



POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE 88th TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

THE EDUCATION TRUST HAS A BOLD VISION: a future where all Texas children have the freedom to pursue their dreams and receive academic and emotional support in safe, nurturing classrooms led by strong educators from diverse backgrounds. We envision well-resourced public schools accountable to the communities they serve, where parents and schools work side-by-side to help all students reach their full potential through college or career pathways that lead to economic opportunity and a stronger Texas workforce.

We pursue this vision by working with trusted partners across Texas to speak up for and with students, especially those whose needs and potential are often overlooked. We evaluate every policy, every practice, and every dollar spent through a single lens: what is right for students.



ADVANCE PROVEN STRATEGIES TO ACCELERATE STUDENT LEARNING

In light of the unfinished learning and disparities worsened by the pandemic, it is critical for lawmakers to put the increased needs of students first. The 88th Texas Legislature should remain focused on ensuring schools have the resources and capacity to accelerate student learning using evidence-based strategies.

Policy Recommendations:

- Support adoption and implementation of strategic investments passed in House Bill 3 (2019), including the Teacher Incentive Allotment and Additional Days School Year funding
- Prioritize implementation of evidence-based strategies to accelerate the learning of students most in need of targeted support, including high-impact tutoring
- Require school systems to establish an opt-out policy to enroll high-performing students into advanced coursework, specifically 8th Grade Algebra I
- Provide dedicated funding to support evidence-based strategies that contribute to safe, supportive, and welcoming school climates for students, families, and educators



ADDRESS TEACHER VACANCIES BY INVESTING IN HIGH- QUALITY PREPARATION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

The disruptions caused by the pandemic exposed and worsened the challenges of teacher vacancies and high turnover that have long compromised our ability to provide a high-quality education to all students, especially students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. To accelerate student success and secure Texas' teacher workforce for the future, now is the time to invest in proven strategies that will prepare and retain more effective, diverse educators.

Policy Recommendations:

- Create statewide goals to strengthen the teacher workforce, similar to the state's 60X30TX plan for postsecondary attainment
- Incentivize high-quality preparation routes by making them accessible and affordable for diverse candidates through residency stipends, registered apprenticeships, and targeted financial aid
- Establish and incentivize articulated Grow Your Own pathways from dual credit, community colleges, and four-year institutions to shorten time to degree and certification and value work-based credentials
- Expand strategic staffing models that promote paid leadership roles for highly effective teachers, including mentorship and coaching



BUILD TRUST WITH PARENTS AND FAMILIES BY STRENGTHENING DATA TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION

Just as state and local decision-makers rely upon data, Texas families also want to understand their child's progress and help them succeed after high school. Providing families and communities access to more complete information and useful data can enable them to partner more effectively with schools.

Policy Recommendations:

- Improve family access and communication regarding student academic data, including state assessment results and accountability ratings, in ways that are user-friendly, easy to understand, and translated into various languages
- Ensure communication with families regarding disciplinary actions involving their students, including a statewide opt-in policy for corporal punishment
- Strengthen collection and reporting of school-level information, including chronic absenteeism rates, school climate and school discipline data, teacher retention and certification rates, and College, Career or Military Readiness (CCMR) outcomes



EXPAND POSTSECONDARY ACCESS AND REENTRY SUCCESS FOR INCARCERATED TEXANS

In July 2023, the U.S. Department of Education will restore need-based Pell Grants to people in state and local prisons, lifting a ban that had been in place since 1994. Under the bipartisan Second Chance Pell Experimental Initiative, Texas had more participating colleges and students than any other state. Now lawmakers can create a system of postsecondary education in Texas prisons that ensures access, quality, and equity for all seeking to reach their full potential.

Policy Recommendations:

- Establish a framework in statute that allows for effective collaboration and data-sharing between the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), other state agencies, and institutions of higher education
- Establish a statewide consortium to support the TDCJ in fulfilling its oversight role and facilitate input from relevant stakeholders, including formerly incarcerated students



INVEST IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Following the interim work of the Texas Commission on Community College Finance, lawmakers have an opportunity to strategically and equitably invest in community colleges. These local, open-access institutions play an essential role in reaching the state's postsecondary attainment goals and equipping Texans to gain skills and credentials they need to have successful careers, provide for their families, and contribute to a strong Texas economy.

Policy Recommendations:

- Approve the bold and transformative set of recommendations proposed by the Texas Commission on Community College Finance, including:
- Tying increased state investment to outcomes, especially for students with higher needs, that lead to increased completion, transfer success, and workforce earnings
 - Increasing funding for need-based financial aid, including Texas Educational Opportunity Grants, targeted financial aid for dual credit, and paid work-based learning opportunities, to lower barriers to student access and success
 - Investing in capacity for workforce partnerships and shared services across colleges that help students along their career pathway