



## 2019 ACTION PAPER – FINANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION IN TEXAS

LWVTX urges the 86th 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 41st in the nation in the School Finance and 42nd in the Chance for Success categories per the 2018 “Quality Counts” report 1. 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.

**Property taxes constitute the primary funding source for public education in Texas (the state will contribute just 37.5%)<sup>2</sup>. The state’s over-reliance on property taxes to fund K-12 education:**

- Causes reductions in: school staff and salaries, school maintenance and improvements, and technology access.
- Prevents the addition of early childhood education (pre-school) which is especially needed in poorer districts.
- Burdens the least able to pay, like seniors who can’t pay rising school taxes (due to increasing property values).
- Exacerbates the disparity between rich and poor 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 of full-day pre-school opportunities for all children.
- Up-to-date technology, textbooks, supplemental materials and libraries.
- Programs that adequately address various students’ needs, including IDEA and ELL.

**Oppose all vouchers, whether called “tax credits”, “scholarships”, “grants”, “school choice”, “taxpayer savings” or anything else.** Vouchers use 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.

Sources report that the majority of vouchers have gone to students already enrolled in private schools. The vast majority of our students (more than 90%) still need high-quality, fully funded public schools.

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