



Source: Every Texan analysis of Texas Education Agency and Legislative Budget Board data

# Texas Needs to Fund Every Student

Attendance-based funding disadvantages districts with high concentrations of low-income students and students with chronic health issues. Using funding to incentivize attendance is based on the unfounded assumption that absenteeism is mostly voluntary, and the primary cause is truancy. Texas is an outlier in making this assumption; 46 states have a formula-based system of funding public education, but only seven states base the formulas on average daily attendance rather than enrollment (CA, ID, IL, KY, MS, MO, TX).

School districts plan and budget based on the number of students enrolled. Every student must be assigned a campus, classrooms, teachers, and desk space. The school must be prepared to educate every child every school day, even when a child is absent for the day. Schools do not save money when children are absent. In fact, chronic absenteeism brings additional costs such as remediation for students and administrative time for teachers and districts.

In 2020 of the nearly 5.5 million students enrolled, 434,350 or 8% of students were not reflected in average daily attendance for funding purposes. Because low-income students and those with chronic health issues drive higher absenteeism, using attendance for funding penalizes schools based on the types of students they serve. Districts with rates of low-income and other hard teach populations are being denied the resources needed to overcome the obstacles their students arrive with—including the issues that lead to chronic absenteeism.

**TSTA Recommendation:** The Legislature should adopt enrollment-based funding to improve equity, increase stability, decrease administrative burdens, and fund every student in Texas public schools. The Texas Legislature should ensure the funds needed for this change are preserved in the budget.

