it's hard ;) and then again at the Young Republicans dinner in Fort Worth with my husband Blake Avary. My dad, Rick Willis, served with Fred Underwood and many I don't need to mention, to help our farmers. Please know I'm the least of the least and not bragging but I was Miss Texas USA 2005 and spoke to our House and Senate about a leadership program for elementary students. You took the time to receive my invitation to meet, concerned for our future young Texans.

Times have changed, government needs to get out of education, and neither you or I could afford private school growing up, even with these vouchers. And good gracious our moms wouldn't want uncertified teachers teaching us! You face much more than I will ever know but if you ever see this, will you consider seeing a "good elementary and middle school" in Argyle, TX, before all these new voucher things take over? I'm a nobody, just a mom these days, and don't expect a response. Please know, and this is my opinion but really it's truth, Texas and Texans are amazing because of those teachers and parents that supported us and taught us to give back. I can text my number but that's weird :) Please consider a visit with an old, Texan mom/supporter and see how spectacular your educators are!

Blessings and God's favor,
Tyler Willis-Avary

Roberto Cardenas
Self
Austin, TX

Honorable Representatives, thank you for your public service to the people of Texas. As the father of a current high school student I'm concerned about the shortfall the Austin Independent School District is projecting and the drastic measures they propose to balance the budget. Since 2011 when education funding was slashed, I've seen teachers leave, courses dropped and parents asked to help with supplies. Our teachers are already underpaid and are hard to retain. With the budget surplus and the rainy day fund it's time to step up and support the future citizens of our state. Please do the right thing and support public education. Thank you

Eliane Maillot
Texas mother
Austin, TX

I am a mother of 2 kids in the public school system and my mother is a retired teacher. What is happening with the lack of funding in our schools is embarrassing and the underperformance of the Texas school System as a result of this lack of funding needs to be remedied immediately.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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In addition you must push back on vouchers!! This only benefits the wealthy and does not help middle class families like myself. We need money in the public schools now

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Sana Burney
Argyle ISD
Argyle, TX

Please fund our schools fairly. These children that we teach are our future. In order for us to enrich the lives of our youth, we need your help through educational funding for our ISD so that we can continue to build relationships with our students and help them to be successful citizens of our communities. Inflation keeps increasing and yet you guys keep taking away from us. What needs to happen before you see for yourself that our educational institutions need funding from taxpayers and our government. If you do not help fund us, you're setting this kids up for failure. Do the right thing.

Emily Perhamus
Self, Accessibility Advocate
Austin, TX

Please fund sustainable wages for our hardworking public school teachers- as a former high school principal I know all too well that teachers work countless unpaid hours, after making unsustainable wages. We will continue to lose talented, dedicated educators to other sectors if we can't compensate them fairly for their vital work. Strong public schools are the best way to support our future generation of Texans. Please increase teacher pay and fully fund mandates to make Texas public education great again.

Matt Flickinger
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I encourage you to use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Kia Biller
Concerned Texas Mom of Public School student
Austin, TX

Thank you for your representation of your constituents. I am writing to advocate for continued and increased funding for Texas' public schools. These schools which guarantee education for all Texans, not just the wealthy, have been robbed of funding for years and are currently funded well below national average. Remember when Texas was on top, the biggest and the best? We are losing ground because we refuse to take care of everyone and invest in our children's future.

As a Texan, I grew up in and thrived in public schools surrounded by my neighbors that spanned the gamut of Texans. With appropriate funding all TEXAS children can receive quality well rounded education in core subjects supplemented with arts, trade, and athletics.

As a parent of a middle schooler, I see the impacts of the withheld funding over the last several sessions. His and other schools are suffering from loss of teachers, who can no longer sacrifice the well being of their families for low pay and lack of support; buildings and grounds that are deteriorating; inability to staff elective courses like arts, etc. Don't take away my child's or any other children's opportunities to thrive and make our state top tier, like it used to be. Please advocate to stop this voucher program which will continue to deteriorate our Texas school funding and advocate for our students, our teachers, and the future of Texas.

Thank you for putting all of our students first and ensuring Texas can once again bring our students to the Top of the Class.

KayCee Macik

Self

Katy, TX

It is imperative that we maintain funding for public schools. In pursuit of our state's educational objectives, we must recognize that achieving high-quality education is best supported through public educational institutions rather than the private sector. Public schools provide equitable opportunities for all students to receive a comprehensive education and the necessary support. Many parents rely on public education to ensure that every student, regardless of their background, receives the education they deserve.

Tamela Crawford

Self

Midlothian, TX

Texas needs to increase the basic allotment for public education to address the widening disparities in educational resources across districts. Many schools, particularly in low-income areas, lack adequate funding for essential programs such as arts, extracurriculars, and advanced placement courses, leaving students with fewer opportunities for academic success. With inflation driving up the costs of educational materials and facilities maintenance, the current funding does not stretch far enough to meet these rising demands. By increasing the basic allotment, Texas can ensure that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to a high-quality education. This investment will help level the playing field, promoting equity and better outcomes for all Texas students.

Michele Brown

Self

Tomball, TX

I believe that the state should continue funding public education. A majority of parents cannot afford private schools even if a voucher is available. Public education teaches essential life skills and allows students to meet diverse populations to prepare them for college and future jobs.

Bahareh Behbahani, Mom
Self
AUSTIN, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Kendall Harrison
Self/teacher/parent
Buffalo Gap, TX

I am writing on behalf of myself, public school educators, parents and Texas citizens. I am a mother, a public school (history teacher) educator, a taxpayer, a voter and a concerned citizen. The facts about the public school voucher program have been severely skewed by Governor Abbott and the Senate. My administration and school board can tell you a way different story about funding than what is being displayed by Abbott and the Senate. SB2 would be detrimental to public school education by allowing our voted representatives to take taxpayer money and give it to private schools. Where would all of the accountability be to the private schools? What test would the student have to take? What about the separation of (private) church and state schools? There is so much wrong with this bill and I am saddened to see the Senate and Abbott actually voting against the children of Texas. Please vote against SB2 and do what is right for the children and public schools of Texas. This voucher bill would only benefit the ones that already go to private school and there would actually not be a big shift of public school students going to private school. It will be a waste of money that should be going to public schools to begin with. Thank you for your time and work in our Texas government.

Amy Gentry
self
The Woodlands, TX

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to urge you to fund public schools first, and to vote against school voucher programs. I work in Title 1 Schools often, and I see how badly funding is needed. Public Schools are a safe haven for so many vulnerable children, whose parents would never be able to afford any kind of private school. I also urge you to increase spending in education, these are tax dollars well spent, an investment in the future of our state. Again, please fund public schools first, and vote against any measure that would take funds away from public education. Thank you

Mark Gentry
Self
The Woodlands, TX

Do not reduce funding to public schools. They are too important to our future.

Sam Naioti
self
AUSTIN, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing

Linda Evans
Self
Conroe, TX

Texas needs to fully fund public education before even considering voucher programs. The districts in this state have not been adequately funded for years, even when the state had record surplus funds. Teacher pay has not kept up with inflation. The costs of running a district has increased in all areas, but districts have not gotten the money they need. Stop wasting time on a voucher program that would only serve higher economic populations, have no standards for accepting all students and no accountability for good performance all while using tax payer's money. Yes for adequate funding public schools! No No No to vouchers!

Jessica Sommer, Mom
Simmer Family
Argyle, TX

Please increase funding for our public schools. The children of today are our caregivers of tomorrow.

Arden Decker, Dr.
Self, Art Historian
Houston, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Lizet Villagrana
Texas parent
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I hope you will use your power of the purse wisely to support our children. Our public schools have been underfunded and rely heavily on parent and community. The funds allocated to each school and student is not sufficient to support a quality education. You have the power to dip into the rainy day fund to remedy this. Thank you for doing the right thing.

Seth Johnson

parent of two public school students

Austin, TX

I have been paying huge property taxes to the state of Texas for over 20 years, yet my children are enrolled in public schools where each student is funded \$4,000 below the national average. The quality of the Texas state education system ranks in the lower half (29) of all states in this country. Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

We have attracted multi-billion-dollar corporations to relocate to Texas, and I would have hoped this would help improve the quality of our education system. Instead, it has become clear that these companies are coming here to avoid paying for social services through taxes.

Please tap into the rainy day fund to improve the education of our Texas schoolchildren and the future of our proud state. Or, put the pinch on the billionaires who live here to have them contribute their fair share.

Appreciatively,

Seth Johnson

Antoinette Franklin

Self

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Marc Koke

self

Argyle, TX

Please stop school choice/vouchers and fund our public schools properly!!!

Dori Hill
Self-teacher
Spring, TX

We need to increase Funds to public schools! Teachers need necessary raises and children's needs should be met. Funding hasn't increased since 2019, despite higher cost of living due to inflation. This should be top priority in order to retain quality teachers in our state.

Elizabeth Bingham
Teacher Argyle ISD
Denton, TX

Increased funding for public education is critical. Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%

Fuel: Increased by 44%

Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%

Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state

Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

Although our district maintains A+ transparency ratings for our fiscal spending, we cannot meet the demands of the economy. We have positions, such as technology instruction (one could argue technology education is vital for students to be educated on safety as well as preparation for the work-force), intervention specialists, and general education teachers that have lost their jobs because we cannot afford to pay teachers. The increased class sizes in fifth grade are detrimental to character development, differentiation, and meeting the needs of each and every student. Our students deserve the best. If we in Texas pride ourselves on being the best, we have to start putting our money where it counts, in schools and the citizens of the future. Last year, as a PK-5th grade STEM teacher, I had over 1,000 students and a budget of \$250. My art teacher had this same budget for the same number of kids. While we are creative, writing grants, and asking for donations from our community, this is simply not enough. I ask you to think of your own children in classrooms that are overcrowded and under-funded. With very little resources provided by the schools, we are left to the financial ability of each individual teacher to fund his or her classrooms. This is inequitable and should not be how our schools run. Please, please, fund our public schools. As a member of the executive board for the Science Teachers Association of Texas, we saw record-low numbers attend our annual conference this past November. Several of our presenters dropped out at the last minute because their schools could not provide professional learning expenses associated with attending the conference. Teachers need quality professional learning to enhance instruction in their classrooms and to create a network of educators with which they can advance education throughout the state. Quality teachers are leaving education in droves because of the lack of funding and low salaries on top of the stresses of operating without the support of our state to provide basic necessities. I want educators who feel supported, inspired, and competitively compensated to be in the classroom teaching my children. Inspiring the next generation to be anything and do everything they work hard to accomplish. Support our schools.

Josh Hart, Dr.
Self
Austin, TX

Increase per pupil funding, based on enrollment not attendance. Increase teacher pay. Fund mandates such as security requirements. Make Texas public education great again.

Audrey Lively

Self, physician assistant, assistant professor

Argyle, TX

I have 3 kids in the public school system. We absolutely love our teachers, but facilities are in need of renovation, class sizes are growing (think 24 kindergarteners to one exhausted teacher, or 35+ 5th graders to one teacher), and programs are being cut due to funding issues. It is a right of every child in the US to receive a public education, an incredible part of why living in our country is so great. Over the 6 years we have had kids in the public school system, however, we have seen some major shifts, as mentioned above. We continue to have incredible teachers, but the school districts need funding to continue to operate, make improvements, and not lose the teachers we have to burnout. Please fix the broken system by increasing the funding to the public school districts. I am aware of the surplus, and believe the best investment of this surplus is into the lives of the children who will one day be leading this state and country. Thank you.

Annemarie Miles, Mrs.

self/homemaker

Tomball, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools. I understand that reform is needed in our school system, but vouchers will only increase government involvement for homeschool families, which we do not want, and allow private schools to increase their tuition. We need reform, but vouchers are not the kind of reform that will actually benefit Texas, it will only benefit the rich.

Carolyn Merriman

Self

Austin, TX

We must support our schools in order to protect the future of our children and country. Our teachers are now paid \$10,000 below the national average, our students funded at \$4,000 below the national average, and the average tenure of a new teacher in our classrooms is 3 years, causing instability to not only them, but our schools and classrooms.

According to a Rice University study, 73% of our Texas school districts are in a financial crisis

Olivia Herron

self

Austin, TX

Ensure our funding can pay our teachers a living wage and support our students with access to the resources they need to thrive in the education system!

Jill Maxwell, Retired

The children of Texas

Abilene, TX

Every child in Texas deserves to be treated with the same compassion, humanity and empathy that each of you would expect for your own child or grandchild. There is no justification for limiting the quality of education each child receives. Public education is a right of every person in America. If we truly are the "Christian" people we claim to be, then Jesus would be appalled by the mere mention of depriving ANY child of food, medical care and a free and quality education. Please fund the public schools in Texas with money to meet the needs of every child since these are the expectations of our Lord.

Laura Grannell, Dr

Myself and all children with 504 plans

Austin, TX

Let us be clear on the truth, instilling a “choice” of schooling will not benefit the majority of households and families in Texas. The average income of the majority of families is not, nor will be soon at a rate where private school choice is remotely on the table. Even with a said voucher. This bill is about higher Socioeconomic populations gaining money back for the choices they already are entitled and have the ability to choose for their children. If you said to me today I will receive 10k to make a difference choice for my child’s schooling, that is a FRACTION of what a yearly tuition at a private school institution would in reality cost me and my family. The joint income for my family is over 120k, which is well over the average of most Texas families. The reality- families would not have the choice to make a difference choice for their children. Now, income of a family is just one part of where this deal has continued to shine its injustice on the average Texas family. With DEI being dismantled- what stands in the way of a private institution denying a child of diverse background into their gated establishment? Nothing really. Oh and yes, it actually does come back to income. Because we all know, DEi was the only reason for these gated institutions to award scholarships to many who otherwise would not be able to afford attending. Private schools will absolutely deny children from families of low income. Because again, the truth, the reality, how will their yearly galas be sponsored if 40% of the student body comes from families who cannot contribute?! How will their grounds be kept so prestige when families cannot donate extra throughout the year through various fundraisers? How would the PTA even function with significantly reduced funding?! See, that’s the reality of how Private institutions run, and that isn’t the reality of the majority of TX avg income families. This bill is to solely benefit the elite; leaving a system in need of repair to continue crumbling. For the majority of children, the majority of our future Texans who deserve quality education at the public level, this bill should be vetoed, never to be seen again. Instead rainy day funds should be used to build guidelines and expectations of increased learning standards for ALL of Texas’ children. And NOT increased testing, but critical thinking, essential future skills and improving basic reading and mathematical skills. Make ALL Texan children Great Again.

Lilli Salerno

Self

Austin, TX

Please pay our teachers more! please fund our students education better.

Nathan Wyman

Self

Austin, TX

Our Texas teachers are paid less than the national average and have an average tenure of 3years. If there is money available it should be spent on teacher salaries so we can attract and retain qualified, passionate teachers

Ruth Davies
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will be competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.
Thank you for supporting our children and future through our public schools.

Elizabeth Peterson
self
Austin, TX

I attended Houston ISD schools K-12 when I was a child, and I now have two sons attending Austin ISD. I am deeply concerned about the lack of state funding for our school district. Austin ISD students deserve better. We need teachers who are better paid and better supported. We need public schools that enable students to achieve academic excellence and not just meet minimum standards. When the state diverts funds from public schools, it is not acting in the best interest of the people of this state. We need to invest in our public education system, not bleed it dry by pulling funding and students from it - to put them in schools that are not subject to the same requirements that public schools have to meet.

Thomas Yankeelov
Self
Austin, TX

Please fund our public schools so that *every* child can have chance of a bright future to help make Texas even more wonderful. Our teachers are paid \$10,000 below the national average. Our students funded at \$4,000 below the national average.

--> When you are deciding how to spend our \$24 billion surplus in the general revenue fund, please consider taking action to change the above two statistics by increasing funding to our public schools. This will do nothing but make our future brighter for all Texans. Thank you for your consideration.

Josh Lively
my family
Bartonville, TX

Set aside political considerations and prioritize the well-being of children. This is not about reciprocal favors; it is about the essential services provided by teachers, administrators, and those working in facilities that should not exist. As a member of the superintendent advisory board and a parent of a 3 kids at my local school, I have witnessed the detrimental impact of adult actions on our children's education. Withholding funding is a regrettable consequence of such actions. It is imperative that you, as a leader, utilize your position and resources to the utmost benefit of our children. We are witnessing a failure of leadership that is detrimental to our children's future. My daughter's is currently unable to access books due to the school's inability to provide funding. This is not a matter of personal grievances; it is a matter of the well-being of our children. It is crucial that you prioritize the needs of children above all else and refrain from engaging in political maneuvering that hinders their progress. Your actions are having a detrimental impact on our children's lives. It is time for you to take responsibility and make a positive difference.

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Lively
Bartonville, TX

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Jamie Gardner
Texas Mom
Austin, TX

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These children will become our future workforce, innovators, legislators, parents, and community members. This investment is required for the future health of our state's economy and communities. It is a wise investment for Texas' future.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Polly Trigger
Self
Austin, TX

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Estibalitz Ukar, Dr.
Self, Research Professor
Austin, TX

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Manjit Randhawa, Dr
Self, Retired Professor
Austin, TX

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Rebecca Richardson

Self

Austin, TX

Our school have rat infestations, loud portable air conditioner units due to malfunctioning AC units, and after school care that is ridiculously expensive. We can do better. Let's do it.

Rose Bamberger Chavez

Self; mother of student in AISD

Austin, TX

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Karen Heflin

Self

Abilene, TX

We have four children. Two just graduated from public school. The other two recently moved to a private school. However, we refuse to accept vouchers on principle. This bill will further harm Texas public schools. We already rank low in every public school category. States that have gone to this voucher scam plan, have already run out of funding for promised vouchers. It over promises and under delivers. And it takes valuable tax money away from our public school students. It's unethical to have public schools compete with private schools when they have completely different metrics by which they're evaluated. Look at states that have gone to this format....their rankings have not improved. I believe that a state and country that does not provide a robust public education program will continue to decline in all categories. This is not a long term benefit to the people of our state. Please do NOT vote for this proposed program!!

Amelia Torres
Argyle West Elementary
Argyle, TX

Texas schools are facing a crisis due to inadequate education funding, and the consequences are affecting students, families, and teachers across the state. Without sufficient resources, schools struggle to provide essential services, maintain reasonable class sizes, and retain qualified educators. Students suffer the most, as outdated textbooks, limited technology, and a lack of academic support hinder their ability to succeed. Additionally, budget shortfalls often lead to cuts in crucial educational staff, including school counselors, librarians, and interventionists.

Without enough counselors, students miss out on vital social-emotional support, academic guidance, and college and career readiness resources. The loss of librarians reduces access to literacy support and research skills, limiting students' ability to develop strong reading and critical thinking abilities. Cutting interventionists means fewer small-group learning opportunities, which are essential for struggling students. Without targeted support, academic gaps widen, making it even harder for students to catch up.

Families are forced to fill the gaps by purchasing supplies, paying higher school fees, or seeking private tutoring—costs that disproportionately burden low-income communities. Meanwhile, teachers, who are already underpaid, face growing workloads, larger class sizes, and fewer resources. This leads to burnout and high turnover rates, ultimately reducing the quality of education students receive.

