



Legislative Update

February 25, 2025

Current Political Climate

Headlines

TEXAS LEGISLATURE 2025

Texas senators fast-track school voucher bill for full vote

The Senate could vote on the proposal as soon as next week. Democrats on Tuesday criticized the bill saying it fails to prioritize the state's neediest children.

Trump signs sweeping executive order to expand school choice

The White House also announced that Trump signed an executive order aimed at "ending radical indoctrination in K-12 schooling."

Abbott sticks by school choice plan without blanket increase in money for Texas schools

Story by Gromer Jeffers Jr., The Dallas Morning News • 23h • ⌚ 5 min read

89th Legislative Session

Emergency Items

Gov. Abbott gave State of the State Address and declared **emergency items**; four are related to education. Only emergency items can advance during first 60 days of session.

- **School choice** (\$1B universal ESA program, increase funding for open-enrollment charters, expand virtual ed options, improve access to transfer)
- **Property tax relief** (using at least \$10 billion of surplus; requiring all bond and tax elections to be in November and approved by **two-thirds supermajority of voters**)
- **Raise teacher pay** (incl. \$750M in TIA, waive fees for high-need certifications, mentor training)
- **Expand CTE** (increase funding for dual credit, career ed allotments, and more; funding for career readiness)



89th Legislative Session

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick's Priority Bills

Lt. Gov. issued first round of priority bills, following are the education-related bills:

- SB1 – Senate's Budget for Texas
- SB2 – **Providing School Choice**
- SB4 – Increasing Homestead Exemption to \$140,000
- SB10 – Placing the Ten Commandments in School
- SB11 – Protecting the Freedom to Pray in School
- SB12 – Establishing a Parental Bill of Rights in Public Education
- SB13 – Guarding Against Inappropriate Books in Public Schools
- SB19 – Stopping Taxpayer Dollars for Lobbyists (TASA/TASB)
- SB24 – Educating Texas Students on the Horrors of Communism



Budget Bills

Senate Bill 1

- Includes **\$1 billion for vouchers** (double what was considered last session)
- Includes **\$4.85 billion in new funding for public education**, specifying increase in **\$4,000 teacher pay** (\$10,000 for rural teachers) and **TIA changes**
- Includes **\$400 million for school safety**
- Additional **\$3.5 billion in additional tax relief**
 - \$3 billion by increasing homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000 and \$150,000 for seniors
 - \$500 million property tax reductions for businesses

House Bill 1

- Includes **\$1 billion for vouchers** (double what was considered last session)
- Includes **\$4.85 billion in new funding for public education**, no specifications
- Includes **\$400 million for school safety**
- Additional **\$3.5 billion for property tax relief** through compression

SB2 – Voucher Bill

(aka Texas Education Freedom Act)

- Senate's **universal voucher bill moved quickly**.
 - Passed the Senate chamber Feb. 5, sent to House
- Provides **\$10,000** per year for each eligible student, **\$11,500** for students with disabilities, **\$2,000** for homeschool students, **\$2,500** for homeschool students with disabilities.
- Creates lottery system if more applicants than spots – **80%** of available positions filled by students who previously attended a public school and are either from **low-income** households (defined as less than **\$125K income per year** as compared to 130% threshold for free lunch) or have a **disability**.

Fiscal Note:

TOTAL COST EST. **\$1.B** in 2025-27

TOTAL COST EST. **\$4.6B** increase in four years



HB3 – Universal Voucher Bill

- Voucher amount equal to 85% of state/local funding and ADA
- Any child eligible for public education enrollment is eligible to apply for a voucher
- Priority given to applications in the following order:
 - Special Education students whose annual family income is less than \$125,000
 - Students whose annual family income is less than \$50,000
 - Students whose annual family income is greater than \$50,000 and less than \$125,000
 - Students whose annual family income is greater than \$125,000
- Provider must be deemed eligible by the Comptroller

TOTAL COST EST.



Budget Bills

Senate Bill 26

- Raises for teachers only
- 3-4yrs experience \$2,500
- 5+yrs experience \$5,500
- Creates Local Optional Teacher Designation Grant Program (Merit Pay program administered by TEA)
- Teachers' children considered qualified for Pre-K
- TEA administered 3rd party for teacher's rights and liability insurance (replace ATPE etc. with TEA controlled version)
- Increase Teacher Incentive Allotment

TOTAL COST EST. \$4.8B

House Bill 2

- \$220 BA Increase (min.40% for Staff Compensation)
- Increased weights for Special Education (est.\$900M/Yr)
- Fine Arts Allotment
- Special Education Service Group Allotment
- Increase in funding for Teacher Incentive Allotment
- Changes to teacher preparation programs/requirements

TOTAL COST EST. \$7.8B

Other Active Education Bills

Senate Bills

- **SB2:** Vouchers
- **SB4:** Tax Compression
- **SB26** \$ Teacher Salary Only

House Bills

- **HB2:** Funding / Omnibus
- **HB3:** Vouchers
- **HB4:** STAAR
- **HB6:** Discipline

Goal 3: Culture of Engagement

Next Steps

- Follow legislative process and key bills
- Advocate for our Northwest ISD Legislative Priorities
- NISD Advocacy Committee Meeting, February 26
- NISD Capitol Delegation Visit, March 5
- For more information visit www.nisdtx.org/legislative



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or Advocacy Committee.*



Questions?