

EMERGENCY ITEM: EDUCATION FREEDOM

Under Governor Greg Abbott's leadership, Texas is a national leader in education:

- #1 for National Blue Ribbon Schools
- #1 for Tier One Research Universities
- One of the best high school graduation rates in the country
- Home to 9 of the top 100 public high schools in the U.S.

Working with the Texas Legislature, Governor Abbott has:

- Provided more funding for public education and more funding for teacher pay raises than ever (2022 TEA Annual Report)
- Achieved an all-time high for statewide per-student funding through landmark school finance reforms (TEA 2022-2023 Report on Public Education State Funding Transparency)
- Established the Teacher Incentive Allotment which has awarded over \$55 million in pay raises to more than 6,200 exemplary teachers (TEA)

To empower parents as the primary decision makers for their child's education, Governor Abbott created a limited education savings account (ESA) for special needs students. It has proven so successful, the Texas Legislature now wants to increase funding for it as the current waitlist of 17,900 students is expected to grow to 48,000-74,000 students by May 2023.

Without education freedom, parents are hindered in helping their child. Like the Aly family in Corpus Christi who grew frustrated watching their child fall behind in her schoolwork because she was forced to learn from home.

To provide every parent with the ability to choose the best education option for their child, Governor Abbott will work with the Texas Legislature this session to:

- Expand school choice options available through ESAs to all Texas students
- Amend the Texas Constitution to bolster a parent's right as the primary decisionmaker in all matters involving their child
- Require schools to better inform parents of their rights
- Expand parent access to curriculum, school libraries, and what their children are taught
- Reform the grievance process to ensure parent concerns are addressed quickly and respectfully
- Allow parents to decide if their child should repeat a grade
- Strengthen consent requirements for health services
- Protect students from unnecessary personal data collection and ensure schools are not sharing or selling student data outside the Texas public education system