If Texas does not increase education funding, these issues will only worsen, further widening achievement gaps and weakening the state's future workforce. Investing in education is not just about supporting schools—it's about ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed and thrive. It's time for lawmakers to prioritize funding that truly meets the needs of Texas students.

Jonathan Ohlson
Self, stay at home parent
Tomball, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools.

Autumn Gray
Self
Austin, TX

Texas public schools need more funding. Our teachers are now paid \$10,000 below the national average, our students funded at \$4,000 below the national average, and the average tenure of a new teacher in our classrooms is 3 years, causing instability to not only them, but our schools and classrooms.

According to a Rice University study, 73% of our Texas school districts are in a financial crisis, with nearby districts closing schools, firing librarians and teachers, and asking hard-working families to continue to carry the burden of funding our public schools through volunteer work, sky-high property taxes, and VATRES, like Austin Independent School District Prop A.

Michael Blair
Texas Parent / Self
Austin, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Melissa Preston
Self/Texas Mom
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I am encouraging you to use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children and voters who are watching.

Chandria Ridgeway
Self
Pflugerville, TX

Please utilize funds to support public schools, we are in a deficit and teachers are underpaid and overworked.

Baljit Randhawa, Mrs
Self
Austin, TX

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Judson Hermans
Public school parent
Austin, TX

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Derral Riggle, Mr
LISD
Copper Canyon, TX

My wife works in the Superintendent office in Lewisville Tx. She is in charge of organizing board meetings. She comes home all the time complaining \$\$\$\$. They have recently had to close schools for budgeting purposes since the state hasn't increased the amount given to schools per student in a long time. They even take our \$\$\$ away and give it to the poor. My wife didn't even get a raise that yr and we had major inflation everything cost more. This bill effects the heart and soul of our community only the rich send there kids to private schools and they can afford it they don't need the states help. Give the schools back the \$\$\$ they collect in taxes and we can build schools every family would be proud to have there kids attend. I use to be proud of our Governor but he is wrong on this issue give the \$\$\$ back to the people we moved here so our kids could go to these good schools and our property taxes are huge. Thanks

Stefanie Donley
Self - Senior Administrative Associate
Pflugerville, TX

The State needs to take invest more into public schools and making our schools a place of pride instead of trying to push students into private education. Texas is huge and proud, our students should be some of the top ranked in the country and not some of the lowest. We need to put money into our public schools and allow people who choose to use private schools to put their money there, that is a choice they are making just like choosing if they are going to purchase a new car or a puppy. Tax payers don't fund people's personal choices, we fund public things like roads, schools, parks. It is insane to think that the state should be funding private education, if a student doesn't have access to it, the state shouldn't fund it. We need to put more money into our schools and our teachers so that we can have the best and be the best.

Autumn Gray

Self

Austin, TX

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Averyl Pinto
Self
Austin, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Susan Merriman
Self, part time office administrator
Houston, TX

Our grandson is at Russell Lee Elementary School in Austin, TX. We strongly support funding for higher salaries for teachers and student allocation amounts. The great state of Texas should be among the leaders in public education. It is my understanding that the average tenure for teachers at Lee is three years. Continuity is needed and if the teachers were better paid, I think they would stay longer. I was a teacher at Spring Branch Middle School after I graduated from Rice University and I know from experience that if the funding is not ample for the students, the dedicated teachers who are able will spend their own money to help educate the children. Our children and our teachers are so very important and key to a good education which will pay off to promote our state and our future!

Jennifer Espey
Spring Branch ISD Parent & Community Advocate
Houston, TX

It is your obligation as lawmakers and my fellow Texans to fully and fairly fund Texas public schools. Since the passing of HB3 in 2019, no new real investment in public schools has been made -- and our schools and Texas public school students are the ones who are suffering the results. Sure, some dollars have been added to specific buckets like school safety & security, but the amounts don't cover or come close to covering actual costs to districts. Unfunded mandates are impacting the bottom lines of nearly every Texas school district. Last session -- with a record surplus budget -- there was a massive opportunity to add significant dollars to the basic allotment and make a transformative impact. And if legislation had been passed to add an inflationary adjustment to the basic allotment -- most school districts would be in much better funding shape today. But, sadly, the governor has prioritized private education over public education with his obsession and very misinformed/disingenuous push for vouchers/ESAs/taxpayer dollars going to private schools...Our Texas public school offer all kinds of choice. Does offering a \$10K voucher for use at a private school while the current BA of \$6160 for public school students sound fair to you? And we know from other states that have implemented voucher programs -- the costs massively balloon year to year -- and who takes the hit? The public school kids. As you debate the budget -- please remember that Texas public schools DID NOT receive much of anything last session. Districts across the state are now operating in the red -- including SBISD -- a standout district with a reputation for conservative budgeting and top academic performance. Please do the right thing -- make Texas public schools your funding priority by making an impactful investments in the Basic Allotment, properly funding education allotments for SPED/PreK/CTE/ESL, pass legislation based on enrollment over attendance, and ensuring any voucher legislation -- if it must be done -- has serious guardrails on it -- for instance, only goes to students in actual failing schools (with ratings of D or F); or those who require special services. Private schools must be held to same standards public schools are for academic performance and attendance. Voucher legislation should never cut into the buckets of money for our Texas public schools -- Public Schools should always be the priority for funds. Thank you for your consideration and service to Texas. Texas' 5.5M public school students are counting on you to do the right thing this session.

Nancy Gresham
self
Austin, TX

Our teachers are now paid \$10,000 below the national average, our students funded at \$4,000 below the national average, and the average tenure of a new teacher in our classrooms is 3 years, causing instability to not only them, but our schools and classrooms.

According to a Rice University study, 73% of our Texas school districts are in a financial crisis, with nearby districts closing schools, firing librarians and teachers, and asking hard-working families to continue to carry the burden of funding our public schools through volunteer work, sky-high property taxes, and VATRES, like AISD Prop A.

Carey Hamilton
Self
Willow Park, TX

I am very worried about vouchers and how it will impact our communities. Please send me any information available.

Christine Potts
Texas MOM
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will be competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this. It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching."

Kari Kulak
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state. I hope you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even return us to 2009 funding levels, when accounting for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and the years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10,000 LESS than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, 1/3 of the resources of children in other states with whom they will be competing against for jobs in the future; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by mental health professionals. This is a problem that was created by this committee years ago. You, those who now make up this committee, can change this.

It's raining and you have the umbrella. Will you choose to cover our kids? You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if needed, to get back into our schools the money that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

This legislature speaks frequently of valuing Texan families and kids. It's time to put your money where your mouth is. Do the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Liron Kreitman

Self

Austin, TX

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Lindsey Monteleone

self

Austin, TX

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Jacob Morgan
Self- Teacher
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state.

I am a public school teacher and have been for over a decade now. I see the impacts of school funding every single day as serve the children of Texas and struggle to meet their diverse needs. An investment in these children is an investment in the future of Texas, and unless drastic action is taken to fund our schools, that future is a dismal one.

Since 2011, our schools have been underfunded because of a budget you balanced on the backs of students, educators, and their families to the tune of 5.4 billion dollars. The needs of students have not decreased in this time, yet educators: teachers, school staff, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and all of the people who make up our schools have worked themselves to the bone to try and meet these needs. It is an impossible job under these conditions, and only you have the remedy.

Texas has a surplus of money while its public schools fall apart. It's been six years since there was any adjustment in the basic allotment for students. I think you know as well as I do how much has happened during that time: a pandemic, inflation, economic insecurity, and so much more. We the students, faculty, staff, need to be given the resources necessary to deal with these problems.

Texas is a powerhouse, and I'm proud to live here, but I'm ashamed at the way the state treats public education. We could lead the country in teacher pay, incentivizing accomplished educators to move here and growing our programs. Instead, we're paying them \$10k less than peers in other states. We could graduate our students with a diverse set of skills and needs to face unprecedented times in our country. Instead, we fund them with less than a third of the resources that are supplied to students in other states. We could have students who are supported with counseling and services for mental health. From a teacher's perspective, mental health is only getting worse for our kids, and these are some of the first programs that go when we balance an impossible budget.

As a teacher who believes in our future, and as a Texan who knows we can do better, I implore you to serve us in the ways the constitution demands. Increase the basic allotment and support the professionals who make it our lives to raise the next generation. We know as well as anyone the importance of school funding in order to make this happen.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Eric Busch, Dr.
self, higher ed
Austin, TX

Texas children deserve a high-quality education, and taxpayers have already provided the funding to make it happen. With a projected \$24 billion budget surplus over the next two years, the state has the means to invest in public schools. Yet, despite rising costs, basic allotment funding has remained stagnant since before the pandemic. As a result, Texas ISDs are cutting staff, reducing services, and closing schools, while local property taxes continue to rise. The situation is further strained by the push for school vouchers, which divert public funds to private schools that operate with less oversight and accountability. This combination of underfunding and policy threats is driving public school teachers out of the profession and even out of the state. Increased funding is just the start—Texas needs a real commitment to strengthening public education and supporting the educators who make it possible.

Chrissy Hejny
Self - Public School Teacher
Austin, TX

I was born in Texas, am a product of Texas public schools, I'm in my 17th year as a Texas public school teacher, and I have two children who attend Texas public schools. Ninety percent of Texas children attend public schools, and it isn't because they can't afford private school tuition; it's because public schools are the superior choice. Please don't cave to the pressure to push vouchers in Texas. Public dollars belong in public schools. Every penny available should be used to fund the institution that serves ALL Texas children. Moreover, if you put vouchers on the ballot, Texans would vote against it because Texans love their public schools. These measures have failed miserably in every state that has tried them, and it ends up hurting children AND the economy.

Jason Boone
Self
Kyle, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Jennifer Crisp
Self
Abilene, TX

I support full funding our public schools, and even adding money to what they are currently given. I do not support school vouchers that can be used at private schools.

Kelli Stevens
Self/Title Agent
Abilene, TX

I have 3 children that have graduated from public school and I am a former public school teacher. I greatly oppose private school vouchers or education savings accounts. I believe private school subsidies are wasteful, deceitful, inefficient, and unfair. Public school dollars should go to only public schools. Public schools in Texas are underfunded. We elect legislators to represent the interests of their communities. I will stand with my legislators in opposing vouchers. When they vote against private school subsidies, I will make sure all their constituents know they did the right thing.

Lesley Blessing, Mrs.
self/artist
Austin, TX

Children are our future. If we want to be a stronger society we have to educate our children and young adults. We are failing ourselves by preventing these young people a purpose and platform to grow, develop and be our leading workforce. The teachers need Texas to step up and help fund their classrooms. This is a crisis that can be remedied by Texas. I hope we can bring hope to this existential crisis that we created in the first place.

Lainie Polland
Self
Austin, TX

Our public schools are amazing places of education and personal development for our kids. There are so many wonder teachers and administrators and our students deserve the best. Texas should be fully funding our schools so they can grow up and be the best candidates for jobs all over the country!!

Trista Bishop-Watt
Good Reason Houston
Houston, TX

Dear Chairman Bonnen and honorable members of the Appropriations Committee:

Good Reason Houston is a nonprofit that collaborates with public school systems to ensure every child in every neighborhood has access to a world-class public school that prepares them to thrive in the Texas of tomorrow.

We greatly appreciate the investment in public education proposed by HB 1, Art. III and want to underscore why it is so critical for Texas students, communities, and our economy.

The Texas Workforce Commission projects growth in high-wage, high-demand jobs, most requiring a postsecondary credential. However, Good Reason Houston's recent analysis found that only 27% of Houston high school graduates attain a credential, and only 1 in 5 earn a living wage within six years. By 2030, over 60% of jobs in our region will require a credential. This is a serious challenge to our graduates and Texas employers who rely on a skilled workforce to power our economy.

In addition to the investments in school safety and instructional leadership, we applaud the \$4.85 billion dollar investment to increase public education funding. As school districts grapple with meeting student needs and the changing dynamics of the Texas workforce, investment in our public schools is critical to ensuring our students have the resources, skills, and knowledge they need to be prepared for postsecondary life.

Rider 79 of Art. III enables legislation that not only can support increases to the Basic Allotment of the Foundation School Program, but can also prioritize high-impact areas that center student academic needs and offer a strong return on investment.

The Early Education Allotment is dedicated to supporting instruction in pre-K through 3rd grade. Additional funds for public education could be leveraged to expand this allotment to ensure pre-K students generate weighted funding, both incentivizing greater focus on early learning and enrollment in pre-K. Our research shows eligible students that attend pre-K in Houston are twice as likely to be kindergarten ready than their peers.

The Teacher Incentive Allotment, which recognizes and rewards effective educators, while also encouraging strong evaluations to offer critical feedback for high-quality instruction, has provided participating teachers with an average compensation increase of over \$11,000. Rider 79 would allow legislation to expand the allotment to allow more educators to access higher salaries.

The Compensatory Education Allotment is a crucial funding stream to ensure the state's highest need students receive targeted support. Increases to this allotment would allow a greater focus on research-backed interventions, like high impact tutoring, to support students who are at risk of falling behind grade-level standards.

We strongly support HB 1's investment in public education and thank the Committee for prioritizing students, teachers, and school districts in biennial appropriations.

Anamarie Dowaliby, Mrs.
Self
Austin, TX

I am writing to please urge you to use part of the budget surplus to fund the public school system in Texas. Our public school system not only helps educate our children, it also creates safer, more prosperous, and stronger communities. Our educators and students alike deserve to be funded at the national average so that Texas can thrive and continue to be a great state. Many areas, rural and urban, would benefit from this allocation of funds. Thank you.

Robin Stansell
Self
Abilene, TX

Our public schools are under funded as is. Every child should have GOOD and FREE schooling. Taking away what little funds there are is only going to hurt public achools and the future of our children.

Claudia Ullrich
Texas mom and concerned citizen
Austin, TX

As you meet to decide how to spend our \$24 billion surplus in the general revenue fund (and \$28 billion in the Rainy Day Fund), I am asking you to use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

73% of our Texas school districts are in a financial crisis, with nearby districts closing schools, firing librarians and teachers, and asking hard-working families to continue to carry the burden of funding our public schools through volunteer work, sky-high property taxes, and VATRES. It's not just us. It's all over the state.

Our teachers are now paid \$10,000 below the national average, our students funded at \$4,000 below the national average, and the average tenure of a new teacher in our classrooms is 3 years, causing instability to not only them, but our schools and classrooms. Our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

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Please take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Cindy Stewart
Self
Abilene, TX

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Adam Ullrich
Texas Dad and concerned citizen
Austin, TX

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Jennifer Williams
Myself
Austin, TX

School vouchers are a misguided policy that siphons critical funding away from public schools, further deepening inequality in education. By redirecting taxpayer dollars to private and often unregulated institutions, vouchers weaken the very system that serves the vast majority of students, particularly those from lower-income families who rely on public education. Instead of improving schools, this scheme exacerbates disparities, favoring wealthier families who can already afford private tuition while leaving public schools with fewer resources, larger class sizes, and diminished programs. Ultimately, school vouchers are a thinly veiled attempt to transfer public wealth into private hands, undermining the promise of free, high-quality education for all.

L Love
Public Schools
League City, TX

URGENT REQUEST:

Texas House Appropriations Committee is holding a meeting today (2/19) decide how much money should go into public education. Please take a moment to send a comment that will become part of the public record of this committee hearing.

<https://comments.house.texas.gov/home?c=c030>

Search for the Overview of Public Education Funding and the Foundation School Program

Copy and paste this script - personalize it if you'd like:

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Mary Specht
self
Abilene, TX

Please, please, please fund our schools. I am a product of good schools with good teachers. I grew up in a very red county and now happen to live in a blue one, but kids are the same all over. They need well-paid teachers and schools with the resources to make Texans grow and succeed. Education should be something we can all agree on. Please don't let our kids fall further behind. I know you care about us. Please show it!

Donna Hester
Self—Retired educator
Abilene, TX

I speak as a parent of children who all graduated from public schools, as a graduate myself, and as a former public school teacher. I greatly oppose private school vouchers or education savings accounts that will further drain our already underfunded public schools. We elect legislators to represent the interests of their communities. I will stand with my legislators in opposing vouchers. When they vote against private school subsidies, they are putting their support behind our public schools. Let's put resources into making our public schools better—everyone benefits from that.

Martha Heady
Self, retired
Abilene, TX

Please put all Texas schoolchildren first. Private school vouchers do nothing for the high percentage of public schools who teach our children in badly underfunded buildings staffed by dedicated but badly underpaid teachers. I am a proud product of Texas public education, first grade through college. Private school vouchers come at the expense of most of our kids. Diverting funds to private schools makes no sense. I gladly pay school taxes even though I have no children because it is the right thing to do. There is nothing more crucial than educating every single child in this state. Please keep your priorities there, not in further siphoning money from our public schools.

Taylor Kimbrell
Argyle High School- Athletic Trainer/Teacher
Northlake, TX

If public education funding is increased, we would have higher teacher salaries to attract and retain educators. Students would have smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes. We would be able to have additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence. Currently, I am a 3rd year teacher in a 5A school district. During my time in this district and due to lack of funding in the district, I have had to take on two full time jobs in the district. This year I am teaching a full course schedule while also being a full time athletic trainer and covering all athletic events for the district with no pay increase. Last school year, I only had to be an athletic trainer and take care of the wellbeing of all high school athletes. Now I have 25-30 students per class period in the day, on top of taking care of every athlete in the school. This is double the parent phone calls and emails, double the documentation of doctors notes, 504 paperwork, ARD meetings, grading and lesson planning. Adding these extra duties, with no pay raise, but added stress and added hours has created an environment in which I cannot always give students in the classroom 100% because I am exhausted from the day or events of the night before. On top of that, I am at school 2 hours before it starts and I stay after school 2 hours after the bell rings due to athletic practices. We are spread thin this year. I am missing time with my family and friends, missing important events due to the double duty load at the school district. On top of this, I work a part time job in order to make ends meet due to not having a raise this school year. I beg that you please re-consider how public school funds are allocated to the schools. Losing family time, taking a pay cut essentially due to working two jobs as one, no pay rise makes it hard to want to stay in public education. This is why teachers leave, they feel unappreciated, and are asked to give the world to these kids with no incentive to stay. I love my job, but I don't love feeling beat up, run down and mentally and emotionally drained at the end of each day. On top of this, why should my hard earned money in the public school system be designated to private schools? If parents have school choice, they could move to another district with better schools and better programs. Giving the choice of you can go to this school or pay x amount of dollars to attend private schools shouldn't be the only choice. After 4 years of paying for private school, the family could have moved to a better district. Please help public schools out, please fund them. We have great school districts around us, and in the state of Texas that could stay great if given the proper resources.

Laura Spraggins
After-school Educator
Austin, TX

Hello, I run an after-care program serving 120 children at an elementary school. I see first hand the impact funding has on our TX youth, their families, and the dedicated teachers and staff who nurture our communities.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Angela Bates, Mrs.
Self
Franklin, TX

Please do NOT vote for school vouchers. They will only hurt our public school system. Our local ISD's and charter schools need every dollar and every student they can get to educate. My concern is that some families who may be struggling financially will pull their children from the public system to "homeschool" them so that they can get the voucher amount and then not educate those children. In addition to that our tax dollars should not be going to fund private schools. Private schools are not held to the same standards as public schools and can deny entry to anyone. Our tax dollars should be used to fund education for those who have financial means to fund their own children's education in a private setting.

