



HB 4340 BY FRANK

TSTA opposes this bill because it is an overt transfer of taxpayer funds to private entities.

Texas public schools are open and nondiscriminatory in their acceptance of all students, but voucher programs undermine this fundamental role of public schools because they divert desperately needed resources away from the schools that serve the vast majority of Texas children and are open to all, to private entities who can selectively enroll, push out, and discriminate.

Private school vouchers do not provide the same accountability to taxpayers.

Private school vouchers do not adequately serve students.

Private school vouchers do not improve academic achievement.

PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHERS DO NOT PROVIDE THE SAME ACCOUNTABILITY TO TAXPAYERS

HB 4340 does not have sufficient protections to ensure fidelity. The legislation only gives the comptroller the authority to conduct an audit but does not require it (sec. 29.362)

- In conducting the audit, **may** require program participant or Educational Assistance Organization to provide information and/or documentation.
- During audits in AZ, the state's auditor general found multiple instances of misspending by participants, including daily attempts to withdraw cash, cosmetic purchases and even entry to a haunted house.
- This same audit also reported that parents who received warning letters for attempts to withdraw cash were still found later to misspend the savings account money.

Does not require state tests — offers choice between norm-referenced testing or STAAR.

- You can only really compare student achievement when you have used the same instrument on all students.
- If students are all taking the same state exam, then we can accurately compare the *value* of the voucher.
- This means we will be unable to track individual students' progress or compare them to students who remain in public schools.

PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHERS DO NOT ADEQUATELY SERVE STUDENTS

HB 4340 prioritizes low-income students and students with disabilities, but precedent shows that these subgroups especially are not well-served by vouchers.

Private school vouchers do not adequately serve low-income students.

- There is nothing in this legislation to cap private school tuition at the amount of the voucher award.
- This means only families with income enough to cover the cost of the tuition, transportation, and additional expenditures benefit from the voucher.

Private school vouchers do not adequately serve students with disabilities.

- In practice, many students with disabilities are systemically excluded from voucher programs,
 - because students are denied admission
 - because schools lack the necessary services, so families electively do not apply
 - because higher needs students are counseled out.

Additionally, students with special needs who make it in to private schools

- forfeit their protections provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Act
- lose all due process protections, meaning they are no longer empowered to raise concerns with a hearing officer for lack of service.

PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHERS DO NOT IMPROVE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Studies repeatedly show that voucher programs not only do not result in better student outcomes but have large negative effects.

- In LA, a voucher scheme in effect since 2008, first as a pilot, had negative effects in reading and math but significant in math
- In IN, a study showed “significant achievement losses for students who switch from a public to private school”
- In OH, a decade-long longitudinal study found that participants were higher-achieving low-income students but fared worse on state exams compared to their closely matched peers who remained in public schools.