

Covering vouchers in Texas

Planning for a big education story in the lege

Plan your resources

K-12 reporter



+ A little help from my friends:

- Politics team
- Breaking news team
- Regions team
- Data viz team
- Etc.

Set the stage

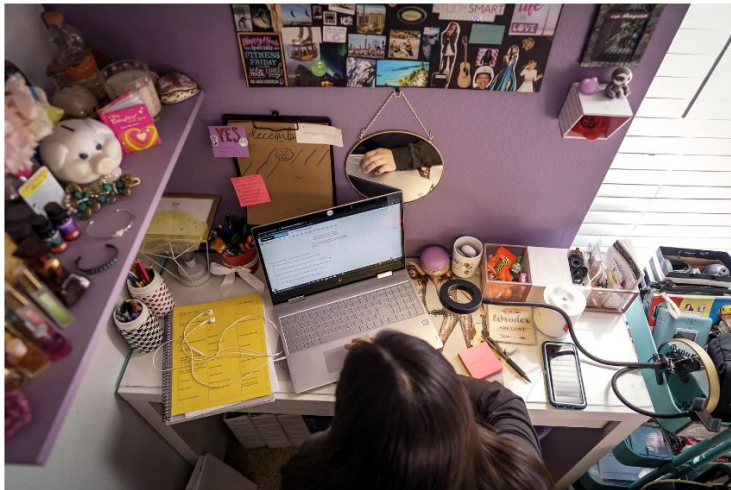
TEXAS LEGISLATURE 2023

What you need to know about education savings accounts, the voucher-like program championed by Gov. Greg Abbott

Texas is the latest state to pitch a version of the program, which lets parents who opt out of their local school districts use tax dollars to pay for private schooling.

BY BRIAN LOPEZ FEB. 22, 2023 UPDATED: APRIL 5, 2023

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Isabel Suarez works on homework prior to the start of the school day from her home in Pflugerville on Dec 9, 2020. © Jordan Vonderhaar for The Texas Tribune

Here's what you need to know about education savings accounts.

Education savings accounts in Texas

- What is an education savings account?
- Why is it called a "school choice" program?
- Where else do they exist?
- Is "school choice" a new idea in Texas?
- Why are education savings accounts back?
- What can we expect at the Texas Legislature?



What is an education savings account?

Education savings accounts are essentially taxpayer-supported bank accounts for parents who remove their children from the public education system. Those parents get state money up front to pay for their educational expenses, like private school tuition, online schooling or private tutors. In most cases, the state manages these accounts.

There are several education savings account proposals under consideration by the Texas Legislature this session, but Senate Bill 8 by Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, has been designated as a priority bill. SB 8 would give participants up to \$8,000 per student each year to be used on private school tuition, tutors, uniforms and other approved educational expenses. The program would be open to virtually every K-12 student and would not accept those already in private schools.

Creighton's proposal, like most education savings account programs in other states, does not require private schools or education services vendors to report test results or how they're spending taxpayers' money.

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Paint a full picture

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The COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and burnout have pummeled teachers in the last few years. Lawmakers from both parties agree they should get a pay bump — but it won't happen without some negotiation.

BY BRIAN LOPEZ JAN. 30, 2023 5 AM CENTRAL

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Ride the wave

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Texas Senate approves education savings account bill — but House signals a tough road ahead

A Texas House vote earlier in the lower chamber. Senate bonus.

BY BRIAN LOPEZ, PATRICK SVITI

APRIL 6, 2023 UPDATED: 8 PM C

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Gov. Greg Abbott threatens to veto pared-down school choice bill, warns of special sessions

Abbott says will be the re

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BY BRIAN LOPEZ

Time runs out for taxpayer-funded private school tuition bill as special session looms

Gov. Greg Abbott has already voucher-like program open to

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BY BRIAN LOPEZ MAY 20, 2023

No teacher raises, no vouchers: Lawmakers fail to reach compromise on school funding bill

The end of House Bill 100 is a bittersweet victory for public education advocates who vehemently oppose school voucher programs but lament that schools won't get additional funds to pay for teacher raises or balance their budgets.

