

Rodríguez **VS.** San Antonio

50th Anniversary Commemoration

**The Fight for Fair
School Funding**

**Equity: Past,
Present and
Future**



A Call to Community Action for Equitable School Funding

Morgan Craven, J.D.
Joanna Sanchez, Ph.D.
Diana Long





Morgan Craven, J.D.
National Director of Policy,
Advocacy and Community
Engagement



Joanna Sanchez, Ph.D
Senior Policy Researcher



Diana Long
IDRA Education Policy
Fellow





How does school funding work in Texas today?



Snapshot of Public Education in Texas (2021-2022)

**Total
Enrollment:**

**5,427,370
students**

Emergent Bilingual (English Learner)	1,175,333 (22% enrollment)
Economically Disadvantaged	3,289,420 (61% enrollment)
Hispanic/Latino	2,860,754 (53% enrollment)
Black or African American	694,302 (13% enrollment)
White	1,427,241 (26% enrollment)
Special Education	635,097 (12% enrollment)



Texas schools are funded by:

- Local funds
- State funds
- Federal funds

School districts generate funds through local property taxes, then the state provides additional funding if necessary to meet a pre-determined per-pupil funding amount.

- Texas Basic Allotment (basic per-pupil funding level): **\$6,160**

Plus:

- Bilingual weight: 10%
- Dual language weight: 5%
- Weight for students in poverty: 22.5%-27.5%
- Special education: varies
- Dyslexia weight: 10%



School districts with high property wealth (because of a history of segregation and government investment) are able to easily out-raise districts with low property wealth.

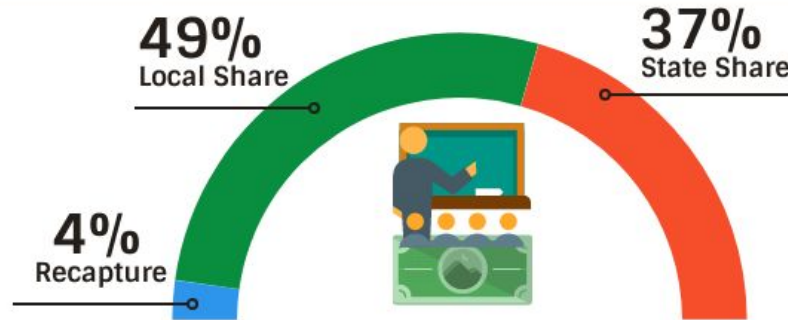
While those high-wealth districts must send some money to the state to distribute to other districts (called “recapture”), they are able to keep some of those funds within their district to pay for extracurriculars, specialized programs, more staff and equipment, or whatever else they decide.

This system ensures our public schools remain inequitably funded ...



...while many students' basic needs are not being met.

Texas state funding for public schools has fallen below 50% and does not account for inflation or actual costs of education.



