

2023 ACTION PAPER – FINANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION IN TEXAS

The League of Women Voters of Texas urges the 88th Legislature to support adequate state funding for public schools to ensure that all Texas school children receive a high-quality education. Our priorities include:

A school finance system that provides taxpayer equity and the equitable distribution of funds to ensure that all Texas children receive a high-quality education.

Texas is 38th in the nation in public school per pupil funding¹ but is still 42nd in the Chance-for-Success categories per the “Quality Counts 2021” report². This report is routinely used by businesses and professionals when considering where to locate. To ensure our economic future, the state of Texas needs to improve funding for public education.

Local property taxes constitute the primary funding source for public education in Texas (the state will contribute just 41%. The state’s over-reliance on local property taxes to fund K-12 education:

- Jeopardizes school staff and salaries, school maintenance and improvements, and technology access.
- Prevents the addition of early childhood education (pre-school), especially critical in poorer districts.
- Burdens the least able to pay, like the working poor and seniors, who can’t keep up with rising taxes (due to increasing property values).
- Exacerbates the disparity between wealthy and poorer school districts.

An increase in state funding is critical to ensure that all school districts are provided equitably with:

- Safe and secure facilities.
- The ability to hire and retain highly qualified teachers and staff.
- Funds to implement full-day preschool opportunities for all children.
- Up-to-date technology, textbooks, supplemental materials and libraries.
- Programs and resources that adequately address various students’ needs, including IDEA and ELL.

Opposition to all vouchers, “tax credits”, “scholarships”, “grants”, “school choice”, “taxpayer savings” or any other program that uses taxpayer dollars to fund private, for-profit and religious schools.

Numerous independent studies show they do not produce greater academic gains than public schools.

Private and for-profit schools are not required to:

- Follow the state curriculum.
- Hire qualified teachers.
- Address special education (IDEA) and English learner (ELL) requirements.
- Ensure academic accountability.
- Answer questions related to equity and social justice.
- Respond to transparency concerns.

Studies show they do not provide a way out of poverty for poor students. The vast majority of our students (more than 90%) still need high-quality, fully funded public schools.



Support a state mandated curriculum that provides the academic rigor necessary for success in post-secondary education and careers and that provides students with an education that prepares them to be responsible members in a participatory democracy.

- Legislation that limits the ability of teachers and students to freely discuss sensitive topics in their lives or in the news fails to prepare students for civil discourse and limits their freedom of expression.
- Legislation that erodes the ability of schools to offer students opportunities to learn about and participate in civic life on and off school grounds fails to prepare students to be responsible citizens.

Diann Andy, Education Issues Chair DiannAndyLWVTX@gmail.com (210) 262-1499

¹Per Pupil Spending by State 2023. World Population Review.

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/per-pupil-spending-by-state>

²Chance-for-Success Index. Quality Counts 2021: Educational Opportunities and Performance in Texas

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/quality-counts-2021-educational-opportunities-and-performance-in-texas/2021/01>