BY BRIAN LOPEZ MAY 27, 2023 UPDATED: 9 PM CENTRAL

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Don't stop!

TEXAS LEGISLATURE 2023

In East Texas, skepticism over private school tuition assistance persists despite push from conservative leaders

Gov. Greg Abbott and other conservatives say families need options to escape “woke” education in public schools. East Texas parents and school leaders say the national talking points are off base.

BY [POOJA SALHOTRA](#)

APRIL 7, 2023 5 AM CENTRAL

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Mothers Anna Sneed, Chantel Jones-Bigby and Sharby Hunt-Hart with their daughters at the Rowlett Public Library in Rowlett on Oct. 26, 2023. 📷 Shelby Tauber for The Texas Tribune

TEXAS LEGISLATURE 2023

These home-schooling moms want to create a “microschool” for Black kids. They need vouchers to make it happen.

TEXAS LEGISLATURE 2023

Voucher proposal spurs mix of excitement, wariness in Texas home schooling community

Parents of Texas’ growing population of home-schooled students are split over whether education savings accounts would give them much-needed financial help or represent an unwanted government involvement in their kids’ educations.

BY [KEATON PETERS](#)

OCT. 20, 2023

UPDATED: 8 AM CENTRAL

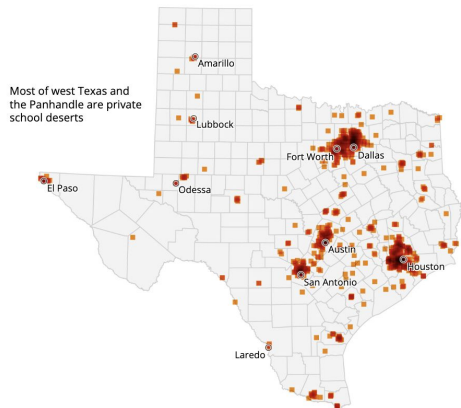
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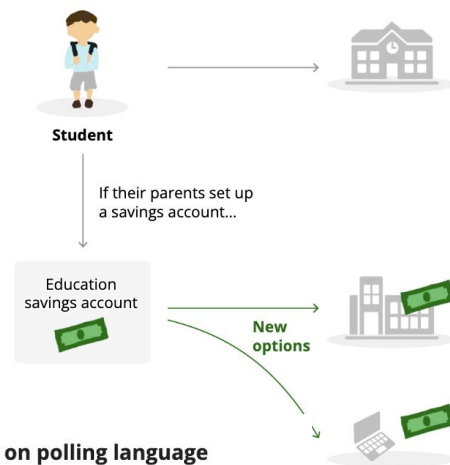
Many rural counties have no private schools

A majority of private schools in Texas are located in urban and mid-sized counties, which leaves rural counties with a scarce amount of schools. Even when factoring in population, urban counties have more than double the number of private schools than rural counties.



What is an education savings account?

Education savings accounts are a form of school vouchers, which gives families state money to pay for their children's private education. They are essentially taxpayer-supported bank accounts for parents who remove their children from the public education system.



They can stay in a **public school** — which includes charter schools — and won't have access to education savings account funds.

How the Texas House voted on school vouchers

On Friday, **84** Texas House members voted in favor of an amendment to remove school vouchers from the education bill.

	Total	Rep.	Dem.
✓ Support	84	21	63
Against	63	63	0
Present not voting	1	1	0
Absent	1	0	1

* Republican members who voted against vouchers in April

Dist.	Representative	Yes	No
R-1	Gary VanDeaver *	Y	
R-3	Cecil Bell Jr.		N
R-4	Keith Bell *	Y	

Popularity of school vouchers varies depending on polling language

A recent UT poll shows how registered voters in different parts of Texas responded when asked about establishing a voucher program and how their opinions changed when asked about redirecting state tax revenue for private school tuition.

■ Support ■ Oppose ■ Don't know/no opinion



Questions?

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