Margie Yankeelov, Dr.
Self, university lecturer and parent
Austin, TX

Our schools and teachers are severely underfunded. If we want the best workforce for Texas, we must have the most talented teachers. We cannot maintain a talented pool of teachers on the salaries they currently receive. They could make much more under a lot less stress in other fields and other states. We need to support our teachers with better pay so they are motivated to stay in Texas and grow in their positions, then fund the PUBLIC schools (not vouchers). Students need stability and opportunity in order to learn anything. Let's give those who were not born into advantage all the advantages we can.

Amanda Moulton
Self
Leander, TX

Vouchers are NOT what Texas needs! Research published in double-blind peer-reviewed journals find that large-scale voucher programs similar to what is being proposed in Texas showed students using vouchers experienced statistically significant declines in math and reading achievement. Protect Texas children and vote against vouchers.

Patricia Draughn
self
Austin, TX

It is disgusting to me that the State of Texas cares so little for our youth. Education is sorely underfunded; \$4000 per student under the national average! Everything is bigger in Texas? Obviously not everything, but a lack of care for our future is clearly bigger in Texas. How can any Texas politician claim to care with such staggering underfunding. Quit blaming teachers they are \$10,000 underpaid compared to the national average. They are underpaid, overworked with unrealistic expectations.

Allison BURKE
The Burke Family
AUSTIN, TX

Our schools are in crisis and our children's educations are on the line. We need to make sure our teachers and schools have the necessary funding to function. Schools are heavily relying on parent donations, but those schools who have lower income families are struggling the most. We need the state's help to fund our schools and teachers for the future of this State. Public school is an incredible resource that we all pay into with our taxes and we need to put those funds to work for our children.

Linda Childers
Self, mother
Abilene, TX

Only a robust, fully funded public school system will help every Texas child receive a good education. Vouchers (private school subsidies) will negatively affect the budget that public schools need. Private schools do not want to be accountable financially or academically for government funds. Vouchers will only provide more money in the pockets of those who already can afford private schools. Please vote to increase funding for our public schools to educate our children well.

Jackie Strong
self
Austin, TX

Our public schools are in crisis and need our help. Education is the corner stone of a successful society which includes the Texas economy. The funds ARE available to turn this around and provide all Texas children a top notch education regardless of the school/city. Our schools need funds for improvements. Our teachers are paid well under the national average which creates high turn over and instability for all Texas families. Big picture, this hurting the future prosperity of the state. As a Texas resident that contributed to the \$40+ billion in surplus the state now sits on, I demand a substantial investment in our public schools across the state. That you have been sitting on it while our school systems fall apart is not only short sighted but quite frankly, deplorable.

Timothy Whitehill
Self, designer
Austin, TX

Our schools, teachers and students are suffering due to lack of funds that are being held up by the state. Our teachers are now paid \$10,000 below the national average, our students funded at \$4,000 below the national average, and the average tenure of a new teacher in our classrooms is 3 years, causing instability to not only them, but our schools and classrooms. Texas ranked No. 46 nationally for its spending on its public school system, the sixth lowest out of all 50 states and the District of Columbia - the Texas state government should be ashamed. We should not be diluting the public school system funds by moving to a privatized voucher version- every kid should have a right to a good public education!

Nancy Kirk
Self
Abilene, TX

Please fund PUBLIC SCHOOLS!!!

Leah Mesches
self, parent of 2 AISD students
Austin, TX

I have a kindergarten and a third grader in a Texas Title 1 public school, and I am deeply concerned about the resources available for their education. The district has been forced to make increasingly difficult cuts to staff and programs every year since my children started kindergarten, even as student needs and state mandates have continued to grow.

At our local school, the PTA and parents in the community are the driving force behind providing the school with basic needs such as classroom materials. We are so lucky to have strong leadership, generous parents who do what they can (financially and with their time), but you can see how draining it is for the staff and community. Teachers are burnt out and it's impacting our children.

The underfunding of Texas public schools since 2011, starting with a \$5.4 billion cut, has had a devastating impact on our children. With nearly 90% of education funding supporting classroom staff, these cuts directly affected student learning. Even the 2019 "record investment" failed to restore funding to pre-2011 levels, adjusted for inflation. The subsequent years of pandemic and inflation have only exacerbated the problem.

Our students are being shortchanged. Texas teachers are paid significantly less than their counterparts in other states, and per-student funding is a fraction of what students elsewhere receive, hindering their future opportunities. Overburdened counselors struggle to meet student needs due to inadequate staffing ratios.

Texas' economic future hinges on the quality of education our children receive today. Our state's strong economy attracts recruiters from across the nation, seeking the next generation of talent. As a parent and a proud resident of Austin, I ask you to invest in that future by restoring public school funding to at least 2019 levels, or ideally, to the levels prior to the 2011 cuts. This is not just about our children; it's about the long-term prosperity of Texas.

This committee has the power to change this trajectory. We urge you to prioritize our children's future by allocating surplus funds, including Rainy Day funds if necessary, to increase the basic allotment for public education. This will provide crucial support for all school professionals, not just teachers, ensuring a better education for Texas students. We ask you to consider the future of Texas and act accordingly.

Nicholas Tracz
self / account executive
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Julie Danley
Self
Abilene, TX

Our public schools are one of our very most important assets, to our community and our country and our world. Public schools are community and keep so many children from falling through the cracks. I witness regularly how our public schools benefit the city of Abilene. School vouchers will decimate our system and in Abilene alone our society and our culture will suffer. Public school teachers work so hard to bring knowledge, the arts, literature, math, science, and a place of belonging. It may be the only thing that keeps our country great. Please do not take more money from our schools. It is a slap in the face to the citizens of Texas to take money from the public schools and give it to those who already have privilege of choice. Those children who will fall through the cracks are the ones that their families will not know how to navigate the system to get what they need. They are the ones who will suffer. Shame on any of you for even proposing that you take money from those schools and give it to private schools or homeschoolers. I honor the choices those families have made but they need to make those choices on their own dime.

Samera Dominguez, Mrs.
AISD/Teacher
Argyle, TX

Release funds to our public schools. These students are the future of our economy. Are you so heartless and so inconsiderate to continue to defund public school education. You are putting so much pressure on teachers and literally sucking the joy out of teaching. Stop being so heartless and do something! Get your priorities straight people.

Sarah Fambrough

Self

Abilene, TX

Texas has billions in surplus while Texas school districts are operating with deficit budgets in the millions. Most careers in Texas that require college degrees have had salary increases of 25% on average in the last 25 years while Texas educators' salaries have increased 2% during that time. Governor Abbott is saying Texas spends on average \$15,000 per student but that number includes TEA and regions service center funds. What school districts actually have to work with is closer to \$10,000 per student, ranking Texas 44th in the United States for per student funding.

I urge you to oppose Governor Abbott's Education Freedom Plan. It will be costly and not in the best interest of all Texas children. Texas needs to fund public schools fully and equitably! IF private schools receive tax dollars then they should be accountable just like public schools which means they should have the same testing requirements. They should also be accountable for how they spend that money and their books should be audited.

Mary Suzetta Nutt

Self / Executive Minister

Abilene, TX

I have 2 children that have graduated from public school, and I currently have an 8th grader in public school. I greatly oppose private school vouchers or education savings accounts. I believe private school subsidies are wasteful, deceitful, inefficient, and unfair. Public school dollars should go to only public schools. Public schools in Texas are underfunded. We elect legislators to represent the interests of their communities. I will stand with my legislators in opposing vouchers. When they vote against private school subsidies, I will make sure all their constituents know they did the right thing.

Joanna Willard

Self

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Natalie Hughes
Self—parent, house manager
Abilene, TX

I have 2 children who attend public school and 1 who will be attending when he is old enough! We love our public schools because we value the diversity of our community we find here in our public school and we see the skills of the teachers and staff who provide their education. I greatly oppose private school vouchers or education savings accounts. I believe private school subsidies are unnecessary when we have a quality and appropriately funded public school setting. Many public school districts, when funded properly, are able to provide the unique opportunities that are appropriately sought by some families through private school settings. Public school dollars should go to continuing to address the needs that exist in our public schools. Public schools in Texas are underfunded and because of this are not as able to provide for the unique needs that exist in both gifted/talented students as well as differently-abled students. We elect legislators to represent the interests of their communities and I will stand with my legislators in opposing vouchers. When they vote against private school subsidies, I will make use all my networks to praise and support their choice that considers ALL of our children.

Angelina Perez
Pasadena independent school district
Houston, TX

Give the money to the schools. Period. The kids are the ones who desperately need schools. Not only a learning institution but as safe haven. Buildings are falling apart, kids do not have adequate access to needed resources. Teachers are already stretched thin enough, yet we stay because we know that we hold the future in our hands. Don't be blind and take from the poor, but give back to those who are in need. Please.

Deborah Matzner
self, market researcher and parent for two
Austin, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Paul Hull
self
Austin, TX

Please appropriate proper monies from the State of Texas budget surplus and the "Rainy Day Fund" for public education in the State of Texas. Teachers, school district administrators, parents, and, most importantly, students in the State of Texas deserve this funding for a better future. Please do not delay properly funding Texas Public schools with the available money.

Ben Wu
Self
Austin, TX

Hello
My name is Ben Wu, I've been an Austin resident for nearly 11 years, and parent of two- my son has been in Austin ISD for the past 5 years, and my daughter will be entering the Austin public school system next year as a kindergartner.

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Anika Keswani, JD
self
AUSTIN, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I ASK that you use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Linda Bartley
self
DALLAS, TX

Texas needs quality public schools. Fully fund our public schools and then we can talk about using tax payer money to fund private schools. Every Texas child deserves no less than a robust education, it is our obligation as a Texas citizen. Do not pass SB2.

Elizabeth Vanderkolk
Self
Austin, TX

I demand we OPPOSE SCHOOL VOUCHERS!!

Jennifer Raney, Mrs.
Myself
Abilene, TX

I was an educator - teacher and principal - for 33 years. Funding was always TIGHT. Programs, staffing and potential incentives were OFTEN sidelined for lack of funding. The majority of teachers pay for classroom items because we are unable to do so. PLEASE rethink! Also, funding parents to homeschool has the potential to be disastrous for some students.

Brittany Pilger
self, public school teacher
Argyle, TX

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the current level of per-pupil funding for public schools in Texas. As an educator and a stakeholder in our public education system, I see firsthand the challenges that schools face due to inadequate financial resources. I urge you and your colleagues in the Texas Legislature to prioritize increasing state funding for public schools to ensure that every child receives a high-quality education.

Texas ranks among the lowest in the nation in per-student funding, which has a direct impact on classroom sizes, teacher retention, student resources, and overall educational outcomes. Insufficient funding places an undue burden on educators, limits access to critical academic and extracurricular programs, and fails to provide students with the tools necessary to compete in an increasingly complex and competitive world.

Investing in public education is an investment in the future of Texas. Increased per-pupil funding would allow schools to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, modernize outdated infrastructure, and provide students with the technology and resources they need to succeed. Strong public schools contribute to stronger communities, a more skilled workforce, and a robust state economy.

I respectfully urge you to advocate for and support legislation that increases per-pupil funding for Texas public schools. Our students deserve a well-funded, equitable education system that prepares them for future success. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and explore ways in which we can work together to support Texas students.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to our state's future. I appreciate your leadership and look forward to seeing meaningful progress on this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Brittany Pilger, Public School Teacher, Northwest ISD and mom of a public school student in Argyle ISD.

Katherine Schaeffer
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Fuerza Kitcher
Self
Austin, TX

Texas public schools are the backbone of our state. For the future of Texas, it is your duty to ensure full, stable public education funding so that public schools have the resources to serve and be responsive to our communities. Like many other Texas families, I have done my part by volunteering, donating, voting to raise my own property taxes, holding my school district accountable, and staying informed. So I know that there is more that you can do, too. Please prioritize our public schools first. All Texans are better off when our public schools have what they need to deliver for our communities.

Craig Campbell
Self
Austin, TX

Why is Texas at the bottom of funding for public education?
Why does Texas have 20% uncertified teachers? What is the plan to improve this?

Craig Campbell
Self
Austin, TX

Why do you propose \$10,000 per private wealthy student and \$6,000 per public poor student? Is this not REVERSE ROBIN HOOD? Robin Hood was to make sure that poor students had equal access to a quality education. SB 2 seems to be a complete flip of this court ordered move for fairness. Will the original plaintiffs not have grounds to reactivate that suit? Fairness is a fundamental value for all people.

Holly Gorman
Texas parent
AUSTIN, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Hannes Mandel, Dr.
The People of Texas
Austin, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Kelsy Mayse, Ms.
self teacher
Argyle, TX

I've been teaching in the public education system of Texas for over 12 years, I work in special education. the processing and organizing of this section of teaching needs a complete oversight. it needs to be reorganized to meet the needs of our special students! They deserve much more, and the teachers that serve these wonderful special students need more as well! it is time to look at the legal and educational needs of these remarkable students that struggle everyday. I see it in their eyes, I see it in their souls, every time they approach curriculum they feel defeated. The teachers that inspire them feel defeated, due to lack of resources and funding. self-contained teachers need special attention, counseling and on campus support during crisis moments that could injure the student or themselves. more curriculum for our self-contained classrooms, tactile unt teks-based materials that cover the school year timeline of modified curriculum. We create so much, and rarely have a chance to spend time on brief breaks to create them. We monitor lunches, every busload, sometimes the classes that cover are brakes, crisis intervention, and deescalation situations are routine daily, we need counselors that come in to our classrooms to check on our mental health daily, including our support staff. A designated nurse intended for our special students would be wonderful as well. if injury falls upon a support staff, employee, therapist, or teacher, it could be properly diagnosed and treated

We need organized meetings weekly, or monthly to express concerns, educational ideas, behavioral ideas for students with special needs. We need to have State standardized tests that truly reflect their ability level. Our self-contained students with behavioral support, need more support inside the general Ed classrooms. their behaviors impede upon the learning of others, most of these individuals do not perform at grade level and need modified curriculum already created by the state to support them. We have to meet them where they're at, instead of presenting grade level worksheets and curriculum that they cannot complete, or even begin. each of those students shut down and show aggressive behavior, due to not understanding what is expected of them. We need more behavioral support, educational support, unt monitoring, trained bodies to support us during crisis moments. We need to have safety meetings monthly/weekly, to discuss student behaviors and how we properly respond to them as a team! this is essential to save all from injuries and destruction of school property! Thank you for your time and your efforts! We appreciate you for hearing us!

Susie Alvaro
Texas mom
Austin, TX

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Ekaterina Schifferdecker
Ekaterina Schifferdecker
Flower Mound, TX

I want to express my support for increased funding for Argyle ISD. My child attends Argyle ISD and I believe it's important to focus on Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators, Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes, Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence. I also want to point out that my child is currently on a 504 plan. Currently, Special Education is Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state. I have grave concerns as a parent of a child in public school and a resident of Argyle ISD.

Thank you.

Brandon Schifferdecker
Brandon Schifferdecker
Flower Mound, TX

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Thank you.

Cristina Hohlman
self
Austin, TX

As a CFO of a venture capital firm, I firmly believe that public education was the foundation that supported me to what I've achieved today. Our public schools are begging for your support. We ALL are begging for you to do the right thing and increase funding to public schools. The state is sitting on a surplus, while our teachers have over 22 kids in a class and barely have enough to pay for a minimum standard of living.

I own my home, yet the recapture takes ~70% to recapture and the state is sitting on a surplus. We want our tax dollars to go back to OUR COMMUNITY! NO SCHOOL VOUCHERS.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Kevin M. Jackson Jr., Mr.
Self/Educational Diagnostician
AUSTIN, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Crystal Harvey
Self, homemaker
Tomball, TX

Please, please, FULLY fund our PUBLIC education system! Private schools do NOT NEED our funds. It is just welfare for the wealthy. My sons rely on public education for special needs.

Beth Isernhagen

Self

Spring, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools.

I am a licensed teacher who has taught in Texas public schools. I have five children, four of whom are in Tomball ISD and one who will attend in the future. We love our neighborhood schools, but they must be adequately funded to allow for the best educational opportunities. Many counties in Texas do not have any other option than public schools and they deserve far more funding as well. Many districts are having budget difficulties not because of mismanagement of funds but because the legislature has kept school funding hostage and instead focused on private schools who already have their own funding. Overwhelmingly, Texans want schools funded and not voucher programs, which funnel money away from our neighborhood schools and often go toward people who already have the funds and already send their kids to private schools. Please FUND our schools before considering any other options.

Mariah Bach

Argyle Middle School

Argyle, TX

I have been teaching 8th grade English for a few years, and I worry much for the trajectory of this career based on what I have seen in little time. This year has been particularly challenging as we have navigated the funding drop off. We just changed curriculum and it was tough enough to navigate the newness of it alone, but cutting back on resources & losing PLC time made it harder. Our 8th ELA team gets about 10-20 minutes in a week to prepare for the coming week of lessons because we can't afford to have a meeting period for planning and grading. In a class with so much writing, I need far more time to give helpful feedback and guidance to my students, but I have to speed read their work just to get it done in the limited time I have to grade.

Another difficulty of the limited planning time is that I can't differentiate as well for my range of learners. I am responsible for teaching my ESL students in the same room as kids I would consider GT. It's incredibly difficult to process the lesson & prepare all the accommodations & enrichments needed to make an effective lesson for all learners when I have 50 minutes a day to focus on planning, grading, parent communication, accommodation documentation, and that includes none of the school activities I manage on top of it. If we had the funding to hire more staff, we could have a PLC period to complete this work more effectively and we would see the gaps close for our kids sooner.

I ask that your team consider the long term effects of struggling educators & students who are let down because of our declining system. When educators are overworked and underfunded, students don't get the quality education they need to thrive. What will society look like when public education gets thrown to the dogs?

Lori Adamczyk

SELF

The Woodlands, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about the students in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools.

Courtney Mitchell
Self/ Program Analyst
Argyle, TX

I strongly oppose school vouchers and support public education in Texas. Our schools need increased funding and I will vote against every person supporting vouchers.

Jamie Vaca
Self
Northlake, TX

Our money should be going back to the schools! Allotments haven't increased in half a decade, and that is impacting all schools, all jobs, and all students. We need an increase in funds because we need:

- ? Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain our amazing educators
- ? Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes
- ? Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

Nancy Hathaway
Self
The Woodlands, TX

Please increase the basic allotment for TX public schools. There's been no increase since 2019; there's been a decrease of \$9.86B in the fund since then. The \$2B increase for 2024-25 was never distributed. Since 2020, the number of economically disadvantaged students in TX has risen by 4%; the number of special ed students has risen by 32%. The lack of funding especially hits special ed, transportation, and security needs hard—not to mention teachers' salaries, which have not even kept up with inflation! With the looming efforts to provide vouchers—which, by even Gov. Abbot's admission, will hurt public schools' funding—we MUST increase the basic allotment for our public schools, which are a bedrock of a true democracy. FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST!!

Paige Peters
self
Argyle, TX

As a Texas resident and advocate for quality public education, I urge the Texas House Committee on Appropriations to prioritize increased public school funding. The student basic allotment has remained unchanged since 2019, despite record inflation and the growing financial demands on our schools. Without immediate action, districts like Argyle ISD—and many others across the state—will struggle to maintain the high-quality education our children deserve.

