



WHO WE ARE

Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, TCTELA, is an organization that has been in existence for fifty-eight years. It is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English.

WHAT WE DO

The mission of the Texas Council of Teachers of English is to advance the literacy growth of all Texas students by developing a network of professionals, providing research-based professional development, and transforming public understanding of the connection between teacher knowledge and student learning.

WHY WE ARE HERE

- To introduce our organization and invite you to use us as a resource for classroom excellence.
- To ensure that English Language Arts Professional Educators be used as a major resource in creating policies that relate to the acquisition of instructional resources not limited to textbooks and scripted curriculum but also books apart of school and classroom libraries.
- To protect teacher autonomy in creating state-aligned curriculum and instruction to ensure positive student outcomes.
- To highlight the impact of school vouchers on public school funding and on accessible and equitable education for all students.

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The Impact of School Vouchers

School vouchers are education tax dollars that are diverted from public schools and given to private schools, religious institutions, and vendors with no accountability for academic results. School vouchers are advertised as an option for parents to seek “better choices” outside of public education. Proponents of vouchers also endorse education savings accounts (see Senate Bill 8 filed by Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe) which might sound different but is just a type of school voucher. Under Senate Bill 8, the legislation would create education savings accounts of up to \$8,000, which families can use to pay for private school tuition, books, transportation, tutoring, and other materials such as uniforms. According to the bill, these funds can only go to private schools and state-approved vendors.

Voucher proponents fail to:

- note that there is a lack of transparency and accountability when it comes to how those funds are spent once given to private schools and vendors.
- explain that vouchers can cost the state more money as these programs expand over time to accommodate rising tuition costs.
- note that in most cases, vouchers benefit families who can already afford private school tuition.
- mention the stark contrast in accountability measures and requirements placed upon public schools compared to private schools to track and ensure student success.
- highlight that parents already have choice in public school districts through magnet programs, early college programs, and public specialty schools offering specialized curricula for science, technology, and fine arts.

	Public Schools	Private Schools
Required to accept or enroll all students.	YES	NO
Bound to comply with federal protections (IDEA and ESSA) for students with disabilities.	YES	NO
Bound to state accountability measures for student performance.	YES	NO
Mandated to close or placed under state management for several years of low performance.	YES	NO
Required to align to the state curriculum.	YES	NO
Required to publicly report use of taxpayer funds.	YES	NO

Schools Vouchers ≠ Improved Student Outcomes

Repeated studies of school voucher programs across the nation show that the overall effect of school vouchers is limited and inconsistent. In fact, multiple studies reveal that vouchers result in worse test scores and outcomes for students. Studies exploring the Louisiana, Indiana, and Ohio voucher programs have demonstrated that students with vouchers experience worse academic outcomes than their peers in public schools. A recent study of Milwaukee's voucher program, the longest-standing program in the country, found no improvements in math or reading scores for students who used vouchers. Studies exploring other long-standing programs in Cleveland and the District of Columbia reflect the same results—these programs do not improve student achievement. Other recent studies reveal vouchers did not positively impact college enrollment and completion rates for low-income or first-generation students of color.

Schools Vouchers ≠ Equity, Transparency, and Accountability

School vouchers are taxpayer-funded government subsidies for private schools and vendors with no accountability for academic results. Unlike public schools, private and religious schools are not required to accept or enroll all students. Private institutions can change their admission requirements and tuition costs annually. Often, this makes it difficult for low-income families to enroll or maintain enrollment in these institutions, despite some form of financial aid. In 2020-2021, the average cost of private school tuition across Texas was \$9,645, according to the Texas Private Schools Association. This does not include admission fees, textbooks, uniform costs, and other related school fees. With a proposal like Senate Bill 8, an education savings account funded with a maximum of \$8,000 does not make this advertised better choice attainable for students in lower- and middle-income families.

Private schools are not required to administer state-mandated assessments such as the STAAR or end-of-course exams, be rated under the state's A-F school accountability system, or align curriculum to the state's curriculum. Teachers at private schools are not required to be certified and are not expected to maintain ongoing professional development as part of certification renewal requirements.

In public schools, students who receive special education services and their families are protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In public schools, students are required to receive services that follow their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Parents are also offered more avenues to advocate for their children, such as filing complaints at the district, state, and federal levels and filing lawsuits at the state and federal levels. However, private schools are not required to offer the same accommodations to parents or services to students with special education needs.

Instead of School Vouchers and Senate Bill 8, Support Public Schools:

- Support keeping taxpayer dollars in the public education system.
- Support school choice within the public education system.
- Support increased funding to ensure teachers are paid more and are given funds to expand instructional expertise.
- Support increased funding to provide additional resources in public schools that have been proven to positively impact student success.
- Oppose all forms of vouchers that use taxpayer dollars to fund private schools and vendors.

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