



# GRADUATION FOR ALL

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## How are funding cuts affecting your school? • [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) • November 2011

The state of Texas, [like other states](#), has a constitutional duty to provide an appropriate educational system.

As the Supreme Court of Texas affirmed in 2005, "If the Legislature substantially defaulted on its responsibility such that Texas school children were denied access to that education needed to participate fully in the social, economic, and educational opportunities available in Texas, the 'suitable provision' clause [would be violated](#)."

In Spring, 2011, despite this obligation--and ignoring the concerns of family, community, and business leaders--Texas lawmakers cut \$6.4 billion from the state's public education system. The cuts sliced into a system already weakened by inequity, with gaps of more than [\\$1,000 per student](#) separating poor and wealthy districts. The rainy day fund, we were told, could not be tapped.

And the cuts to education did not stop at K-12. Texas legislators also eliminated \$223 million in state grants for at-risk pre-schoolers and cut scholarships for 29,000 low-income college students. As he pressed for these cuts, Governor Rick Perry insisted that any fallout would be a [local problem](#): "The lieutenant governor, the (Texas House) speaker, and their colleagues aren't going to hire or fire one teacher, best I can tell. That is a local decision that will be made at the local districts."

But teachers *are* being fired--an estimated 12,000 teachers have lost their jobs so far. Crucial student supports *are* being cut. And cash-strapped students *are* facing cuts to financial aid.

How much has been cut from public schools in your community? What impact is this having on children in your district? How will it affect student graduation and preparation for college? What can you do to speak out and take action? This issue of Graduation for All provides three key resources. As always we welcome your comments, insights and opinions at [gradforall@idra.org](mailto:gradforall@idra.org).

**Share Your Story - How are funding cuts affecting your school or community?** To put your story on the map, visit [Texas School Funding Map](#).

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## Schools and Communities in Action

Here are three concrete ways you can speak out and take action:



### #1: Get Data on Revenue Cuts in TX

Cuts have been made to almost every public school district in the state of Texas. You can find out exactly how much revenue has been lost in your district and county, by visiting these [interactive data maps](#).

Also, visit IDRA's OurSchool portal ([in English](#); in [Spanish](#)) to find out how your school is doing and the status of revenues.

*Need more data?* Texas ranks 43rd in per pupil funding. Visit this [infographic](#) to find out how your state stacks up in investing in children.

### #2: Share your Story - How are Funding Cuts Affecting Your School?

Is your school having to cut teachers, staff, services, or after-school programs or raise local taxes to make ends meet? How are these cuts affecting students?

[Put your story on the map](#)

### **#3: Pass a Resolution calling for Fair Funding Now**

Call on your board, chamber of commerce, congregation, community organization to pass a Resolution for Funding Equity.

[See a sample resolution and background presentation on the issue.](#)

[See what other actions you can take.](#)

## **Toolbox**

### **About the Fair Funding Now! Initiative**

In 2011, the Texas legislature cut education funding for the first time in four decades. Communities across the state are taking action to make sure that schools are equipped to guarantee that all children graduate ready for college and career. The Fair Funding Now! initiative is a collaborative effort between IDRA, LULAC, NAACP, the Mexican American School Board Members Association (MASBA) and the Texas Center for Education Policy (TCEP) to call for school finance equity.



[See more resources you can use in your community and learn more about Fair Funding Now!](#)

## **Youth Voices**

"I want to do something to change the world, because I live under one philosophy: you must give back what you receive" - Joe Perez, quoted in a [New York Times/Texas Tribune article by Thanh Tan](#), whose plans to become an aerospace or mechanical engineer may have to be put on hold for lack of funds to cover tuition and board.

**We want to hear from you!** Have a story of school-community partnership that's raising graduation rates? We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions at [gradforall@idra.org](mailto:gradforall@idra.org).

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### **Thanks for reading!**

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