In Argyle ISD, essential costs have skyrocketed:

Utilities have increased by 51%
Fuel costs have risen 44%
Property & casualty insurance has grown by 45%
Special education is projected to cost 151% more than what the state provides
Safety & security expenses have surged by 483%
These rising expenses, combined with unfunded mandates, force schools to make difficult choices that negatively impact students and teachers. Texas must invest in public education to ensure:
? Competitive teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators
? Smaller class sizes that enhance student learning outcomes
? Adequate funding for programs that support academic and extracurricular success

As a parent, I have seen firsthand how funding impacts the quality of education. When resources are stretched too thin, students lose access to essential programs, teachers face burnout, and schools struggle to provide a safe and enriching learning environment. Education is the foundation of Texas' future workforce and economy—we cannot afford to underfund it.

I respectfully request that the Texas Legislature increase the basic allotment to reflect current economic realities and fully fund the needs of our public schools. Investing in education is investing in Texas' future. Please take action to ensure every child has access to the high-quality education they deserve.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Texas students and educators.

Brad Uptmore
Self/Police Officer
Argyle, TX

My child attends Hilltop Elementary in Argyle, Texas. I chose the school for their stellar special education program, which has changed our lives. The teachers do not make enough money and it's disgusting how the state cannot fund our schools properly. Pay teachers a wage where they don't have to work multiple jobs, give the school the resources to make their bills, and actually value education in Texas. My mom was a teacher for 25 years and I saw the same mistreatment. The taxes and money is there, but wasted on "wall" talk, or vouchers, or attacks on DEI. Which part do you hate? The diversity, the equity, or the inclusion? You've spent our dollars fighting that, when it could be funding our schools.

Cuneyt Uysal
Self IT
Argyle, TX

We need to increase funds for schools which has not happened since the inflation increase since 2019. Please don't punish our children any longer and make progress

Kor Wert
Argyle ISD
ARGYLE, TX

With the amount of inflation over the past few years, public schools have not been given adequate funding to keep up with the increase in costs. Districts are suffering, which in turn, kids are suffering. Schools are having to be closed. Class sizes are increasing to above the student/teacher ratio, and overall morale of educators is dwindling. Governor Abbott has used holding the funds over everyone's head in order to get school choice/vouchers to pass. Not even private schools or those who home school even want vouchers. I still don't even know the purpose. School funding is at an all time low, and Governor Abbott has even admitted that schools are underfunded. Continuing to hold off supporting public schools by not giving them the funds they so desperately need is single handedly hurting our children. DO BETTER.

Toni Filler, Teacher
Self
Argyle, TX

As a public school teacher in the state of Texas, it is essential that my representative's advocate to fund public schools. With record-breaking inflation, our schools are suffering. Children need to be the focus of our lives. They are the future. They will make a difference. There is nothing more important during this legislative session than funding public schools in Texas. We have faced larger class sizes and cutting up essential teachers because the legislature has not done its job and protected public schools. The crisis continues. Children matter please vote to show that you use believe this.

Mathew Timmons
self, hospital executive
Argyle, TX

We need to prioritize higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators
We need smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes.
We need additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence.

Wendy Aubin
self , educator
Argyle, TX

I am a life long Republican and public school teacher, and my oldest daughter attends a private Christian school. I am so appreciative of being able to choose what school is best for each of my children. My husband and I made the decision to send her to a private school because we felt that was best for her; my other daughter is in 6th grade and attends public school in the same district where I teach. If vouchers were allowed back when we enrolled her in the private school, we would not have taken them for a couple reasons. I do not believe government should pay for private entities. It is considered private for a reason. Also, I would not want to send my child to a private school that government has a foot in the door. I would question whether or not the government could begin making requirements or demands on the private institute. For instance, you may not pray in school or use the Bible in class as a teaching tool. Public schools deserve to be fully funded. They have not seen an increase in funds since 2019. With inflation sky rocketing, I know our household budget would be dismal if my husband didn't get any increase in wages. How do you expect a school budget to survive? I love my work: teaching children how to read, write, think and problem solve; I love the people I work with and for, most of them are fellow Christ followers like myself. I view my work as some-what of a mission. I may not be able to talk about the Gospel in public school but I can sure love on my students and coworkers and pray for them like the Bible tells me to. Please don't allow the school budget to eliminate my position. Please release funds to schools now and if vouchers go through make it equitable. There are so many teachers and administrators doing a whole lot of good for communities. Encourage that, don't make me go work in a different profession and leave what I feel is my mission.

Heather Sayre, Mrs
Self
Argyle, TX

Please don't give to the private school more funding than public schools. I am a public school teacher and we need all the money we can get.

Marie Hatcher
Self
Argyle, TX

Our school needs more funding to ensure that every child, regardless of their background or specific needs, has access to the resources and opportunities they deserve. From my personal experience, my son has greatly benefited from speech therapy, which has played a crucial role in his development. My son also is requiring another evaluation due to his delays- I am thankful for the staff and resources to allow for this type of attention... The school's pre-K program would be a perfect fit for his growth, yet due to the lottery system, he faces the uncertainty of not being able to continue. Additional funding would allow the school to expand its programs, ensuring that children who need specialized services, like speech therapy, can continue to receive the support they need, without being limited by random selection. It would help create a more inclusive and effective learning environment for all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration in more funding for Argyle West Elementary.

Lori Claybrook
Self
Northlake, TX

As of today, my 5th grader has 28 kids in his class. School district officials say it is because the state hasn't increased the basic allotment since 2019 (~\$6k/student). State officials say that number is higher because of extended allotment and is closer to \$15k/student. The school portion of my property taxes is >\$6k. As a parent, I'd love to see better transparency. I'm paying for my kids to get an education but with 28 kids in the class, all with different learning levels, how are students and teachers supposed to be successful? Parents are stuck in the middle of school districts and state officials that each have their own version of the truth. Please figure this out for the sake of our children. Nobody likes to be monkey in the middle.

Josh Sterling
Self
Argyle, TX

Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%
Fuel: Increased by 44%
Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%
Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state
Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state.

The state told us to try for a VATRE and we did but that failed. The community doesn't want to pay additional on top of the taxes already being paid that the state isn't using appropriately for public school funding.

Martha Forcey

Self

Argyle, TX

Argyle ISD, as well as other district's depend on student basic allotment, which has not increased since 2019. This funding helps offset costs for many educational programs and supports campus level costs. Meantime, the following costs have been absorbed by Argyle ISD, again with no additional funding:

Utilities: Increased by 51%

Fuel: Increased by 44%

Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%

Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state.

Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state.

This said, please know that I vote in every election, and I help with get out the vote programs. I will not support, and will encourage everyone I know or come in contact with not to keep any elected officials in office that do not support local schools by providing additional student funding to help support Texas children in successful educational outcomes.

Don't let Governor Greg Abbott bully you into giving in to his approach to school funding.

Martha Forcey

Self

Argyle, TX

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Don't let Governor Greg Abbott bully you into giving in to his approach to school funding.

Josh Sterling

Argyle ISD - Self

Argyle, TX

We need additional public school funding for:

- Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators
- Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes
- Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

Proper funding greatly impacts our children's education and general support for increased investment in our schools should be a priority to the state. In order for Texas to the best you must give the children the resources they need by funding the ISD's.

Jamie Webb
Self
Argyle, TX

I am writing to plead for increased funding to our public education system, specifically Argyle ISD. Our class sizes have gotten ridiculously large leading to my daughter struggling to get help needed to understand the daily curriculum. What has always been an A student is falling behind telling me she doesn't feel ok to ask for help because the teachers are too busy. We have looked into private school, and will have to do so if a space opens up, which will lead to many years of school debt before she even goes to college. Honestly, I can't even believe that I'm having to ask for this. With the rate of inflation, our schools have not received an increase in student allotment since 2019. What household could sustain the same inflation without a raise in pay?

William Lafayette
Myself
Argyle, TX

I am against school vouchers. One of many is public schools have to take everyone and provide an educational plan. Vouchers will take away funding that public schools need for special education SPED programs for students they have to accept and educate. Vouchers are a tax break for the very wealthy.

Amy Godwin
self, Registered Dietitian
Northlake, TX

We have already seen class sizes at our elementary school grow to 25 per classroom and are now reading that this class sizes will grow more. I have a son in the gifted and talented program and with these increased class sizes we are seeing his testing scores slowly decrease. This is too many kids for one teacher to be able to manage and teach in a way that each child is progressing in the way they should be.

Chad Malchow, Mr.
Self
Argyle, TX

I am emailing to express my support for an increase in public funding. I moved to the Argyle ISD due to its highly competitive academics, small classroom sizes and the programs and amenities it provides my children. It's imperative we keep our outstanding ISDs outstanding while we raise up other ISDs. But we can not and should not ignore or hold back our outstanding ISDs like Argyle. I ask you to support this bill so parents like me can receive the support our children need in:

- ? Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators
 - ? Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes
 - ? Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence
-

Trace Humphreys
Self, Teacher
Justin, TX

I love my job. I love serving my students and strive to make a positive difference in their lives. This is my sixth year in education and I am looking forward to many more pouring into the local community. However, there needs to be more support for public school districts around the state and the current bill, SB2, is deeply concerning. Here are some of the ways that it is affecting the district that I am serving in.

In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%

Fuel: Increased by 44%

Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%

Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state

Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

With all of this, there has not been any increase to our allotment since 2019. Our class sizes are growing quickly due to the lack of funding. Kindergarten classes reaching 30 students is not beneficial for the students, nor sustainable for the educators. A higher allotment would allow for both an increase in teacher salaries, attracting great candidates and providing them with a wage that allows them to support their family, as well as increasing the number of teachers on staff thereby reducing class sizes. An increase to the general allotment would also allow for more programs to support the growing needs and interests of our state's students. By diverting funding towards the voucher program, our schools, communities, families, and society will struggle, creating a greater disparity between those who can afford to use the private school vouchers and those who cannot.

Tanya O'Neil
Self, Parent and Realtor
argyle, TX

Our public school has changed my child's life. She is ADHD and dyslexic and now as a 5th grader, can read in a way that is amazing. I give all the credit to her teachers and the school system. By holding funding hostage and paying teachers low wages, this kind of story may not continue to happen. School vouchers are not the solution, supporting our local PUBLIC schools are the way to keep our tax dollars taking care of our children and our next generation of Texans.

Joshua Combs
Argyle ISD
Argyle, TX

I have 4 children who have attended Argyle ISD for years now. One will graduate this year and go on to be an incredible leader in this great state. I'm very involved at Argyle ISD, leading the Bond Oversight Committee. One of my children has moved to a private school this year. I went to private school growing up. I've seen both public and private education at work and believe there is a place for both. However, holding funding from public schools that the state has in it's pockets is flat wrong. Doing it for political leverage is worse. Our state needs to issue M&O funding to our public schools systems. Private school is a choice for those who are willing to sacrifice to send their kids there, but public education should not suffer. I and many many others are tired of our legislators holding public schools hostage. Release more funding to our students.

SABITHA KANAPARTHI

SELF

NORTHLAKE, TX

Hi ,

Honorable Members,

I am Resident of Argyle Area,My kids go to Middle and high school.Argyle ISD, is facing a very real financial challenge due to rising costs and stagnant funding levels. The significant increases in utilities, fuel, insurance, and other essential services like special education and safety/security are putting a major strain on school budget. The projected overages in these areas, especially the 483% increase in safety and security costs, are particularly alarming.Please help our kids have better standards by allotting funds to public schools.

Thank you

Geetha Srirangapuri

SELF

Northlake, TX

Public education is the foundation of our future, yet schools across the state, including Argyle ISD, are struggling due to inadequate funding. The student basic allotment has remained unchanged since 2019, despite significant inflation and rising operational costs. This stagnant funding has placed a tremendous strain on our district's ability to meet the needs of students, teachers, and essential programs.

In Argyle ISD, we have seen:

A 51% increase in utility costs

A 44% increase in fuel expenses

A 45% increase in property and casualty insurance

A 151% increase in special education spending, exceeding state allocations

A 483% increase in safety and security expenditures, also exceeding state support

These financial pressures directly impact students. Without increased funding, our schools face larger class sizes, fewer resources, and challenges in recruiting and retaining high-quality educators. Teachers deserve competitive salaries, students deserve smaller class sizes for better learning outcomes, and districts need the resources to provide safe, enriching environments.

As a [parent/teacher/community member], I have personally witnessed how these funding challenges affect our schools. [You may include a brief personal experience, such as a teacher shortage, outdated materials, or program cuts.]

I urge the committee to prioritize increased funding for public education. Our children deserve the best possible learning environment, and that requires a stronger financial commitment from the state. Please support higher teacher salaries, smaller class sizes, and additional funding for academic and extracurricular programs.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Texas students. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to seeing meaningful action on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information, if required]

[Your Affiliation, if applicable]

Would you like any adjustments to personalize it further?

Search

Reason

ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check importa

Debra Ross, AVP Talent Management

Self

Argyle, TX

Please release funding deserving of our public schools. I have had my kids in both public and private schools. When I choose private, I choose to pay. We have an obligation to provide public education—this is a responsibility as citizens—to educate our future generation. Public schools are in a choke-hold—and relying on additional bonds to fund teachers—only penalizing taxpayers while you hold our money. Please fund our schools and let private school parents pay if that is the education they desire.

Jennifer McClure

self

Fort Worth, TX

As an educator, I'd like to ask you to please review your funding for public schools. As teachers, we are vastly underpaid and haven't had pay increases to even keep up with inflation. I am a single income household and struggle to get by. In addition, despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%

Fuel: Increased by 44%

Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%

Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state

Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

We are losing teachers who can no longer afford to teach and those of us that stay grow more and more dissatisfied with our career choice and are looking for ways to move into other professions. Please help us.

Heather Seal-Breslin

Self - Student

Argyle, TX

I strongly oppose the use of my tax dollars to fund the private school education of already wealthy families. Our public schools have struggled without state funds since 2019. Taking away more money from the common good to subsidize private schools makes no sense whatsoever. If Texas is to remain a state capable of attracting businesses we need to have an educated workforce available. All students deserve a good education regardless of how wealthy their families are. Lastly, schools cannot survive further budget cuts without cutting the activities that make our schools special, like athletics, music and academic competitions. Do not vote for this voucher program!

Amanda Shelton Shirley
self/mom of 4 and small business owner
Argyle, TX

Being a mom of four boys all in public school this is a very important topic for our family. Argyle ISD is one of the best school districts in the state, in our opinion, and is struggling to be able to provide for our students. The teachers are struggling to make ends meet due to pay, the students are getting the bare minimum when it comes to having new technology, new facilities, and even being able to have classes that will better their future (Technology class, STEM, Gift and Talented, and Life skills). Without the state of Texas changing the school funding budget and how districts get state funding we are failing our children. Not all children will thrive in private schools. I am personally one of those. Parents who chose public school for their children should not be punished by the state for their lack of funding. Our teachers deserve better and so do our children. Texas is one of the worst states when it comes to public school funding. Is that what we want to be known for? Local taxes do not cover the cost of running a school and providing the tools for our children to succeed. The voucher is not the solution to the school funding and providing our children a better education. Private school does not provide the programs needed by students with certain learning challenges. Having a child with ADHD and is also gifted I know that the programs that are available in Argyle ISD help him grow as a learner and person each day. These programs are not available at all private schools but are at all public schools. The board of education for the state should consist of educators not business men or people who do not have children in school today. I fear for our children and their future knowing that their future does not matter to those making big decisions in the state we live in. Money should be put towards public education and not in the pockets of politicians. \$10,000 per student in Argyle ISD could go a long ways and help better their future. Right now Argyle ISD has around \$6,500 per student. If you offer \$10,000 for a private school voucher it should be the same across the board for public school children as well.

Carolyn Mitchell, Rev.
Self/Retired Minister
Conroe, TX

Fund Public Schools First

I support a meaningful increase in public school funding. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school districts. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to close neighborhood schools and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps.

I urge you to take action to improve the financing for public schools and therefore improve working conditions for teachers and a more equitable education for all students in CISD, not just those in private schools.

Thank you,
Rev. Carolyn Mitchell
CISD

Jennifer Calvert
Self
ARGYLE, TX

Please ensure adequate funding is provided to our schools WITHOUT raising property taxes. There are more than enough funding mechanisms to do this. Our kids deserve to learn in an environment that is safe, from teachers who are paid well and have the resources needed to do their jobs.

Megan Lamb
self
Ponder, TX

As both a public educator and parent, I request the following to be strongly considered: Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators; Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes; and Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence.

I have been in education since 2014, and since 2020, the number of teachers that have chosen to leave the profession has only continually increased. These are highly passionate and dedicated individuals who have chosen to leave because they cannot make ends meet on a teacher's salary. Teachers have left the profession mid-year, causing inconsistency in student education, making academic excellence a significant struggle. The student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Cumulative inflation price increase since 2019 is Approximately 23.45% . At the bare minimum if Texas is prioritizing the education and the future of Texas, they should be increasing the spending equivalent to inflation costs.

In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates has impacted our budget in the following ways: Utilities Increased by 51%, Fuel Increased by 44%, Property & Casualty Insurance Increased by 45%, Special Education is projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state, and Safety & Security is Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state.

As Texas expands in other areas outside of education according to the census and Texas Realtors, Since 2019 more than 1.5 million people have moved to Texas from other states. With increased population, if funding is not increased to help accommodate for smaller classes, it will significantly impact education. As class sizes increase, a larger effort on teachers is focused on classroom behavior and management, and less time for individual connections. This directly impacts individual student abilities for educational success. As of today at the time of writing this, my largest class is 28 5th grade students. Last week 6 new students enrolled in the school, and this morning 2 more new students enrolled as well. After 28, there begins to not be physically enough room for students not only in my classroom but in many other classrooms. If you were asked to show up at your job but without a chair, desk, and provided electronic device, how would that impact your work performance? And how quickly would this situation be remedied? The same urgency needs to be applied to our students.

If Texas wants to improve education for current and incoming residents, then Texas needs to financially support education by increasing teacher salaries, providing smaller class sizes, and providing Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence.

Syd Webb
Self
Argyle, TX

Increased funding is critical for our district, Argyle ISD. Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

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I would like to advocate for increased funding to support the following in our district:

- Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators
- Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes
- Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

Whitney Sterling
Argyle ISD
Argyle, TX

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How You Can Help

Your written testimony can emphasize the need for:

? Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators

? Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes

? Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

I have a child with special needs in the special education program. She does not do general education hardly at all. My fear is for her. Are you even thinking of the kids with special needs? Please help our publicly educated kids. The majority of people cannot afford private school even with your voucher program. You need to think of the majority. We are a small middle class family and even with the voucher we cannot afford to put our children in private school not to mention my child with special needs that private schools cannot accommodate.

Linda Puckett
self
Argyle, TX

FUND OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS! Holding funding for public education back in order to pass SB2 is disgusting and we, as taxpayers, are tired of it. Teachers deserve BIG raises and the basic student allotment desperately needs to be increased by a sizeable amount. We are seeing schools close, classroom sizes increase, and programs shut down because of your refusal to help 5.6 million students in Texas by releasing funds to public schools.

