

The Educator Advisory Council for the Houston Region

Since 2023, EdTrust in Texas has recruited, selected, and supported annual cohorts of educators to tackle the systemic challenges facing teachers in the Houston region and across the state. Convened in partnership with Teach Plus Texas, the Educator Advisory Council (EAC) is composed of aspiring, early career and experienced classroom teachers, school system leaders, and educator preparation program (EPP) leaders. Together, members bring multiple unique perspectives needed to shape and advance effective policy solutions that improve teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention. As part of a paid, year-long fellowship experience, members gain policy knowledge, advocacy skills, and opportunities to participate directly in state and local policymaking with structured training, a supportive peer network, and dedicated coaching.

Who Serves on the EAC?

- 34 educators representing 13 Houston-area school systems and 10 Educator Preparation Programs
- Three teacher candidates in year-long residency programs and two early career teachers who completed residency programs
- Eight campus administrators, eight school system administrators, and 12 EPP administrators
- [Learn more about our members.](#)



How is the EAC Experience Structured?

Each cohort runs from July to May and includes monthly meetings focused on policy knowledge and advocacy training. Learning is facilitated through peer-to-peer sharing and guest speakers with subject matter expertise in policies and practices related to teacher preparation and retention. Advocacy training centers on the application of core skills such as conducting relational meetings, performing root cause analysis, power mapping, storytelling, testifying, and engaging with media.

Council members form working groups focused on influencing policy across institutions or at the state level to address teacher preparation and retention. Previous topics have included transfer pathways, teacher certification, teacher evaluation, and teacher compensation. Members also define an individual advocacy project focused on policy change within their respective school system or institution of higher education.



Outside of monthly meetings, members gather research, hone their personal stories, and apply their advocacy skills by meeting with local and state policymakers, testifying at public hearings, and writing op-eds. EdTrust staff regularly meet with members to provide one-on-one coaching and support. At the end of every cohort, members present a summary reflecting on their insights and achievements.

What Do EAC Members Say about the Experience?

According to survey responses, 100% of members feel adequately prepared to put their trainings into practice; 96% agree the program developed their leadership skills to influence change and ultimately impact student success.

"This is an incredible opportunity to learn how to advocate for educators and students. EdTrust breaks down skills that are often not formally taught, and they provide support along the way!"
— *School administrator*

"I went to the Capitol terrified, but I did it. And it was transformational. That day reignited my why. It gave me courage I hadn't felt in years, and reminded me that I have a voice, that I can take risks, and that I belong in these spaces. This experience has been life-changing, not just for my work, but for who I am as a person." — *EPP administrator*

"We didn't just learn policy; we learned how to build relationships that move systems. I felt my work would only be as important as my network. This program helped me build that network: teachers, principals, preparation programs, and researchers all working toward the same goal. But more than that, it taught me how to use my voice. — *EPP administrator*

"When I started, I didn't even know what advocacy was. Now I understand how policy connects to the classroom — and how I can be part of it." — *Teacher*

How Has the EAC Influenced Policy Change?

At the State Board of Education (SBOE): In April 2024, the SBOE narrowly approved [improved teacher preparation standards](#) that included the creation of an “Enhanced Standard Certificate” for candidates who complete a high-quality, yearlong teacher residency route. Leading up to the vote, EAC members met privately with SBOE members and testified publicly. This regulatory change made Texas the first state to recognize residency completers by awarding a distinct certification status and maintained momentum for state funding of residency stipends established by the legislature under House Bill 2 (HB 2) the following year.

“I learned so much about the process through which the Texas Administrative Code is developed and passed, and in this case, I was able to see the document I was testifying in support of passing the SBOE, so my first experience was a win!” — *EPP administrator*

At the State Legislature: In the 89th Texas Legislative Session, the passage of HB 2 included a historic investment of up to \$400 million annually for high-quality teacher preparation. EAC members advocated in both the Texas Senate and House for a new Preparing and Retaining Educators through Partnership (PREP) Allotment. Throughout session, members persistently contacted legislative offices, gained their organizations’ public support, and authored op-eds. Their advocacy culminated with a [Capitol Day](#), visiting face-to-face with more than 50 elected officials.

“Going to the Capitol with my EdTrust cohort was a transformative experience. Standing in the Capitol, using my voice to advocate for the issues I care about, made everything we learned come full circle. I grew so much — personally and professionally — gaining not only a deeper understanding of the advocacy process but also the confidence to know that my story matters and can drive real change.” — *School administrator*

With Local Institutions: EAC members catalyzed collaborative efforts between community colleges and university-based EPPs in the Houston region to align their articulation agreements and improve the transfer pathway for teacher candidates. This led to the creation of a formal community of practice with more than a dozen two-year and four-year institutions. As part of the EAC, members worked to bring senior leaders from their respective EPPs into the conversation and clear institutional barriers that ultimately led to the adoption of a clear set of shared course requirements for transfer candidates in the Houston region.

At the Local School Board: EAC members engaged in advocacy to inform Houston ISD’s Teacher Excellence System. Through individual meetings with board members, written comments, a community-facing webinar, and [blogs](#), they pushed for differentiated spot observations unique to fine arts and alternative schools, recommended scoring of proficiency levels, and suggested district-created resources to assist teachers in improving their craft. All of these changes were incorporated into the final version of the evaluation system unanimously approved by the board.