



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION 8716 N. Mopac Expressway, Austin, TX 78759 • 877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org • Fax 512-486-7049

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2026

Contact: Clay Robison

ClayR@tsta.org

cell: 512.535.8994

As families begin applying for private school vouchers, TSTA will continue working to kill this expensive and discriminatory program

Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina released the following statement:

Texas parents who want to send their children to private schools at every taxpayer's expense can start applying for vouchers this week. TSTA is marking the occasion with a commitment to continue working to kill this expensive and discriminatory program.

Gov. Greg Abbott's and his billionaire supporters' success in forcing the creation of the voucher program last year does not change the fact that spending tax dollars on religious and other private schools is poor public policy, especially for a state like Texas that grossly underfunds public schools, where most Texas students are and will continue to be educated.

According to the National Education Association's annual survey of state education spending, the average public school teacher salary in Texas trailed the national average by more than \$10,000 in the 2024-25 school year. The average per-student expenditure in average daily attendance (ADA) was more than \$5,500 less than the national average. Only three states – Utah, Oklahoma and Idaho – spent less per student. The new funding the Legislature set aside last year for public education, including teacher pay raises, wasn't enough to close these gaps.

Meanwhile, the \$1 billion lawmakers spent on the first year of the voucher program will increase to about \$4 billion a year by 2030, the Legislative Budget Board has predicted – and who knows how much after that. If Texas follows the example of many other voucher states, spending on private schools will soon increase at a higher rate than per-student spending on public education.

Any family can apply for vouchers that will be \$10,000-plus for most students, including pre-K kids, as much as \$30,000 for special education children and \$2,000 for home-schooled students. But many low-income families, even with vouchers, will be unable to afford private school tuition and related costs for their children. Most private schools don't accept special education students.

Most of the religious schools that the state has approved for the program are Christian, many of which restrict admission or give preference to children of their own faith. Some of these schools refuse admission to LGBTQ students. These schools will use public tax dollars to discriminate against children whose families pay these tax dollars. Public schools do not discriminate. They accept every student who lives in their district, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, family income or whatever, and only public schools should receive our tax revenue. As the annual survey of state education spending shows us, they need more of it.