Melissa Hawkes
self - Physical Therapist
Argyle, TX

I am deeply concerned by the current state of our school funding (or lack thereof) and even more concerned for the future of public schools in the state of Texas. It is inexcusable that our state legislature is refusing to appropriately fund our public schools. There is a legal, and I believe moral, obligation to adequately fund the public school system in the state of Texas. For our lawmakers to be sitting on a "surplus" while not increasing basic allotment since 2019 in the midst of record inflation is irresponsible. In my mind it would be the same as a private citizen bragging about how much money they have in their investment accounts while defaulting on their home mortgage, car loans, and credit cards. It's not mine to save/spend if I haven't paid my bills - and funding public education is the State's bill.

My husband worked as a teacher/coach/administrator in both public and private schools for 20 years. We've lived in Texas, Colorado, Illinois, and Florida but we have chosen to live and raise our children in Texas since 2005 because we believe that it has the best environment to help our kids grow into successful adults that make a positive impact on their community. The current administration's failure to adequately increase public school funding to keep up with inflation and expenses is putting that belief in jeopardy. Quality public education is one of the foundational pillars of our society. Please vote to continue that legacy.

Matt Shovlin
self
Argyle, TX

The fact that there has not been an increase in school funding in six years is shameful and I consider it criminal behavior on behalf of this legislative body. You should be ashamed of yourselves. As a proud republican your inability to act responsibly on behalf of the students in this state of which I am the parent of two sickens me and makes me question each and every one of your bonds fides, especially Mitch Little.

Darcy Walter
Self
Roanoke, TX

Please increase school funding for public schools in Texas. School vouchers undermine strong public schools and communities. We chose Argyle ISD because of the great teachers, the sense of community, and the extracurricular activities. Public school teachers need to be valued and receive pay increases. As a native Texan, I implore you to increase the amount of money you allocate to public schools and quit holding school funding up in an attempt to pass vouchers that benefit only a few people.

Jessica Legut
Self
Cypress, TX

Increase public school funding NOW

Laura Patrick
Self; Director of Business Development
Tomball, TX

Properly and adequately funded public education is vital not only for all students to achieve success, but to have a well educated society moving forward. All Texas children are entitled to a quality education and the tax payers of Texas want to see schools and teachers funded and paid like the critical infrastructure and employees they are. Improve Texas education and schools, increase the funding!

Joshua Vinyard
self - business owner and resident in Argyle ISD
Argyle, TX

Thank you for your time. As inflation has soared and the population of Argyle has increased substantially in the past 6 years, funding for the School District basic allotment has not changed since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created a great deal of strain on Argyle ISD, leadership, students, and families alike. Argyle has experienced increases of cost such as:

- Utilities: Increased by 51%
- Fuel: Increased by 44%
- Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%
- Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state
- Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

Our kids need our attention to this matter. Funding is the key to education, and can lead to things like: higher salaries for retaining top talent, smaller class sizes to improve student outcomes, and more extracurricular and school programs that provide enrichment beyond the typical classroom experience.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Josh Vinyard
Father to an Argyle ISD Middle-schooler

Shannon Gutierrez
Self
Tomball, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools.

Kristen Langdon
Self
Tomball, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools. Please and thank you!

Kaushik Kandaswamy

Self

Argyle, TX

Good morning,

My name is Kaushik Kandaswamy , and I am here to express my strong support for the proposed Publication Education Funding Bill[E1.030]. As someone deeply invested in the success of our students, I believe this bill is critical for ensuring our education system meets the needs of every child while empowering educators to deliver the highest quality of instruction.

This bill addresses three fundamental needs that are essential for improving our schools:

#1. ****Higher Teacher Salaries to Attract and Retain Top Educators****

Our teachers are the backbone of our education system. Yet, too often, their dedication and expertise are undervalued. Competitive salaries are necessary to attract the best and brightest to the teaching profession and retain talented educators who are already making a difference in our classrooms. Without this investment, we risk losing exceptional teachers to other industries where their skills are better compensated. This bill recognizes the value of educators by ensuring their pay reflects their vital contributions to society.

2. ****Smaller Class Sizes to Improve Student Learning Outcomes****

Every student deserves individualized attention to thrive academically. Large class sizes create barriers to meaningful teacher-student interaction and hinder the ability to address diverse learning needs. By funding smaller class sizes, this bill will empower teachers to provide personalized instruction, enhance classroom management, and create an environment where all students can succeed. Studies consistently show that smaller class sizes lead to improved academic performance, especially for younger and disadvantaged students.

3. ****Additional Funding for School Programs that Support Academic and Extracurricular Excellence****

Education is about more than just textbooks and tests. To truly prepare students for the future, we must offer programs that foster creativity, critical thinking, leadership, and collaboration. This bill ensures funding for vital programs like STEM initiatives, arts education, athletics, and mental health services. These programs not only enhance academic outcomes but also develop well-rounded individuals equipped to contribute to their communities and pursue their dreams.

Investing in education is not just an investment in our children—it is an investment in our future. By passing this bill, we will ensure that every student has access to high-quality teachers, manageable class sizes, and programs that inspire excellence in all areas of learning. Let us seize this opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the success of our schools, our students, and our society as a whole.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to the future of education. I urge you to vote in favor of the Education Funding Bill.

Regards,
Kaushik K

Vaishali Jain, Mrs
Argyle ISD
Argyle, TX

As a parent, I've seen firsthand how quality education shapes a child's future. Investing in our schools is investing in our children's success.

? Higher Teacher Salaries – Great teachers make all the difference, but without competitive pay, we risk losing them to other districts or professions. My child has thrived under passionate, dedicated educators, and I want to ensure they are valued and retained.

? Smaller Class Sizes – Individual attention is key to student success. When my child was in a smaller class, they received the support they needed to excel. In larger classes, that one-on-one time is harder to get, impacting learning outcomes.

? Additional Funding for Programs – Extracurricular and academic programs enrich students' education beyond textbooks. Whether it's STEM clubs, arts programs, or advanced coursework, these opportunities prepare students for the future. Without proper funding, these programs suffer, limiting our children's potential.

I urge decision-makers to prioritize education funding because our children deserve the best resources, teachers, and opportunities to thrive. Their future—and ours—depends on it.

Daphne Hoffacker, Rev
I'm a Mom!
Austin, TX

Our public schools are running on the backs of underpaid teachers, the hearts of overworked administrators, and the absolute soul of the thousands of volunteers like me who work tirelessly in the shadows to keep the schools y'all have neglected continuing to serve the 5.4 million Texas children who depend on them. I'm tired. I'm exhausted. We all are. But we aren't going to give up our children and their future. Wouldn't it be awesome if our state leaders were as dedicated to the future of our state as we moms are? It would be amazing, in fact, if y'all would actually listen to the teachers, administrators and moms when we tell you **OUR SCHOOLS NEED MORE RESOURCES!** And not just teachers - we need more counselors, aides, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, bi-lingual staff and more. We are sick and tired of hearing your lies about what is happening in our schools because blaming schools for your failure to support them is flat-out immoral and abusive. Go back to 2009 school funding levels, adjust for inflation, and put **AT LEAST** that into school funding. You have a constitutional responsibility to take care of our schools and an adult responsibility to go back and fix the mess you've made for over a decade. **FUND OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS!**

Nefertari Mundy, Ms
Self
Houston, TX

Texas school vouchers harm public schools, lack oversight, and primarily benefit private institutions rather than students in need. Instead of diverting resources, we should invest in strengthening public education, ensuring every child—regardless of zip code or income—has access to a high-quality education.

Lee Ann Newberry

Self

Argyle, TX

I am strongly urging you to support public education by increasing the student basic allotment. As you know this amount has not increased since 2019, and since that time costs like insurance, safety, utilities and gas have skyrocketed among other costs. Special education costs have particularly risen quickly and those kids especially deserve to be taken care of well. Public school systems are strapped across the state. Teacher pay has stalled all while in a shortage to find and retain quality educators. The public school systems have been held hostage over Abbott's voucher system which takes money away from public schools, has no testing or special education mandates, and does not require certified teachers. Our state ranking in education has continued to decline. Please support our kids and schools by raising teacher pay and the allotment.

Virginia Kolbuck

Self/ Physical Therapist Assistant

Tomball, TX

"FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools."

I am a product of private school education. I started my son in private school in Illinois. When we moved to Texas, the public school was across the street from our home so we decided to give it a chance. We have been happy with our choice. It was a difficult decision to make. Our taxes should fund public schools first so that all Texas Children can have a strong educational foundation. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Virginia Kolbuck

Annette Johnson

Self. Retired Social Worker

Tomball, TX

"FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019 and inflation has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. This has resulted in many teachers leaving the profession and districts struggle to attract new teachers. Many districts have had to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools."

Lauren Andreadis

Self - Insurance Broker for Public Entities (Texas ISD's)

Magnolia, TX

PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEED PROPER FUNDING FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher program. The basic allotment has not been increased since 2019 and many school districts are operating in a budget deficit. The majority of my clients are having to cut important funding that benefit our children to even afford the cost of insurance, utilities, transportation and inflation in general. They often cant afford to properly insure the new buildings they are building due to the high building values and increased insurance costs. Operating in these budget deficits also detract top teacher talent due to lack of raises and proper pay. They have to put up with too much in the public school system vs what private schools do! Our public education teachers need to make more money, period.

Too many families cant afford private schools. We know if vouchers are passed, the private education system will raise tuition, like they do each year anyway, but at a higher rate. This is going to make it hard for the average American family to afford, even with the vouchers, and take away money from school districts who are already failing financially. I see it each day when I speak to Superintendents and CFO's in the average Texas ISD. We need to keep funds in and raise funds to help the everyday Texas child trying to make a better life for themselves. If anything, holding districts accountable for where funds are being spent. Especially Holding administration accountable for making financial decisions that only go to benefit themselves personally. That should be a crime! What happened to Conflicts of Interest? These things should be reportable and not something that has to go through the board, which in many areas can also be corrupt.

We are seeing public ISD's asking for parents help to keep sports an option, band an option and other activities that are important to our youth an option. We didn't see these types of requests 20 years ago. The public school system needs help and needs a raise in allotment to benefit the everyday student! The private schools certainly do not! Thank you for listening.

Carmen Minick

Parent

Richmond, TX

School Choice Vouchers is not a choice for every parent. Some parents cannot afford private schools and vouchers will take away much needed special education funds in my public school. Our children need proper care, sped aides to help them learn and help them learn appropriate behaviors. Private schools would deny special education children and children with low socioeconomic lives and situations. Please know you are taking education from our children.

robin dwyer

self

Tomball, TX

our schools need more \$. kids in extra curricular competitions representing the schools are being financially held back at present. increase funds!

Jenny Toups

Self

Tomball, TX

Fund public education! Increase funding for public education; it is imperative for the long-term health and economy in Texas. Vouchers will destroy our education system! Education for all is the hallmark of a healthy democracy.

Christine Enslin
Self resident in Argyle ISD
Argyle, TX

My family pays a significant amount to property taxes each year. A large portion of that goes to public school funding. I like many tax payers thought that money went directly to my school. I am now seeing the effects of that money not going to my child's education. My child currently receives special education services. He is currently struggling in classes because as a 5th grader his classes range between 28-30 students in a class. We are in a fast growing district and between funding not increasing in the past 6 years and rising costs my son is being left behind. But it isn't just my child it is many children that depend on a public school to get a good education. I started looking at private schools for my child. Most won't take kids with ADHD or any other high anxiety related issues. We have found one school. 30k a year and we may or may not get in. It is also 45 minutes away from our home. That is the thing private schools can determine who they will take and who they won't take. They do not have to follow the same standards as public schools. The recent requirement of adding security to campuses was significantly underfunded. Seriously who is going to want to work for under \$18 an hour. I have witnessed Texas schools getting worse and worse through the years. It is not fair to our students and the teachers. Property tax relief isn't going to help with an increase in homestead exemption. It's time to find a new formula. Between increase in home values and the percentage that taxes are increased a couple hundred dollars is not helping anyone. It is time for our elected officials to wake up and see that we are failing our children.

Lindsay Hess
Self -- writer
Argyle, TX

Hello,

I am writing as a concerned parent of a public school child whose district funding allotments have not increased since 2019. This is in Argyle ISD, allegedly one of the top districts in the entire state.

Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%
Fuel: Increased by 44%
Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%
Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state
Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

A continued lack of funding increase will be detrimental to my children's education. I am hereby strongly urging the House to do its duty to the young citizens of our (allegedly) great state of Texas, and increase student basic allotments.

-Lindsay Hess

Silvia Martins Gomes

Self - Mother of Texas Public School Students

Argyle, TX

I have 2 kids in Elementary School. This school year the funding for Technology Classes had to be cut. With all increased costs, this is what the ISD had to do to be able to keep affording some other things. Can you imagine how kids can grow without technology? I am lucky enough that they have access to technology at home, but what future are we building for all Texas kids without technology classes, for example? And especially those who are not fortunate enough? We need higher salaries to keep attracting good teachers to Education. Not a lot of people are interested in being teachers right now and if we are not able to have good quality ones, our great state will be behind others. And we cannot allow that. We really need better funding to continue supporting academic and extracurricular programs that will be critical for our kids. We need higher salaries to attract and retain good teachers, and we definitely need smaller and more manageable class sizes. At this point, increasing funding will be essential to success, but that is not even what we are asking for because "to increase" means that we are good and we want more. Since the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019 (even before COVID and the high inflation years we have had), we need to think at least about compensating for the loss of real value of that money. We need to at least update the funding to consider the higher cost of utilities, fuel, property, insurance, safety, etc. It is imperative that we update the public education funding for the future of our kids and for the future of the great state of Texas.

Jerri Styles
Self Teacher
Argyle, TX

I beg of the committee to

Conduct a state-level study that identifies the actual cost of educating all students, including the cost of complying with state mandates.

*My district is projected to spend 151% more than the state allotment for SPED to meet SPED program requirements.

? To meet the state safety requirements, my district is projected to spend 483% more than the state allotment.

Increase funding for special education students to cover the actual district costs for providing needed services based on individual students.

? Pay for special education costs for identification of students, to critical positions, to adequately staff individual needs for student IEPs, and to cover costs of diagnostics.

Develop a requirement that the five-year-old basic allotment commensurate with inflation since 2019 and adjust each biennium based

the CPI rate of inflation.

? With inflation at its highest point in decades, approximately 20% since 2019, public schools are paying more than expected for fuel, utilities, and other mandatory costs. Fuel has increased 44% in my district while utilities have increased 51%. Public school employees and their families, meanwhile, are navigating rising living expenses without adequate compensation increases.

? With an increase to the basic allotment of \$1,200, my district would generate approximately \$9,000,000 annually. My district was one of the few districts left with a significant funding cliff (8% of the budget) from the expiration of the state's Formula Transition Grant enacted in 2019.

? Under the existing allotment in place since 2019, my district was required to eliminate approximately \$4M from the 2024-25 budget. This significant cut to the budget impacted staffing, master scheduling, class sizes, support services, and instructional programs.

Implement recommendations from the 2023 Governor's Teacher Vacancy Task Force regarding teacher and staff compensation. The ability to hire teachers is largely tied to compensation and without the funds to increase compensation, it will become increasingly difficult to retain high-quality teachers and staff. Of the operating budget, 81% is personnel. Every 1% of a staff raise is approximately \$450,000 to the operating budget.

Teachers, I, deserve your support and funding from the State of Texas. Our students deserve your support. Class sizes over 22 are hurting our students and our ability to retain good quality teachers. Please do the right thing and support funding of Public Schools for all children.

Gretchen Otto

Mother of school-aged children attending Texas public schools

Austin, TX

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when the state budget was balanced by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will be competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching. I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Laura Pink

Argyle ISD

Argyle, TX

We are in a critical time. Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas.

We need funding for:

? Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain our amazing educators

? Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes

? Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

We need funding for our special populations, increased safety and security, insurance which has increased by 50%, and utilities which have also increased.

Under the existing allotment in place since 2019, public schools cannot function due to inflation and underfunded mandates which have impacted school budgets. Districts have been forced to close schools and/or eliminate positions of staffing, master scheduling, class sizes, support services, and instructional programs.

It is time for our government to make education a priority and support our schools. Invest in the Future of Texas, Our Workforce, & Economy!

Sharon Graeber
Self
Tomball, TX

Here is a sample of what to write, but be sure to include your own words, personal experiences, and what you are passionate about!

"FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools."

Jessica Borowy
Texas Mother
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of Texas and I pray you will think of our children when deciding where to put the states' funds.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed. On top of that we've had to fund this shortfall through increases in taxes (which I will gladly pay if there is no alternative- but even so our district and many others are woefully short of what they need).

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Annapurna Javvaji
self
Northlake, TX

Kindly consider

Rachel Barnstable
Self, Personal Stylist
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Janis Daemmrch
parent of two public school educated children
Austin, TX

Public schools have been underfunded for well over a decade. Our teachers are paid thousands less than teachers in other states. Our per-student funding has been inadequate for more than a decade as well. Public school districts across the state are in dire financial straits because of your inaction and misplaced priorities. Our state's future generation is at stake, and here you are talking about taking hundreds of millions of dollars that could be spent on public education and putting it towards private, mostly religious schools. I urge you to use your good sense and the rainy day fund, if needed, to get the money back into our public schools to increase the daily allotment. Please do the right thing for our state and its public school systems.

Christopher Howard
Self, Barber
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Yolanda Platon
self
Spring, TX

and tell then that you support a meaningful increase in public school funding. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has Please support a meaningful increase in public school funding. Texas has a proud history of great public schools, fund public schools before appropriating money to voicher programs. By increasing funding to public schools, the impact of higher costs can be addressed and teachers' salaries can be raised. Public schools guarantee accountability, equity, and opportunities for all.

James Chacko
Self/Healthcare Administrator
Flower Mound, TX

I was born and raised in Texas and am also a proud product of our State's public school system. While opportunities exist to send our children to public schools, we decided that there are exceptional opportunities in our State's public school system for an excellent education for our children. We moved specifically into the Argyle ISD area so that we could take advantage of the great schools here.

We have seen our schools do the most and best with what they have been allotted, but we are well aware that the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. And we have seen first hand the effects of this lack of increase. While our school does their utmost to provide quality education for our children, we have seen positions eliminated, programs discontinued, and this definitely has impacted even our elementary aged children.

I'm sure you are seeing this tidbit in other please, but it is very accurate to say that this lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%
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Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state
Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

We are doing a disservice to our Texas families by not increasing the basic student allotment and adequately funding and equipping our schools and teachers to provide the very best to our children. It is my sincere plea that you prioritize adequate funding for our Texas public schools so that we can provide our teachers a fair wage to keep up with inflation and the rising cost of living--we are already seeing quality educators leave their fields because of the lack of fair compensation, we need to avoid have continued class size increases due to an inability to adequately staff our schools, and we need additional funding so that we can offer our children opportunities for extracurricular excellence.

Please help me as a parent to provide our children the education they deserve.