Data source: Legislative Budget Board, 2022



40th

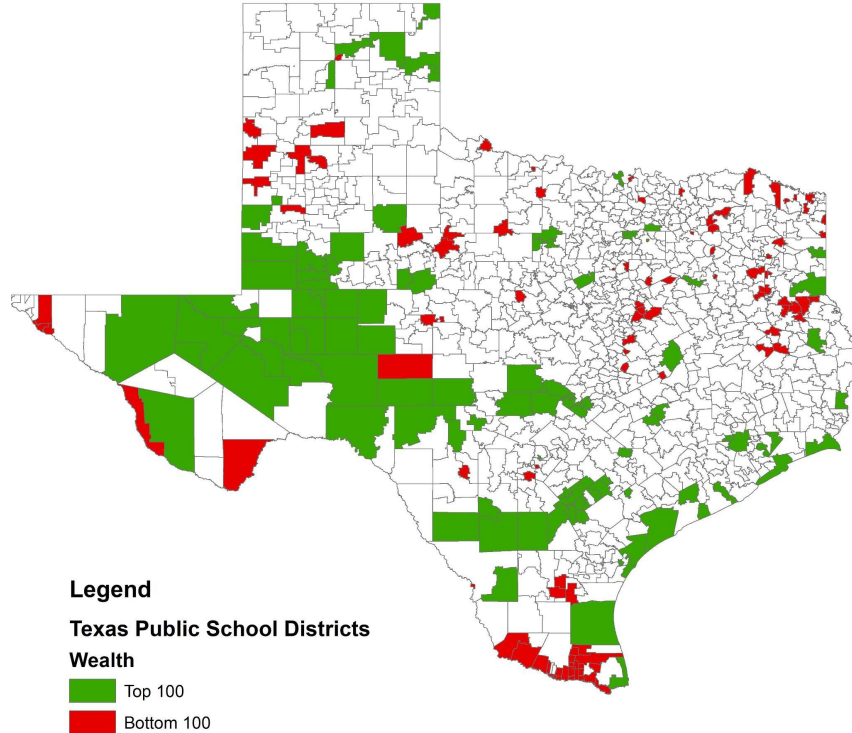
Texas ranks 40th in the nation in per-student funding levels
(\$12,649)



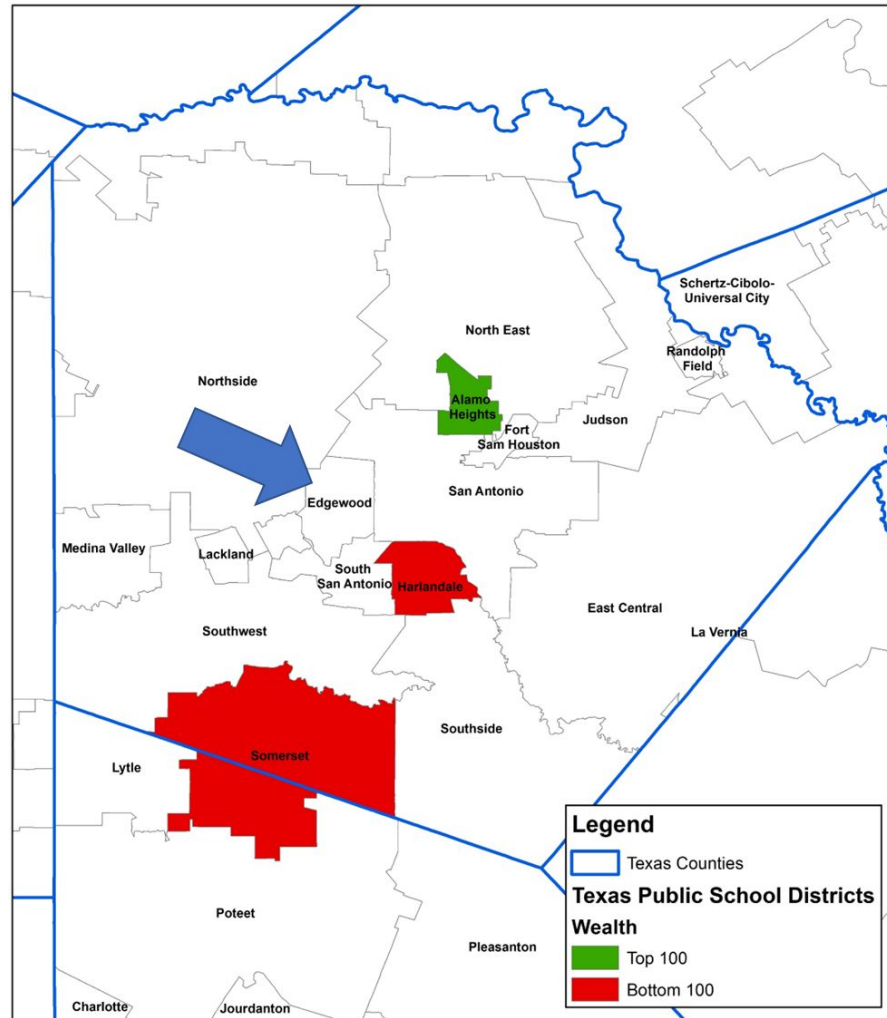
What does this look like in Texas school districts ...



