



Texas PTA is proud to continue building upon our long-standing legacy of advocating to make every child's potential a reality within the following pillars: Supporting Student Success, Health and Safety, Meaningful Assessment and Accountability, and Strengthening Public Schools.

## **Vouchers: Debunk the Myths**

*Strengthen Public Schools*

**Oppose legislation that authorizes state funds to be used to pay for private school tuition and related costs.**

This Legislative Session, SB 176 by Senator Middleton has been filed that would establish the "Texas Parental Empowerment Program" or an educational savings account program. This program would allow funds that would normally go to a Texas public school to instead be directed to the student's family to be used for private school tuition, online courses, tutoring, educational therapies, and other approved reasons. Other voucher bills have been filed in the House, including HB 619 by Representative Shaheen, that would give tax credits to those contributing to educational assistance organizations, such as donations to a private school scholarship fund.

School vouchers hurt Texas public schools because they direct funding away from an already critically underfunded system.

### **Vouchers:**

- Do not ensure accountability.
  - Vouchers send public dollars to private schools that are not accountable to the public for producing results.
- Are a step backward in serving students with disabilities
  - Over the past 30 years, federal and state laws have evolved to ensure students with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education. Private schools are not required to provide special education services mandated by federal and state laws.
- Violate separation of church and state.
  - The U.S. Constitution prohibits any government "establishment of religion." Tax dollars directed toward private schools of religious origin violates this principle.
  - The U.S. Constitution ensures the "free exercise of religion"; no government has proper authority to dictate a religious community's expression of faith. Regulation and oversight always accompany the allocation of public tax dollars, thus violating freedom of religion.
- Provide choice for some, not all.
  - Private schools have a profit motive to admit students with the fewest educational challenges.
  - Vouchers are disproportionately accessible to students living in urban areas due to limited access to private schools in rural Texas.

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## **#DebunkTheMyths**

Vouchers...Learn the Rest of the Story

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# TEXAS PTA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Texas PTA is proud to continue building upon our long-standing legacy of advocating to make every child's potential a reality within the following pillars: Supporting Student Success, Health and Safety, Meaningful Assessment and Accountability, and Strengthening Public Schools.

- Vouchers do not address many needs of low-income, at-risk students such as transportation, free and reduced-priced lunches, textbooks and other instructional materials, assessment of special needs, access to additional remediation programs, and full cost of tuition.
- Drain critical funding.
  - Vouchers drain additional resources from the public school system.
  - Public funds should remain in the public school system that serves the vast majority of Texas students.

## Types of Vouchers

### Education Savings Account Programs (ESA)

- A form of voucher program that allows eligible parents to use a portion of funds the state expends for their child's public school education to fund private school tuition, distance education, and homeschooling materials and curriculum. The remainder of the funds, generally around 30%, are kept by the public school the student previously attended.

### Tax Credit Scholarship Programs

- Corporations can earn tax credits by donating money to a scholarship program that uses the dollars to pay for private school tuition for students.

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