



Texas School Choice Talking Points – Feb. 21, 2025

Topline Messaging

- Texas House Speaker Burrows and Education Chairman Buckley introduced a strong universal ESA bill, HB 3, that builds on the great work of the Senate-passed bill, SB 2.
- HB 3 strengthens legal protections for students, homeschool families, and private schools. It also provides a pathway to expand the program, increases the ESA amount, and ensures an ongoing 100% universal program.
- The Texas Legislature should pass Gov. Abbott's school choice plan, which would be the largest DAY-ONE school choice bill in the nation – "the biggest ESA launch in American history."
- The overwhelming majority of parents and taxpayers have given a mandate for a strong, UNIVERSAL school choice bill for ALL Texas families.
- For the first time ever, all Texas families would have the opportunity to choose the school that's best for their children's needs and values.
- This ESA program is totally voluntary – families and schools are not required to apply. In addition, there is no government control or "strings attached."
- Public schools will get more state funding, including rural school districts. Gov. Abbott and leaders in the Texas Legislature have made it very clear that public schools will continue to have the funding they need.

State of Play

- Speaker Burrows and Chairman Buckley introduced HB 3 on Thursday – the next step is a House Education Committee hearing, expected in the next couple weeks.
- Speaker Burrows appointed a strong committee. Brad Buckley is the chairman. There are 9 Republicans and 6 Democrats. All Republican members support school choice.
- At a recent Parent Empowerment event, Gov. Abbott said: "Tonight is the first time ever in the history of our great state that we've had a Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives raise his hand and say, 'Yes, we will pass school choice in the state of Texas.'"
- Speaker Burrows said the House bill ensures "a robust universal school choice initiative that moves forward to the Governor's desk for his signature."

- The Texas Senate passed their bill, SB 2, earlier this month on a 19-12 vote. All Republicans voted Yes other than Sen. Robert Nichols.
- President Trump weighed in earlier this month, thanking the Senate for passing what would be the “biggest launch of a School Choice program in American History.”
- Trump added: “The Texas House must now pass School Choice to deliver a gigantic Victory for Texas students and parents.” Speaker Burrows replied: “We will.”

ESA Bill Specifics

- The House and Senate bills would establish a universal ESA program to provide up to \$11,500 per child to be used for tuition and other approved expenses.
- Both the House and Senate proposed \$1 billion for ESAs in their budgets this session, which would cover more than 100,000 Texas kids initially.
- This school choice plan would DOUBLE the funding and expand eligibility that was proposed in 2023 – that shows parents and elections matter.
- The final bill should also include a way to expand the program in the future for every Texas student.
- The comptroller projected a \$24 billion budget surplus so there is ample money to fully fund a strong, universal ESA program - and provide higher pay for teachers and more money for public schools.
- Specifically in Texas, it would cost \$10,000 to educate most students through ESAs compared to \$16,792 to educate a child at a public school.

General School Choice Messaging

- School choice means more competition, which leads to improved student performance, increased transparency for parents, and fiscal accountability for taxpayers.
- School choice actually reduces government and saves taxpayers money. Dozens of studies around the country have proven this over the years.
- School choice will also make public schools better and stronger. And public schools will get all the funding they need.