Paul Kula
Self Retired & Grandparent
Argyle, TX

I am a 40 year resident of Texas, 31 years in Denton County, 25 years in Argyle ISD. I currently have 6 grandchildren residing in AISD three of those have learning disabilities. I am asking for your support to increased funding for public schools. In total each year, per student each year, factor in inflationary increases, and make up the difference per student that has not given since 2019. In other words properly fund public education so our schools will be able to increase teachers' salaries and benefits as reward for performance and for teacher/staff retention. I also encourage you to allocate more funding to children with learning disabilities. The current programs in place are lacking much needed improvements including quicker testing to identify kids with needs, enhanced tutoring, one on one assistance for those who have been identified with learning disabilities. The list could go on. A personal example is one my grandsons who was eventually diagnosed with dyslexia and dysgraphia. The amount of time he needs from someone who specializes in these areas (who can teach kids with those disabilities) is not available within Argyle ISD or I doubt any other Texas ISD. This resulted in my grandson being withdrawn from AISD and sent by his parents to a private school that has the staff to help him. My message is all Texas ISD's should be funded to help all children regardless of disabilities. Our children deserve the best education by the best teachers and staff wherever they live in Texas. Let's have common sense and fund public education in a way that will retain teachers, provide world class instruction and best in class results for all kids. Thank you for your time. Paul R Kula Argyle TX 76226

Lisa Day, Texas mom of 3
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Holly Mckinney
Self- Registered Nurse
Roanoke, TX

School funding is of vital importance. As the cost of everything is increasing, please consider the additional burden put on public schools. My son attends Argyle ISD. In the districts on either side of us, entire schools have been closed further burdening the teachers and staff at the remaining options. Furthermore, please consider the extremely detrimental effect school vouchers will have on public schools. The removal of funding by students opting into private school options (who assuredly don't want the interference of government oversight and regulation) will devastate public schools in the state.

lauren singer
Texas mom
AUSTIN, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Tara Walker Leon, Austin ISD librarian
Bowie High School
Austin, TX

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Rachel Glaser
Texas parent
Austin, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Anna Hallmark
Parent of texas public school student
Austin, TX

Im writing to encourage you to dedicate more funding to our state's public schools. They truly are so crucial to our kids, our communities, and our state's future. Our son just entered kindergarten this year and we are so happy to be part of our local public school system - he absolutely loves it. We want to see His school continue to thrive, and for all other Texas students to have the same opportunity to attend an amazing school that prepares them for a great future.

Michelle Ohlson
Self, Product Sales Specialist
Tomball, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST! Do this before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools.

Virginia Wells

Texas mom

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I am hopeful you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

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It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Ashley Aarons, MRS

Self

AUSTIN, TX

With Texas ranked in the bottom 10 States (42nd) for public school funding, I expected more from my State that brags about its economy being larger than most countries around the world - that doesn't say much when you neglect funding our schools and creating an educated workforce for our state. If private school students are worth a 10k voucher per student using tax payer funds then my 4 students in public school are worth \$10K paid by my state prior to additional resources being used from the federal government. And with a surplus like ours, at base we can afford to spend \$15k for our future. If this is impossible in your eyes, then here are 3 things that shouldn't even be questioned - 1. pay ISDs based on enrollment numbers not daily attendance 2. pay teachers a higher base salary that's FMV as college degreed professionals and 3. stop paying for STARR, if our students are funded in the bottom 10 States then we will be ranked that way and we don't need to pay millions for that. Also, if AI is now grading the test, why are we still paying this insane amount? You don't have an issue with ESAs not having to align with STARR so why are we spending the money? The governor deciding to bulldoze these ESAs and vendor bill promises through the Senate and working on the House - unfortunately for those in office now have awoken a large group of Texans up and we are all paying attention now from cities to rural areas from one side of the aisle to the other. This is my 1st comment ever, but now I know how to engage and I will continue sharing. Misinformation will continue to be struck down and counties finding out that our government passed security mandates last session without funding them is about to bite y'all in the bottom. Things couldn't get paid for in our district because the security requirements came first and now Texans are finding out that the basic allotment hasn't been increased since 2019 and how low it is compared to other States - well, I hope you all decide to finally fund public education as I wouldn't want to see what happens when you don't - companies need public schools and when they start feeling the heat you will too. Thank you for doing such a poor job the past two decades there's little nothing positive that can be said to spin or redeem the state of public education in Texas. You have no choice to act now and your actions will determine how Texans get involved moving forward as we are all affected by our public schools.

Robin Ward

Self

Spring, TX

I believe priority should be given to funding of public education over private education. As a voting Texas citizen with children in the public school system, I believe public money should be allocated to public schools.

Laura Trahan

Self

Tomball, TX

I am writing to ask you to FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. Both of my children are public school graduates and Christians. We are a Christian family! I have always felt we are commanded to be a light! The government should want good, functioning community members. My kids are currently doing great at college with their public school education. Classmates from private school are not doing as well because of lack of education in their schools. I have one at a private Christian college and one at a state college. Education is good. I am not sure where this “fake” indoctrination belief issue is coming from? My husband I were both public school graduates. Our school is the center of our community. We rank nationally every year and our superintendent is recognized nationally. My kids’ friends have gone all over the world and their public school education is making an impact worldwide. These are good kids! Our teachers are some of our best friends and sit in the pew with us on Sunday-a few even leading worship! To imply that public school does not build communities and future workforces is absurd. Our schools are suffering, however! Our teachers deserve higher pay! The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district’s costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools. Do what is right for our state. We have one of the biggest economies and the LEAST funding for our schools comparatively. Isn’t everything supposed to be bigger and better in Texas?! Yet we are last in education because of continuous cuts?! What is happening? When did we stop seeing the best way to support kids and our communities and care more about competitive personal agendas that do not benefit the majority? Thank you for your time.

Christine Cao
Texas mom
Austin, TX

Hello,
I'm a mom of a public school elementary school student. Our elementary school has been underfunded since 2011, when the last state budget balance cut education funding by \$5.4 billion. Almost 90% of funds in that budget go directly to the people that support our children in the classrooms and that last cut was a devastating blow to our children that has yet to be remedied. My son's PTA often has to purchase classroom supplies or teacher and staff gift cards just so the kids can get the education they deserve. Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels with inflation taken into account. I am a huge proponent of Texas public education and an example of the professionals that come from a background and exposure to public education. As a veterinarian whose education was 100% public schools, in-state college, and Texas veterinary school it pains me to see all the lack of support our educators get. My child is at a dual language Spanish school and I see the daily struggle our teachers and administrators have to face to 'stretch their budget'. Our PTA has to have a separate fundraiser for classroom needs! I'm saddened to have to be part of a PTA that has to send letters to local companies and businesses just to get the funding our school needs to ensure our children get classroom supplies, school books, a soccer field without pot-holes, or a cafeteria and auditorium that hasn't been fixed since the 1970's. Our teachers get paid \$10,000 less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will be competing against for jobs in the future; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. You could change this.

Please, I implore you, to use your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if needed, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas children and for our children who are watching.

Lakshmi Samyukta Jupalli, Mrs.
Self
Northlake, TX

Need more funding for Argyle isd

shannon fox
Texas Mom
Austin, TX

Thank you for taking the time to understand voters concerns. I am a mother of children that attend public school. I volunteer at their school to unburden the load that has been unfairly placed on our school teacher and support staff.

Our public schools have been severely underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion! And they need action now! Our teachers are being paid significantly less than their out of state peers. Our students are receiving too little funding in a state with a rainy day fund. Our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. You could change this.

Please take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use the surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Shannon

Kaitlyn Robinson
Self- Speech pathologist
Marquez, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Luca Sims
self - Student
Austin, TX

As a student in Austin public schools, public education is naturally of significant concern to me and my peers. In particular, I have noted the degradation of many school facilities including but certainly not limited to holes in walls, both interior and exterior, that have remained un-patched or unfilled for weeks (exterior) or the entire time I have attended the school (interior). Furthermore, persistent leaks in ceilings when rain occurs have continued to threaten our liberal Arts facilities, along with closets labeled 'asbestos hazard' have presented challenges to learning in a safe and comfortable environment. There is also a persistent group of rodents and raccoons that plague the school routinely, including occasionally falling from ceiling tiles onto student's desks. While it is clear these issues cannot be solved immediately, the largest roadblock to progress in creating the learning environments students deserve across Texas is lagging state funding. The general appropriation for public schools has remained constant for more than 5 years, and has utterly failed to keep up with inflation, which has since raised prices by roughly 25%. By increasing the general appropriation, school districts would be able to fight increased debt and improve the schools in places where it is needed the most on a district to district level.

Leah Sanchez
Self, Bilingual Public School Teacher
Carrollton, TX

The Basic Allotment for each Texas public school student is \$6,160 (this has not been raised since 2019 despite rising costs) and the proposed amount to give to students going to private schools is \$10,000 or \$11,500 for a student with a disability. The numbers are not reported to the people of Texas accurately. The additional money that may be given to a public school for a small group or percentage of students cannot be added as an allotment that all students receive from the state of Texas. The reporting must be honest and transparent so the people of Texas can be informed with the truth. As an Early Childhood educator, I also urge all representatives of Texas to be honest about the decision to only fund 50% of a Pre-K 4 year old student once the state required that they go to Pre-K for a full school day. When all students went to school half day the 50% amount per Pre-K student was accurate, but it has been a state requirement since July 18, 2019 when House Bill 3 Pre-K was passed with no additional funds being given for the increase to full day Pre-K.

Public education is given the basic allotment for each student based on the attendance of each individual and it is also required that attendance be taken during a small 10 minute window of the day. Teachers prepare for the whole class to be present daily so the money needs to be available to support all enrolled students. All schools should have the same requirements regarding attendance. The money given to public schools is based on attendance so all schools that receive money from the state of Texas should be based on the same criteria. Or allow the public schools to be allowed to receive the Basic Allotment per student as other schools are allowed.

The Teacher Retirement System (TRS) Pension is in grave danger of becoming non-existent if there continues to be decreases in the number of teachers in the public school system. I personally have been paying into TRS since 2000 and do not wish to see all my hard work and dedication to this state and the children that have been educated in public school to become nothing. There is great value in education and there must continue to be a focus on the amazing things public education does for our society. Public schools offer free appropriate public education (FAPE) and do so without being fully funded by the national or state government. No student is ever turned away and so many are offered bus services to be able to arrive at school daily and make it home safely as well.

May all Texans come together to lift up the necessary job public school teachers do every day in creating all the professions that exist in today's society. A true gift to all residents to make a brighter tomorrow with leaders across the state.

Linda Westergren
Self
Weimar, TX

I would appeal to the committee to provide adequate funding for the future education of all our Texas children. The proposed redistribution of tax monies and state monies to any other than public schools must not be allowed.

Margaret Roscoe
Self
Conroe, TX

I support a meaningful increase for funding public schools.

Laura Weaver
self/retired
The Woodlands, TX

Please fund our public schools!!! The basic allotment for our public schools has not been increased since 2019, despite rising costs for transportation, insurance, utilities and faculty compensation. Teachers are leaving the profession in droves because they are not being paid what they deserve. Our public schools need funding - and their needs to be addressed before (and separately from) any voucher bill is passed.

Kim Bates, Ms
Self A Tax payer
The Woodlands, TX

Funding public schools first is important for property values and for business. People look for homes in quality school districts. Businesses expect quality education so that they can hire locally whether for trade, technical or other business. It is also necessary if we want to continue our beloved tradition of Friday night lights football. Public schools are central to our communities.

Hilary Toma
Self
The Woodlands, TX

I respectfully ask the Committee to say No to school vouchers. Taxpayer funds should not be used to pay the tuition for parents choosing to send their children to private schools. Our public schools need a meaningful increase in public school funding. Each district is at the point where they are being forced to make cuts because the basic allotment has not been increased since 2019. Our kids deserve better and public schools should be the priority for the long-term benefit of our children, our teachers, and the state of Texas. Just say NO!

Megan Mason
Self
The Woodlands, TX

Please provide a meaningful increase to public school funding and to say no to school vouchers. Make public schools the priority.

Steven Wilson
Port Aransas Independent School District
Port aransas, TX

Thank you for your time and attention in reviewing funding for Texas public schools. I am a lifelong Texas resident, a property owner, taxpayer, voter, and parent of two children who are enrolled in Port Aransas ISD. With inflation rates over 20% since 2019, most operating expenses in our local schools have increased significantly without a corresponding increase in funding from the state to overcome inflation. One prime example in my community is property insurance. Since 2019, property insurance costs for the school district have risen 317% (from \$262,817 annually to \$1,095,905 annually), with less coverage and higher deductibles. To put this in perspective, of the \$6,160 basic allotment state funding per student, \$1,873 per student is spent on property insurance alone, which is about 30% of the basic allotment (This does not include the required flood insurance nor other types of insurance that the district must purchase, such as cybersecurity insurance). The majority of the property insurance cost in Port Aransas ISD and most school districts in the 14 Texas coastal counties is windstorm insurance, which is not accounted for in the current school funding formulas. The PAISD operating expenses will increase significantly again in summer 2025 when the current electricity contract ends and the new contract begins, and the rate per kilowatt hour increases 40%. Property insurance and electricity costs are two examples of expenses that take up a significant portion of the operating budget in Port Aransas ISD. Thank you for taking into account the increased expenses in general operations costs for school districts such as ours in Port Aransas as you make decisions regarding the appropriation of state funds paid by taxpayers. I appreciate your time and your service to our great state.

Kathy Richardson
Self
The Woodlands, TX

In order to have a well educated society we must provide good education for all our children, not just the ones who can afford private schools. By taking money away from the education system we risk having a group of children not having the benefits of a good education. Also by giving money to homeschoolers, encourages people to pull their children out of the education system all together to increase their income.

Sylvia Campbell
self
The Woodlands, TX

To the Appropriations Committee,
I urge you to place increased funding for Public Schools as a priority this session. Our Public Schools are struggling with increased demands and not increases in support from the state. A strong Texas demands a well-educated populace. That means all students! Fund Public Schools first!
Thank you.

Nancy Schlirf
Self. retired flight attendant
Colleyville, TX

Please properly fund our public schools before allocating money for private school vouchers. My daughter is the sole school nurse for an elementary school with over 800 students. She does an incredible job of caring for her students, many of whom rely on her for their basic health care needs. (Medicaid expansion in Texas needs to happen!!). I know there are days when she thinks about leaving her job. Many of her teacher friends are also very discouraged. Pay raises would certainly help as would adequate funding per student. Of course, if Texas is going to follow the wishes of our West Texas billionaires none of this matters. They have put us on a path to end public education and replace it with religious (Christian only) indoctrination. I pray I am wrong (yes, I am a church going Christian). Please do the right thing for our Texas children.

Kelly Dillaman, Mrs.
Argyle Independent School District
Argyle, TX

Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%

Fuel: Increased by 44%

Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%

Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state

Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

We desperately need the funds for the following:

? Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain our amazing educators

? Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes

? Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

It has been a huge strain on our district with the lack of funds and the support positions that were dissolved. Our teachers and principals are stressed more than ever trying to keep up with the demands set forth by the state, but with the lack of funds to access proper assistance. PLEASE HELP.

Jeffrey Kuykendall
self
Argyle, TX

If the Texas government fails to provide more funding to its public school, I will change my party alignment for the next election cycle. It is egregious that our Texas government has allowed the cost of housing to increase so much from out of state immigration driving up the property taxes every year to more than mortgage payments for most, and then takes the tax increase money resulting in a surplus not to fund our school districts. This is even worse in areas of housing growth where Texans chose to live for the quality of public education. Use Texan tax dollars to fund our schools.

Greg Lewis
Self
Argyle, TX

There is a need to fix public school funding the per student allocation has not been changed in 5+ years while our schools continue to grow and class room sizes increase. Please prioritize school funding.

Eric brunson
Self
Argyle, TX

Why would the state of Tx no provide adequate funding for school districts and our KIDS to be safe?
This funding for school safety MIST be increased. Stop giving money away to stupid state funds and invest in OUR KIDS.

Y'all should take some lessons to produce results like what Trump is doing for our federal government.

Downsizing the government offices will allow us to invest in our kids and their safety at school.

Robin Oh
self / homemaker
Argyle, TX

Please advocate for ALL STUDENTS in every corner of Texas. Many of us won't be able to afford private schools with or without vouchers. PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEED MORE FUNDING. Teachers need more support, and class size needs to remain smaller. PLEASE HELP US!!!!

Jessica Bynum
Argyle ISD - Teacher
JUSTIN, TX

I am not only concerned about how ESAs could impact public school funding, but I know the current budget allotted by the state is not feasible for our school districts to continue working on. Without an increase in our budget, students will suffer. We will not be able to hire as many aides, teachers assistants, and teachers. We need smaller class sizes, well-paid teachers, and additional funding for school programs. Our state has the ability to be one of the top-rated educational institutions in the world. However, we are continuing to fall below standards due to a lack of funding.

Rashid Rahman
Self
Ponder, TX

Please support public education. I am not against private education. If a student at private education is funded \$10,000 so should be a student in public school. Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

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How You Can Help

Your written testimony can emphasize the need for:

- ? Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators
- ? Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes
- ? Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

Please increase public school funding.

Acela Spiegelberg
Self
Argyle, TX

Argyle ISD needs additional funding. We do not receive the \$16,000/student estimated by some in the legislature. Our teachers have been unable to get raises, they are rationing paper and copying and our student teacher ratios are too high. I have concerns that the push for ESAs will jeopardize the TRS for teachers and long term will siphon much needed money from public schools.

Stephanie Jordan
Self
Northlake, TX

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Anna Owen
Self
Argyle, TX

Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas.
I am in support of higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators in my district. I am in support of smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes across the state.
I am in support of additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence for all students.

Katy Chrzanowski
Texas mom and teacher
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Edward Day
Self, Teacher
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Sara Cleveland
Self
TOMBALL, TX

We are seeing a critical need for more funding for our public schools. Our communities rely on public schools to educate EVERYONE. No child should go with their needs unmet because funding isn't available for him or her.

Elizabeth Roussos

Myself and all of the students I teach

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Carie Cool

AISD

Austin, TX

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Kelly Griswold
Self, parent
Austin, TX

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Kelty Vaquerano
InteraWorks
Austin, TX

Chair and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

Thank you for your service to the people of Texas. I urge you to prioritize our public schools in your budget decisions—because the future of Texas depends on it.

For more than a decade, our public schools have been chronically underfunded. In 2011, \$5.4 billion was cut from education, and we have yet to fully recover. Nearly 90% of that funding goes directly to the people who educate and support our children, so when those resources disappear, it's our students who pay the price.

The "record investment" made in 2019 still didn't restore funding to 2009 levels when adjusted for inflation. Since then, schools have had to navigate a global pandemic, rising costs, and increasing demands—without the funding necessary to meet these challenges.

Texas teachers are paid \$10,000 less than their peers in other states. Students here receive significantly less funding per pupil compared to those they will one day compete against for jobs. School counselors are stretched impossibly thin, working with far more students than experts recommend. These are decisions within your power to change.

Texas has the funds to invest in our schools. The state's surplus and rainy day fund exist for moments like this. Increasing the basic allotment—rather than offering temporary stipends—would provide lasting support not just for teachers, but for every professional who makes our schools run.

Public dollars belong in public schools. Private school voucher programs divert critical funding away from the vast majority of Texas children and weaken the very system that serves our communities.

It's time to do what's right—for our children, our teachers, and the future of Texas.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our students.

