

EdTrust in Texas 89th Texas Legislative Session — Wrap Up

With the 89th legislative session behind us, EdTrust in Texas recaps our progress toward [the priorities](#) we set before the session.

During the regular session, and the two special sessions, we registered positions on dozens of bills, submitted written testimony on key bills, and delivered oral testimony on priority legislation. We were proud to partner with advocates from across the state who traveled to the Capitol to testify and rally for education priorities. We will closely monitor the implementation and rulemaking processes for all these new laws and then study their impact.

Goal 1: Invest in Proven Solutions to Improve Student Outcomes

Results:

House Bill 2 (HB 2) is a major piece of school finance legislation that delivers an \$8.5 billion increase to public education, **expands the Early Education allotment**, and requires funds to be spent on full day Pre-K and teacher training.

HB 2 **expands the optional Additional Days School Year (ADSY)** program through the eighth grade, lowers barriers for schools to participate, provides planning grants, and increases funding for districts that offer at least 200 full days of instruction.

HB 2 **expands the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA)** by adding a designation level to include additional educators and increases compensation for teachers serving rural and high needs schools. HB 2 also introduces a new “enhanced TIA” weight for districts that adopt evaluation and compensation models to place effective principals and teachers where they are needed most.

Goal 2: Expand and Incentivize High-Quality Teacher Preparation

Results:

HB 2 includes historic investments in teacher preparation, **establishing a new PREP allotment** that provides ongoing funding for districts to support up to 200 candidates and aspiring educators annually with paid, hands-on training. As part of this allotment, year-long residency programs can generate up to \$39,500 per candidate serving on high-needs campuses and high-demand positions — including dedicated funding for candidate and cooperating teacher stipends.

The PREP allotment **expands early career mentoring and includes funding for Grow Your Own pathways** that generate up to \$12,000 for a paraprofessional or other district employee to complete their college coursework while receiving on-the-job training.

HB 2 **establishes a new Teacher Retention allotment**, providing permanent pay raises of \$2,500 to \$8,000 for all teachers when they return for their third and fifth year of classroom experience. Along with a new requirement to differentiate entry-level compensation based on certification status, these policies clearly signal the value of high-quality preparation and early career persistence.

HB 2 **waives exam and application fees** for candidates seeking certification in special education or bilingual education — a savings of nearly \$200. It also reduces retesting requirements for teachers demonstrating bilingual proficiency.

Goal 3: Strengthen Early Foundations in Reading and Math

Results:

HB 2 requires school districts to **use approved screeners three times a year** to monitor students' reading skills in grades K-3. Students at risk of not meeting grade-level proficiency on two consecutive screeners are **entitled to receive targeted interventions**, with districts receiving a new allotment to provide these supports.

HB 2 incentivizes teacher preparation programs to incorporate **state-required literacy and math academies** into pre-service training, tasks the state with evaluating the effectiveness of these academies, and ensures a **professional development stipend for teachers**.

Following a major investment in High-Quality Instructional Materials in the previous session — which included a ban on the discredited method of literacy instruction known as “three-cuing” — House Bill 100 **restricts the use of materials rejected** through the state's rigorous review and approval process.

Goal 4: Equip Parents and Families with Reliable Information

Results:

Accompanying other legislation requiring at least two parent-teacher conferences per year, HB 2 requires the results of literacy screeners be reported to parents and **funds a parent-directed tutoring grant** of \$400 for certain students beginning in the first grade.

HB 2 mandates **parental notification when their child is taught by an uncertified teacher** and sets a timeline for districts to phase-out the hiring of uncertified teachers in foundation courses by the 2029-30 school year.

House Bill 8 (HB 8), passed in the second special session, **replaces the STAAR exam** with multiple shorter assessments and eliminates unnecessary benchmark tests. The new system is rooted in state academic standards and is **designed to provide faster results** that enable immediate action to support student learning along with easy-to-use portals for parents to access personalized data. HB 8 also ensures **consistent release of future school ratings** to close achievement gaps, improve college and career readiness indicators, and position Texas as a national leader in public education.

Senate Bill 991 (SB 991) **defines chronic absenteeism in state law**, requires public reporting of absenteeism data by campus and district, and classifies chronically absent students as “at risk of dropping out,” making them eligible for additional support services.

Goal 5: Improve Postsecondary Success for All Texans

Results:

Senate Bill 1786 (SB 1786) **improves the state’s outcomes-based funding formula for community colleges** established by HB 8 in the previous session. SB 1786 expands eligibility for the FAST program to support dual credit access for low-income students, rewards student transfer to any Texas four-year institution, and adds a self-sustaining wage threshold for rewarded credentials. The budget **invests \$2.4 billion** in formula funding for community colleges over the next two years — a 33% increase compared to pre-HB 8 levels.

The budget funds **\$320 million in additional need-based financial aid** to improve postsecondary access and completion — a 22% increase compared to the previous biennium. It also allocates an **additional \$100 million to reduce the state’s waitlist for childcare scholarships** and **\$300 million to modernize the state’s outdated systems** for managing SNAP and Medicaid eligibility.

Senate Bill 2405, also known as the Sunset bill, **codifies access to postsecondary education for incarcerated Texans** and provides a framework for future program improvement and expansion. Specific provisions transfer administration to Windham School District, improve data sharing to support student success, and formalize an advisory board that is required to include impacted students, families, and advocates.

We are thankful to our partners and proud of our many coalition-driven wins this session, and we remain committed to advancing policies that benefit all Texas students