

Education in Texas

December 31, 2021



Top Line

1. Texas has poor education quality compared to most other states
2. Education quality in Texas has decreased rapidly from COVID and the loss in education has the potential to cause significant damage to Texas' economy
3. Texas systemically underfunds its education system and diverts federal funds designated for education to other purposes
4. Most voters support increasing state-level education funding and nearly all voters support advocating more federal funds in Texas towards education
5. Most voters disapprove of how Texas currently handles its public education system

Key take-away/talking point - Texas has a relatively poor and underfunded education system that will pose substantial risks to our economy going forward. Most Texas voters support increasing funding for education.

Backup

1. **Texas has poor education quality compared to most other states**
 - a. EducationWeek's Quality Counts report on school quality in the US ranked Texas as the 42nd best state for education, giving the state a final grade of a C- (3)
 - b. A poll from the Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation asked Texas voters to grade their school– only 56% graded their school as an 'A' or a 'B' (3)

2. Education quality in Texas has decreased rapidly from COVID and the loss in education has the potential to cause significant damage to Texas' economy

- a. Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Morath explained at the Dallas Regional Chamber's annual State of Public Education that educational quality has decreased dramatically from COVID (4)
 - i. The number of students proficient in Math dropped by 15 points, Reading declined by 4 points
 - ii. This decline is estimated to cause \$2 trillion in damages to the Texas economy through loss in potential earnings
 - iii. Morath argued that "This is the largest problem facing the state of Texas, [and] it is larger than every other problem that we face, probably combined"
- b. Dallas Innovates' historical analysis concluded that fewer than 4% of students who fall behind academically ever catch up in Texas. (4)

3. Texas systemically underfunds its education system and diverts federal funds designated for education to other purposes

- a. A study done by the Southern Poverty Law Center confirms Texas underfunds its schools compared to other states (8)
 - i. The study ranked Texas 40 out of 51 (the study included Washington D.C.) in terms of educational spending per student
 - ii. The study gave Texas an 'F' for its funding
- b. A report in the Austin American-Statesman indicated that the Texas State government systemically diverts federal funds designated for education (7)
 - i. In 2021, the federal government sent Texas 19.2 billion dollars to supplement its education program- "a significant chunk of those dollars was held back as "surplus," never going to the schools for which it was intended"
- c. In 2019, the Texas legislature approved \$6.5 billion in additional education funding (11)

4. Most voters support increasing state-level education funding and nearly all voters support advocating more federal funds in Texas towards education

- a. A voter survey from the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium in January of 2021 confirmed widespread support for education (1)
 - i. 67% of voters support increasing state-level spending on education, increasing to 71% after voters are given more information about the issue
 - ii. 81% support requiring Texas to spend federal education grants on education in Texas, increasing to 86% after voters are given more information
- b. A voter survey from 2019 by the University of Texas found that 55% of voters supported increasing budgets on K-12 public education (10)

5. Most voters disapprove of how Texas currently handles its public education system

- a. A poll from the Texas Politics Project in October of 2021 found that nearly 42% of Texans disprove of how the State handles public education– with only 26% of voters supporting how education is handled (9)

More Information

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