Erin Reed
Argyle ISD
ARGYLE, TX

****Increased School Funding is Critical****

Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%, Fuel: Increased by 44%, Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%, Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state, Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

Argyle public schools desperately need funding in order to regain the excellence in education that drew most of us to this district. Unfortunately, without the withheld funding, we have had to cut back on teacher positions, class options for students, and increase class sizes. We need funding to re-gain:

? Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators

? Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes

? Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

With the certain pass of the vouchers, PLEASE at least consider allotting public schools the same amount you provide voucher students AFTER considering the mandated costs incurred by public schools from the state, including mandated bussing/transportation costs, special education services and modifications requirements, security costs, meals, etc. Private schools are exempt from all of these mandatory expenses, yet students attending will receive substantially more money in order to attend them. It is at this precipice that you, the lawmaker, gets to stand with the saving and strengthening of public schools or their demise. Please stand on the right side of history. Thank you

Amy Woodell, Mrs.
PARENT - SAHM
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children. Please increase the basic student (for public school students)allotment by \$4000 and keep it adjusted for inflation. Please use our \$24 billion state surplus or \$28 billion rainy day fund, which is supposed to be for education, to catch Texas students up to top 10 basic allotment amounts in the country.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed. The news is filled with names of ISDs across Texas and the various extreme cuts they are looking at because their ISD budgets are in crisis. The population of the state is booming, inflation is still a concern, and our ISDs are strapped for money for basic items. Austin ISD can't afford more buses, can't afford to pay more drivers and athletic and educational electives(sports, debate) can not transport their participants to events during the work day. Parents have to figure it out. The aging buildings on various campuses have unreliable AC/HEAT and plumbing. Last week I went to McCallum HS and saw dozens of students on their chromebooks in the halls. Poor AC is such a consistent issue at that campus they have a protocol to go to the halls when the room temps are above 87F.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states. It is starting to show. The young inspired teachers tend to leave campus after 3-5 years. The campuses can take months to fill this position with a qualified teacher. The students, and I see this frequently at Lamar MS have a sub in a core class for weeks. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Tim Copeland
self
Argyle, TX

I am writing to request an increase in funding for Argyle ISD. We have not had an increase in basic student allotment since 2019. We have experienced massive growth in population and inflation. Argyle ISD has grown so much we are having to go to two high schools in 2027. How can that happen and there is no increase in the student allotment? The State of Texas is one the best states if not the best in the country to live in. I have been here most of my life and have been proud to be a Texan now. I challenge you as a leader to invest in the future of our district (Argyle ISD) state and country thru the education system.

See below for a few reminders as to the reasons and impacts the last few years have had on public school operating costs.

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Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state

Higher teacher salaries to attract and retain top educators
Smaller class sizes to improve student learning outcomes
Additional funding for school programs that support academic and extracurricular excellence

Thank you in advance for your work in a to get more funding in place for our public schools

Laura Martinez
Texas mom and grandparent
Austin, TX

Our 2 sons have been educated in the Texas public schools, our youngest is graduating from high school in a few short months, our great niece is just starting her journey in PreK, and our grandson is a future student. Thank you for your service and please keep all of our children in mind as you make important decisions with your power of the purse. Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011 when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. That was a devastating blow to children in classrooms across the state that has not yet been remedied.

Please take your constitutional responsibility seriously and get the money back into our schools through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support all the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for our children, the future of Texas.

Kimberly Valdez
Self
Tomball, TX

Taxpayer dollars should go to public schools first. Choice vouchers will cost my children's school district, Tomball ISD approximately 9 million dollars a year. Our schools don't have adequate funding as is. Taking that money out keeps our students from a free appropriate public education which they are owed by law. Say NO to choice vouchers!

Meghan Fernandes
Self, Texas mom
Austin, TX

Hello and thank you for your service to the people of Texas. I am writing because I am the mom of two children at our wonderful neighborhood public elementary school. To say we love this school and the community around it is an understatement. We are so grateful to be a part of this school that serves children from many economic backgrounds and cultures. The teachers, administrators, and families at our school and around the state go way (way, way!) above and beyond to fill the gaps left by underfunding. I am begging you to use the surplus to support these incredible people and, by extension, the kids they care so much about. I can't imagine who would begrudge school staff and the children of working families this essential funding. Funding that will benefit all Texans in the long run, with well-educated citizens. Hopefully not you!

Every day I see the effects of underfunding in our schools: broken water fountains in the gym where kids are the most thirsty, teachers taking second jobs to make ends meet (while also using their own money for supplies), families paying for the window film recommended by the TEA in their safety audit, air conditioning breaking down in 100+ degree temperatures, and so much more. We have the money to fix these fix-able problems, so why not please the millions of families and voters who send their children to Texas public schools?

You have the power to easily do the right thing, something all Texans would rejoice over together. I hope you'll do it.

Many thanks.
I appeal to your commitment to hard-working Texas families.

Leslie Hall
Texas mom
Austin, TX

I have a third and a fourth grader in a Texas Title 1 public school, and I am deeply concerned about the resources available for their education. When they entered public school five years ago, the buying power of the state's basic allotment was more than 20% higher than it is today. It is absolutely wild that we do not adjust this allotment for inflation, as though the costs to educate our kids and pay our teachers exist in some different economy, immune to price changes. How does this make sense?

Every single year since my kids entered kindergarten, we have seen the district forced to cut staff and programs, and the school economize in every way possible, as student needs and state mandates have only grown. This year, the school PTA has increased its spending by half, funding almost \$100,000 in basic expenses like classroom supplies, library books, training for new teachers, and literacy curriculum. A family paid for the window film that TEA recommended in their school safety audit, but provided no funds to purchase. What is happening at schools that don't have these private resources? How is this okay?

We are blessed to have outstanding school leadership, dedicated staff, and enough generous families that we have made do--but it is grinding us down. People are giving up. Teachers and staff are being driven out of the profession because their wages are not keeping up with the cost of living. Last year, a beloved and incredibly effective first-grade teacher was one of our many staff who needed to work a second job to make ends meet. She got the JuiceLand location where she served smoothies to run a fundraiser for our students. This year, she has left the profession. Why are we letting this happen?

Our economy is one of the biggest in the world. Colleges and businesses all over the country come here to recruit their next generation of talent. Our public schools should be exceptional! As a parent and a 6th-generation Texan, I ask you to please provide them the level of financial support we decided was necessary in 2019--or better yet, the level of funding for schools before the \$5 billion cut in 2009. Our kids deserve it. Our economy depends on it. It's the right thing to do.

Katie Case
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Amanda Skye Son
self/stay at home parent
Austin, TX

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Julie Medearis
Self
Tomball, TX

I am writing to ask you to protect neighborhood schools and oppose private school vouchers in Texas.

All Texas students deserve an education that prepares them to succeed, not just students at exclusive private schools. The Texas state constitution says our Legislature is responsible for funding our neighborhood public schools for students, not subsidizing tuition for wealthy families at exclusive private and religious schools that pick and choose who will enroll.

As a concerned Texan, I ask you to vote down any voucher scheme that diverts tax dollars from neighborhood public schools. Public dollars should stay in public schools.

Say no to vouchers that use tax dollars to fund the tuition at exclusive private schools

Jessica Neufeld
Texas Mom
Austin, TX

With a budget surplus in the billions, there is no reason our children and communities should be struggling due to a systematic underfunding of Texas public schools. (73% of Texas schools are underfunded: <https://kinder.rice.edu/research/texas-school-district-funding-gaps>) Our girls' elementary school is a treasure and a center piece of our community. We have resources to make up for the lack of support our teachers and staff receive from the state, but many communities do not and without more funding it will be a greater challenge (even for the well-resourced). Our children would be much better served by a state system that supports their schools and their teachers. We need happy, well-rounded, and well-educated kids to carry this state as adults. Please make a real investment in public schools (pay our teachers more, increase the per student allotment, account for inflation, and get districts the resources they need to help kids thrive and succeed). Do not divert resources from our local communities.

Amanda Clair
self (mother of school age children)
Dallas, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Katy Schreur
Texas mom of three
Austin, TX

Thank you for your work representing the people of Texas! Please consider the children of this state when deciding how to spend the budget surplus.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011. According to a Rice University study, 73% of our Texas school districts are in a financial crisis, with some districts closing schools, firing librarians and teachers, and asking hard-working families to continue to carry the burden of funding our public schools through volunteer work, sky-high property taxes, and VATRES.

The investment in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. But you can change this! You have the power!

Let's get the money back into our schools through an increase in the basic allotment. Something that would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the children of Texas!

Kare Stavins
Self
Spring, TX

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST BEFORE ANY MONEY TO VOUCHER PROGRAMS.

Emily Hermans
self, educator
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state, and your interest in doing what is best for all children across Texas. I am a parent of a child enrolled in public schools in Austin. As a child, I also attended public schools in Texas, and I deeply support public schools as an avenue for education, advancement, learning, and growth for everyone. I am constantly amazed by the incredible work of that I see teachers and administrators doing on behalf of their students' futures, but they are in desperate need of more financial support from the legislature.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't get us back to 2009 levels. Public schools haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and rising inflation.

Public teachers in Texas are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources of in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. For a state that claims to be the greatest in the U.S., this is shameful. However, you can remedy all of this.

If ever there was a rainy day for the 5.5 million students enrolled in Texas public schools, this is it. Children across Texas need you, our representatives, to invest in their futures and increase the basic allotment. They deserve the best teachers and administrators. I implore you to do the right thing for our young Texans and for all of our futures.

C Travis Hohl
Self, Software Engineer
Austin, TX

Dear Texas Representatives,

Texas has a \$24 billion surplus, yet our public schools are in crisis. Teachers are underpaid—earning more than \$13,000 (almost 20%) below the national average—forcing many to leave the profession and creating instability in classrooms. Families are asked to fill the gaps with sky-high property taxes, volunteer work, and local fundraising just to keep basic programs running. School buildings across the state are in disrepair, yet districts are being forced to cut staff, close schools, and make impossible choices.

Meanwhile, Austin ISD sends hundreds of millions of dollars back to the state through recapture, but little of that money finds its way back into our classrooms. At Cunningham Elementary, for example, we have a farm-to-table teaching kitchen that helps kids learn about nutrition, sustainability, and real-world skills. But because of budget shortfalls, this valuable program is at risk of being cancelled in the fall.

This surplus is a chance to fix what's broken. Texas students and teachers deserve better. Please reinvest in public education—raise teacher pay, repair our schools, and fully fund the programs that make a difference for kids.

Sincerely,
C. Travis Hohl
Austin, Texas
Concerned Dad

Madison Fairchild
Argyle ISD/Staff member
Flower Mound, TX

Argyle ISD does a phenomenal job of hiring and retaining top educators. Their track record with budgeting has been bar-none. However, with how quickly the district is growing and other districts offering more compensation, it's become harder and harder to recruit quality teachers because of the lack of funding to properly pay them. I am an educator, my mom and dad are educators. This was supposed to be a lifelong career for me, but because I haven't received a raise and the cost of inflation is so high, I am left looking for other options. This is especially devastating because I am a teacher to my core. This was my calling, but because the state will not release funds, HIGH quality teachers are left having to find side hustles or quit altogether. This job gets harder and harder every single year, but it's always been worth it. Unfortunately, it's becoming more and more unsustainable. Being compensated fairly would greatly help this.

Anna Lipton Galbraith
Texas mother
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of Texas. There is nothing more important to the future of our state than our children and the investments we make in the education and health of our youngest Texans.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when the legislature balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. In the last decade, the number of children in our great state has grown but state funding for the public schools that educate our state's children, the future of Texas, have not kept pace. State investments in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 funding levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and the inflation that followed.

Texas teachers are paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals.

As a parent and Texan dedicated to the future of our great state, I call on you to change this in 2025. You have the ability to dip into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they need to support our children to be the future of Texas through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children. Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and our children.

Tony Stavins
Self
Spring, TX

"FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST before appropriating any money to a voucher (education savings account) program. The basic allotment has not increased since 2019, despite historic inflation that has affected school district's costs for utilities, transportation, insurance payments and much more. Teachers and staff have not gotten raises to keep up with the higher cost of living. Districts all across the state are being forced to make tough decisions to cut programming and eliminate bus services to close budget gaps. If you care at all about children in Texas, you will vote to raise the allotment for public schools."

Casey Gore
self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

This information was shared by our Austin Council of PTAs.

Matthew Gordon
Teachers
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state. I trust you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Cassandra Pearce
Children
Austin, TX

I HOPE you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Wendy Helker, Dr
self/self employed
Flower Mound, TX

I am adamantly opposed to the school voucher scheme that is being considered and highly support the full and proper funding for our public schools. It is essential to a prosperous future for the state of Texas to fully fund our public schools and invest in ALL of our children. We have had the good fortune to have sent our 3 sons through school at Argyle ISD. They each have received an excellent education because of the hard working and dedicated teachers at Argyle ISD. Therefore they are active and aware citizens, engaged in our community and our state. They understand the importance of voting and recognize which politicians fight for all Texans to have a bright economic future. We support education and we support public school teachers. We support all students having access to a safe school building with proper learning resources that include a full and accurate recall of history. We are against censorship and book banning which closes opportunities for critical thinking and understanding of diverse experiences and points of view. By not fully funding public education this committee would rob the state of Texas from a future of state leaders and community members who are compassionate, well informed problem solvers that will be able to ensure Texas remains a flourishing state. When schools are properly and fully funded, teachers, administrators, children and families thrive. There is no need for Texans to need school choice or a voucher scheme if the state would invest in making each school, regardless of the neighborhood it's in, a safe, dynamic place of learning for all students. And finally, uphold the dignity and respect of our teachers who have gone to college and become certified teachers in order to make a positive difference for our children. They are professional, intelligent, and kind and deserve to be compensated fairly in their careers. They deserve a living wage and should not have to take on second jobs in order to make ends meet. Fully fund our public schools and increase the salaries for these educators who rightfully deserve it.

Marjorie Edge
Argyle ISD
ARGYLE, TX

Please increase funding for our wonderful public schools in Argyle and throughout Texas. I have been an employee of Texas public education for 31 years now. I have never been more concerned about the state of our educational future than I am now. I am a huge supporter of public education and have worked very hard for the system for all these years. I believe in what we are doing for our families, students, and communities. Last year, we had to cut staff members in our elementary school of over 800 students. It impacted us on many levels. I am an elementary school counselor and had to lose a counselor partner last year. We had an excellent program when we were able to work together to meet our student needs. We did a great job. One of us serving 800 plus kids is not taking care of mental health needs. This will certainly impact the future of these students and the mental health of our state. Teachers and staff are spread so thin, but we are still working hard to continue our level of excellence for our school. Please understand that we can make such a difference in the lives of Texas children if we continue to hire and pay staff salaries that are reasonable to the level of work. Public school staff members all work so hard for very little pay. We also need additional staff for smaller class size in order to effectively reach student needs. I am proud of the fact that we serve all educational levels of children and backgrounds. We take care of our families. This is getting harder and harder. I pray that the funding for Texas public schools will be released and the significant financial strain will be relieved. Thank you

Michelle Heard
Texas elementary school mom
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state – I'm writing to ask you to use your budgeting power wisely on behalf of our children and the future of this state.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when the state budget was balanced by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied. The "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't get schools back to 2009 levels, when accounting for inflation and all increases in funding have come with expensive mandates attached.

Our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources of the children in other states. Given our state's strong economy and values, this seems like an obvious area to rectify so we can provide for our kids at least to the level of other states with strong education departments.

You're currently looking at what to do with a surplus --- I ask that you please use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children and all children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who rely on you.

Daley Hilton, Mrs.
Texan mother and prior teacher
Dallas, TX

Thank you for your service to Texans and I pray you will use your power wisely on behalf of our children.

I am a product of public schools, was a teacher her in public schools for 9 years, and now have 3 children attending/will attend public schools and I would like to see more money put into our public schools!

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

One of many reasons I left the teaching field is because I was not getting raises to keep up with the cost of living (and sometimes no raise at all) and even in a community with wonderful parent involvement and lots of fundraising efforts, I still spent tons of my own money on classroom supplies. We need to pay our teachers better so that we can attract the best and brightest teachers for our children.

With my own children in public schools - I want to see their programs supported so that they can have all the supplies and experiences they need to for learning. I want to see smaller class sizes with no concerns about being able to afford enough teachers. I want to see students who need additional resources have easy access to them. I want to see facilities being improved and maintained to promote the best learning environments. As a home owner, I want to see my tax dollars going to the betterment of public schools so that all Texans have access to a top notch education. Please do this for Texans!

Kathryn Moses

Texas mom of public school children and overall concerned citizen

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed. This is especially impactful in Austin where nearly 3/4 of the tax increases that we are paying go support education for kids outside our city. Meanwhile our teachers could be making more money waiting tables. Our teachers are teaching the future generations - let's make sure they are valued accordingly!

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will be competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Angela Bissett

Self (parent of students at Argyle ISD)

Argyle, TX

Why Increased Funding is Critical

Despite record inflation, the student basic allotment has not increased since 2019. This lack of adjustment has created significant financial strain on districts across Texas. In Argyle ISD alone, inflation and underfunded mandates have impacted our budget in the following ways:

Utilities: Increased by 51%

Fuel: Increased by 44%

Property & Casualty Insurance: Increased by 45%

Special Education: Projected to spend 151% more than allotted by the state

Safety & Security: Projected to spend 483% more than allotted by the state. I am worried about my kids' education if funding is not improved. How will my kids get a good quality education if not passed? Thank you, Angela Bissett

Teresa Trice, Mrs
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Anna McMaster
Self
Austin, TX

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Liz Neff
Mom
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children. Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied. Our public schools are the heartbeat of communities and good public schools secure strong, safe communities and an educated workforce for the future of our communities. Our teachers work hard, change lives everyday and get paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

Laura Hrabal
Self
Fort Worth, TX

Vouchers are only hurting public schools! I've seen Governor Abbott posting about parents knowing their kids best and they do which is why they as parents have already made a decision to put their kids in private, public, or homeschool. If private schools get more funding per student, then the accountability that public schools have MUST be put in place! Not fair that public schools get less money and more accountability. Taxpayer money should NOT be going to private education!!

Adele Nelson
Texas mom of 5th & 3rd graders
Austin, TX

Dear committee members, I write to ask you to please dedicate extensive new funds to public K-12 education. My children are enrolled in a fantastic public elementary school in Austin, and the enormously gifted educators there have changed my kids' lives. One of my children received Special Education Services & my family relies on the exceptional services he receives. I know my family is not alone in depending upon our public school for such significant, literally society-forming & preserving work. Our teachers deserve better pay. Our students deserve more funds. I am extremely worried about the continuity of my son's services if the state does not act to properly fund public education. Thank you for your consideration. Best wishes, Adele Nelson

MAUREEN DONELAN
Self
The Woodlands, TX

I strongly support increasing funding for public schools. Stipends for private education takes money away the public schools, which are the backbone of our country. In addition, underfunded schools lead to decreased home values.

Genifer Billeaud

Texas citizen, parent of public ed student

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state, I am writing to you today to consider using your power and influence to positively affect public education in our state.

According to a Rice University study, 73% of our Texas school districts are in a financial crisis. We are near the bottom (41st) in per pupil funding in the United States. And the most recent Charles Butt Foundation, 2024 Texas Teacher Poll revealed that 78% of Texas teachers are considering leaving the classroom - pay being one of the top reasons for that choice.

Personally, I live in a district that just raised my property taxes (I pay over 12K annually) to be able to pay teachers more - a proposition I eagerly voted for, because I don't have a choice. We cannot lose our teachers. That same district is expected to pay \$940 million (just shy of a billion!!!) in recapture back to the Texas legislature. And just this week they just adopted a \$110 million deficit budget! This will amount to hiring freezes, cuts to programming and on and on. To say that I am ANGRY is an understatement.

I am ANGRY that I am being asked to carry this burden, that the legislature sat on billions of dollars last session that should have gone to public ed. I am furious that a billion is currently being proposed to be spent on vouchers. I am a former teacher, I am still in education. Teaching is the hardest job I have ever had.

It has been nearly two decades since public education has been adequately funded in this state. We will lose teachers, we will underserve our students, we will lose a competitive workforce, and we will continue to fall in rankings in the nation, despite the incredible resources this state has.

The Texas Legislature should increase the basic allotment by at least \$1,000, and include a permanent inflationary adjustment clause. This will address rising inflation, give teachers the pay raises they deserve, and address the issues in recapture (that feel like we tax payers are being robbed).

Thank you for your time,

Gena Billeaud

Mary Robillard

Self, Landscape Architect/ parent

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Julie Linder

A Texas mom for public education (self)

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Ann Johns, Dr.

self, professor

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state. I write to you as a parent, a grandparent, an educator, and as an advocate for people with disabilities.

The State of Texas has an amazing opportunity with its rainy day funds to improve the lives of our school children, who are, after all, our greatest asset. And yet our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that you have failed to redress.

My daughter-in-law left teaching this year. It wasn't just the money, although we know that our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states. We know that our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this. Encourage bright young people to invest in our future by becoming teachers.

But most importantly, our children (and grandchildren) need and deserve this. ALL of our children, including the kids like my older son (now 36), who is autistic and would not be "accepted" into any private school, vouchers or no vouchers.

History will judge us all. Were we able to see beyond the bottom line of rapacious profits and instead give our children a chance to compete in an increasingly challenging world. Or will this only be an option for the privileged few?

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Caroline Alabi
Texas mom
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Hilary Johns
self, geologist
Austin, TX

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But most importantly, our children (and grandchildren) need and deserve this. ALL of our children, including the kids like my older son (now 36), who is autistic and would not be "accepted" into any private school, vouchers or no vouchers.

History will judge us all. Were we able to see beyond the bottom line of rapacious profits and instead give our children a chance to compete in an increasingly challenging world. Or will this only be an option for the privileged few?

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Annie Rush
Concerned Texas mother
Austin, TX

Thank you for taking the time to consider the wellbeing of the children in our state. I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

As a former teacher in the public and private schools, and a mother of children who are currently in public schools, I am writing to ask that you consider placing more funds into our public schools.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

It is sad and embarrassing for our hard working teachers to be paid so poorly in relation to the rest of the United States, and have to rely upon the parents of the children in their schools to help supply basic school supplies. A quick Google search shares that Texas schools compare poorly to other states in terms of school funding, test scores, and graduation rates and that Texas is one of the least educated states in the U.S. To most, it is obvious that a correlation exists between the amount of funding a state provides to its schools and the educational level of its students.

So I ask, how do you want to be remembered? As an official who positively impacted the educational landscape of our state? Or would you rather be remembered as just another disappointing group of people who drove our state and its future further into the ground, remaining an embarrassment of our nation?

You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Again, I pray that you make the right choice for the students and teachers of our state.

Jen Arauz
self
Argyle, TX

Hello, I am a Texas resident who recently moved to the state in 2023. Though this move was due to job relocation, we had the opportunity to elect to relocate to other states including Tennessee and Illinois. We specifically chose to move to Texas and our location within Argyle ISD zoning because of the excellent public school options available for our 3 and 8 year old. Many families who have moved to this school district had options to choose from as well, but elected Argyle because of it's excellent and experienced faculty, support structure, and programs available to children. Teachers are the most undervalued asset we have in this state and country, and they are who we owe the most for the success of our future generation. I urge you to think about this future generation, and the impact of not investing in their teachers and school system will have on their future success. We moved from a private elementary school in our former home to enrolling our children in the public school system, and both of my kids have THRIVED since that transition. Please support increasing pay for these incredible teachers and additional funding to keep these academic institutions one of the reasons for people to move (and invest) their future in the state of Texas.

Scott Campbell
Self
Austin, TX

I believe our per student funding needs to increase in order to provide the services our children need.

Tiffany Cooper
Mr. Cooper
Argyle, TX

Teachers are being forced to leave the public school sector because they can easily go make more money in another field when they are working in one of the most critical fields- our future. Our children's experience and education should be at the forefront, over land development etc. My highschool student has had two amazing teachers leave after years in the district and this move in both cases was based off of wages. We are losing some of the best teachers because they no longer feel valued and our children are suffering the consequences. Our elementary age student's class size is far too large for even the most experienced staff. Our teacher has decades of experience but when there are too many 6-7 year olds it is almost impossible to give the students the education they need and keep the teacher sane. We are putting more and more on these teachers with each passing year and they get nothing in return. There is no incentive offered to these dedicated staff members. I know these teachers love what they do or they would not continue to come back, but I fear we will continue to burn our teachers and staff out by making them feel unappreciated. I cannot imagine working for a company that I did not feel valued and was not rewarded against personal yearly measurements. We will continue to see a decline in education, retaining top talent and student and staff engagement if this is not rectified.

Jessica Pareti
self
AUSTIN, TX

With Greg Abbott's voucher bill, our public schools are even more desperately in need of funding. Our school district alone (AISD) is facing a \$110 million dollar deficit. Texas, this is UNACCEPTABLE!! What kind of future will we have a state if we do not INVEST in our kids?! It is truly unbelievable to me that when it comes to spending state budget that there is EVER a question about using it on Education. Our children deserve a quality education which means, paying teachers a liveable wage, providing money for infrastructure, valuing important staff like librarians, school counselors, and nurses!! Nurses for goodness sake are on the chopping block! We can't do anything to stop this voucher BS but PLEASE do the right thing and spend the money we do have on our children's PUBLIC education.

Kay Campbell, Mrs
Texas grandparent
Fort Worth, TX

I am devastated that you are considering cutting funds for Public Education! Private schools and wealthy parents do not need subsidies! Our schools and teachers need our support - thus providing a good education for our children. Our children are our future!!

Deborah Hall
Self/retired real estate
The Woodlands, TX

School vouchers will decimate the public school system and decrease property values. No one wants to move to a state that doesn't consider public education a priority.

Lindsey Ramirez, Mrs.
Self
Austin, TX

I am commenting as a parent of students who attend a public school here in Texas. We are woefully underfunded and quite frankly, it's embarrassing that our per student expenditure is at the bottom of the list of states. We should be ashamed and do better for our kids. Please pass legislation to increase a per student allotment for public education and do away with attendance-based allotment, moving to an enrollment-based allotment. Thank you!

Amy Pooley, Texas Mom of 3 public school children
Texas mom of three public school children and attorney
Austin, TX

As a Texas mom with three children in public schools and the daughter of a public school teacher of decades, I implore you to use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Matt Wanzeck
Self
Spring, TX

As a longtime resident of Texas and a military veteran, I am disappointed that my state is considering a means to provide those who have the means to send their kids to private school extra free state funds to do so. I work hard to provide for my family, and through the sales and property taxes I pay, I don't want those funds given selectively to families who don't need it. My two biggest concerns are 1) the \$10k per student to go to private school is higher than the average amount provided to public schools per student. And 2) there is nothing to stop private schools from raising their tuition by \$10k per student. The system presented is ripe for fraud and abuse. Find our public schools!

David Pooley, Dr
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Diane Dahm, Mrs.
Texas grandparent of 7 and retired public school employee
Austin, TX

Currently our state has surplus money in the general fund. Now is the time to invest in our future- our children!

Our public schools have been underfunded since at least 2011 when the state cut education funding by \$5.4 billion. I was working for a TX public school district at the time and was part of a committee looking at ways to cut the budget. Cleaning classrooms, larger classes and cutting help for teachers were part of the solution. Auxiliary staff positions were lost. Yet children need bus drivers to get them to school, custodians to keep the school clean, staff to repair plumbing and mow the lawn, nurses to care for sick children and cafeteria staff to feed them meals.

Texas public schools have not seen a significant increase in funding that did not come with expensive mandates attached to them. Our teachers are getting approximately \$10k less than their peers in other states, our students are receiving funding less than those in other states. Our children will be competing for jobs in the future against better prepared students in other states. Our counselor - to - student ratio is much less than that recommended by health professionals. YOU have the power to change this!! We need good salaries and working conditions to attract good teachers and school professionals to Texas!

Please consider using at least some of this surplus money back in our public schools!
I hope you will do the right thing for the future of Texas and all our children! Thank you

Bethany Gonzales

Retired public school teacher of 34 years

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will be competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what they should be.

Please use your power for good! Do what is right for all Texas students!

Kim Creager

self

Argyle, TX

I do not agree with the school voucher scam and the defunding of public schools. Texas ranks dismally low compared to other states in education and it is embarrassing.

Somebody please stand up for our school children instead of the large political donors.

M Monk

Self retired nurse

Horseshoe Bay, TX

I am in favor of publicly funded private education for special needs children and for families who are in communities with sub par and overcrowded schools. I worked for a public school as a nurse, in an excellent school system years ago. Public schools now are not providing what many parents need for their children and either cannot afford or the means they use to afford it takes away from basic household needs. Many parents are making extraordinary sacrifices to protect their children from the public schooling available. Thank you for your help and consideration.

Courtney Carpenter, Dr.
Argyle ISD - Superintendent of Schools
Argyle, TX

Dear Chairman Bonnen and Members of the Committee,

First, thank you for your continued service to the great state of Texas and your commitment to public education. I am especially grateful for the relationships we have built with our state representatives—Representative Little, Representative Hopper, and Representative Hayes—who have given their time and attention as we discuss the significant challenges our high-performing, fast-growth school district continues to face due to public education funding constraints.

Our district is experiencing rapid growth, with a 12% increase in student enrollment, yet we faced a \$4.5 million budget deficit last summer going into the 2024-25 school year. This deficit was largely due to the lack of an increase in the basic allotment and the expiration of the state's Formula Transition Grant, which impacted fewer than 100 districts statewide but accounted for approximately 8% of our total budget.

Through months of budget workshops and difficult decisions, we worked to reduce our deficit to \$400,000—but this came at a cost. We eliminated positions and cut essential budgetary items, all while forgoing staff compensation increases despite the rising cost of living.

The financial strain is further exacerbated by record inflation since 2019, while state funding has remained unchanged. In Argyle ISD alone, we have seen:

Utilities ? 51%

Fuel ? 44%

Property & Casualty Insurance ? 45%

Special Education Costs ? 151% (exceeding the state allotment)

Safety & Security Costs ? 483% (exceeding the state allotment)

These increasing expenses are placing an unsustainable burden on our district. We are doing everything possible to maintain the quality of education and services our students deserve, but without meaningful adjustments to state funding, our ability to keep up with growth and inflation will be severely compromised.

We Need You to Hear Us: Funding our schools is not optional—it is essential to the future of our students and communities. We urge you to:

? Increase the student basic allotment to reflect inflation and the true cost of educating students

? Allow us to increase teacher and staff salaries to remain competitive and retain the best educators

? Fully fund special education and safety & security, both of which are vital and currently underfunded

We believe in accountability and do not shy away from being held to the highest standards—but we need the resources to continue excelling. Our conservative, high-performing community values excellence in education, fiscal responsibility, and strong schools, and we want to ensure our teachers, students, and staff have what they need to succeed.

This Is a Critical Moment: Without action, school districts like ours will continue to struggle under financial strain. We need your leadership and commitment to ensure Texas students receive the education they deserve.

Our students, teachers, and communities are counting on you.

Thank you for your time!

Julia Mickenberg
Parent
Austin, TX

I'm writing as a parent (and citizen) to urge you to fully fund Texas public schools, without stripping away needed funds for vouchers and/or giving more public money away to fund private schools that have no accountability. Our teachers receive some of the lowest compensation in the country, and I have seen some of my kids' outstanding teachers having to leave the profession because they couldn't afford the cost of living in Austin. Meanwhile we have a rainy day fund and other money available, and the "record investment" in public education in 2019 does not even get us back to 2009 levels. Our kids deserve better and our state deserves better because these kids are our future.

Noelita Lugo
Self
Austin, TX

Look into your soul and do the right thing for students and teachers and the greater public good. Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will be competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. This is on you. You could change this.

Stephennie Mulder
Texas Mom
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I am writing to ask you to use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

Your "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed.

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It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Stephennie Mulder

Elizabeth Switek
self, public school Librarian
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state, though I am writing on behalf of our children, who the State legislature has forgotten.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, and it is causing our students to fall further behind their peers in other states. Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states, leading to astronomical teacher turnover. Public school employees are professionals with expertise that should be valued, celebrated, and encouraged. Schools should receive adequate funds to fix crumbling buildings, pay staff and provide ALL students access to great schools. Change the way schools are funded and stop robbing "richer" districts of the majority of their funds so that "poorer" districts can build natatoriums and huge football stadiums, etc.

The disastrous underfunding of Texas schools is on you. You can change this. Instead the Texas legislature says vouchers will fix everything while at the same time the governor says, on the record, that vouchers will underfund public schools. Take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use the surplus, even dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools. Change the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children. Teachers are begging for their schools to be funded.

Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surp

Robert Karli, Rev
Concerned Citizen, Lutheran Pastor
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Gregory Thomas
Self
Terrell Hills, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Abigail Harrison
Texas mom and school psychologist
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Marcy Walters
Self
Flower Mound, TX

Public Schools in Texas are facing crisis. Without a SIGNIFICANT increase in funding, one that is long overdue because our state has pushed it aside, our schools will continue to suffer. I have been a public educator in Texas for 27 years! I have never seen schools in such crisis. Case loads and work loads for every employee are increasing considerably from paraprofessional supports, to teachers, special education teachers and caseworkers, bilingual and ESL support staff among others. Administrators at both the campus and district level are drowning to keep up with state and federal mandates with bare bones staff. We can NOT afford to keep going. Our public taxes MUST go to public schools. If even one cent goes to charters or private institutions, then I demand that they follow every regulation required of public schools: accept all, transportation, truancy, behavior, special education, meals, second language learning, state testing, certification requirements and everything else!

Wendy Hennard
Self
Jewett, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

A. Byrd
Self
San Antonio, TX

Public school is literally the life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness we are afforded by our US Constitution. For Texas to think for one minute that private school vouchers is the way to go is asinine. You're not listening to the people, you're listening to the money. How are you going to keep and retain quality teachers? What are you going to do with the existing quality teachers I know I don't wanna work in a private setting. I know many of my colleagues don't either. I hate it here. I'm embarrassed to say I'm from Texas. I used to proudly proclaim I was a teacher from Texas. Now all I feel is shame. You should be ashamed of yourselves doing this to thousands of children. How could you? Come look those children in the face and tell them they aren't worth a free, public education. Shame on you. God forbid your family ever fall on hard times, are ever injured to the point of needing equal access to a free and public education. You forget, the higher you sit upon the pedestal, the further you have to fall. Karma will find you. Karma will even the playing field. In the end, you are taking from children. Shame on you.

Rachel Feit
Self
Austin, TX

Public education is the backbone of our democracy. Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

The last "record investment" in public education in 2019 didn't even get us back to 2009 levels, when you account for inflation. We haven't seen a significant increase in funding that didn't come with expensive mandates attached since then, despite a global pandemic and a couple of years of painful inflation that followed. Our teachers are getting paid \$10k less than their peers in other states; our students are receiving funding that is, in some cases, a third of the resources the children they will competing against for jobs in the future currently receive in other states; and our counselor-to-student ratios are a fraction of what is recommended by health professionals. But you can change this. I thank you for your service to our great state and hope to count on you for support of public education for all.

It's raining. You have the umbrella. You could take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use that surplus, dipping into the rainy day fund if you need to, to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Robbe Willeford
Concerned citizens
Lewisville, TX

I what to make it very clear that there is to be zero dollars of public education to be used on school vouchers.

Brittany Labinger
Self - Librarian
Austin, TX

Public schools are underfunded, and students, teachers, and all community members suffer from this lack of support. Cutting funding by \$5.4 billion in 2011 continues to create issues for our schools. I am not a parent, and I do not work for a public K-12 school, but I still highly value public K-12 education because I know that it impacts our ability to thrive as a community. Quality schools lead to a better economy, happier students and communities, and a well-educated city that is poised to take on challenges of the future. With inflation, the need for more school funding is more dire than ever before. There have been no significant increases to education that don't come with mandates, even though there is a teacher shortage and high turnover. Families will not want to live in Texas if there are no quality schools and an ongoing teacher shortage. If I had children, I would certainly consider moving elsewhere so that they would receive a higher quality education from a state that prioritizes children, their futures, and their communities. You have the power to invest in the students who will be the future of Texas. Please give teachers, schools, and students the funding to succeed. Take your constitutional responsibility seriously and use the surplus to provide better resources to the students of Texas. And while you're at it, stop banning books and restricting what teachers are allowed to teach. Teachers are the education experts--NOT Congress. Give teachers the funds they need to create an amazing learning environment.

Dena De La Paz

Self

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I pray you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Rachel Pry

Parent of two children in Texas Public Schools

Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of Texas. I ask that you work to strengthen our public schools. Funding school choice initiatives will hurt Texas children and negatively impact our future workforce. I beg you to invest in all Texans by investing in public schools—the only place where all students are treated equally and have an equal opportunity to thrive. Parents are welcome to choose private schools, but our tax dollars should not subsidize that choice.

Amie Raftus
Self
Austin, TX

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you in advance for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children - who are watching.

Dalia Azim
Self
Austin, TX

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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Thank you for doing the right thing for the future of Texas and the children who are watching.

Daniela Lankford, Mrs
Self
Tomball, TX

Fund public schools first. Adjust for inflation and increase the basic allotment per student. Help schools pay teachers a living wage, keep class sizes down, and keep education free. Vote NO to vouchers.

Jessica Gorman
Concerned parent
Austin, TX

I'm deeply concerned about the state of public education funding in Texas. We love our kids school and the incredible teachers and staff who work there, but we've been disheartened to hear that the state has been underfunding public schools for years and our district is having to make severe budget cuts. Please consider using your surplus to give public schools some much needed funding. The children of Texas deserve the support.

Stephanie Brown
Self - concerned Texas mom
Austin, TX

Thank you for your service to the people of our state and I hope you will use your power of the purse wisely on behalf of our children.

Our public schools have been underfunded since 2011, when you balanced the state budget by cutting education funding by \$5.4 billion. Since almost 90% of the funds in that budget go directly to the people who support our children in the classrooms, that was a devastating blow to children in those classrooms that has not yet been remedied.

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I urge you to get the money back into our schools that they deserve through an increase in the basic allotment, that, unlike a teacher stipend, would support ALL the professionals in our schools supporting our children.

Abbott says he wants to improve our schools but while he's been in office, almost 75% of Texas school districts are underfunded. You have the power to change this. We ask you to fund schools for the future of Texas and for true parent choice.