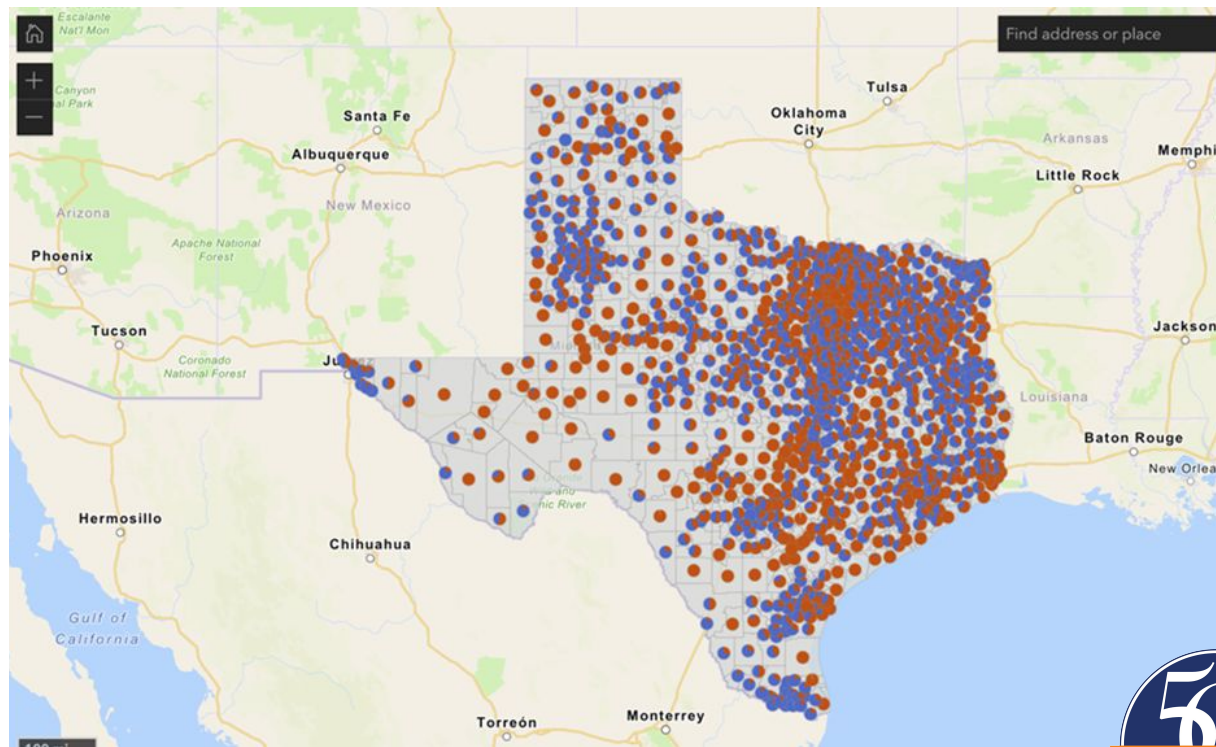
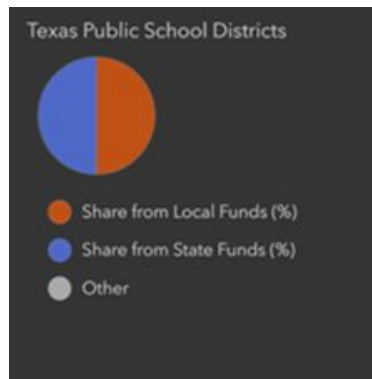
Top 100 High Wealth and Bottom 100 Low Wealth Districts



Bexar County



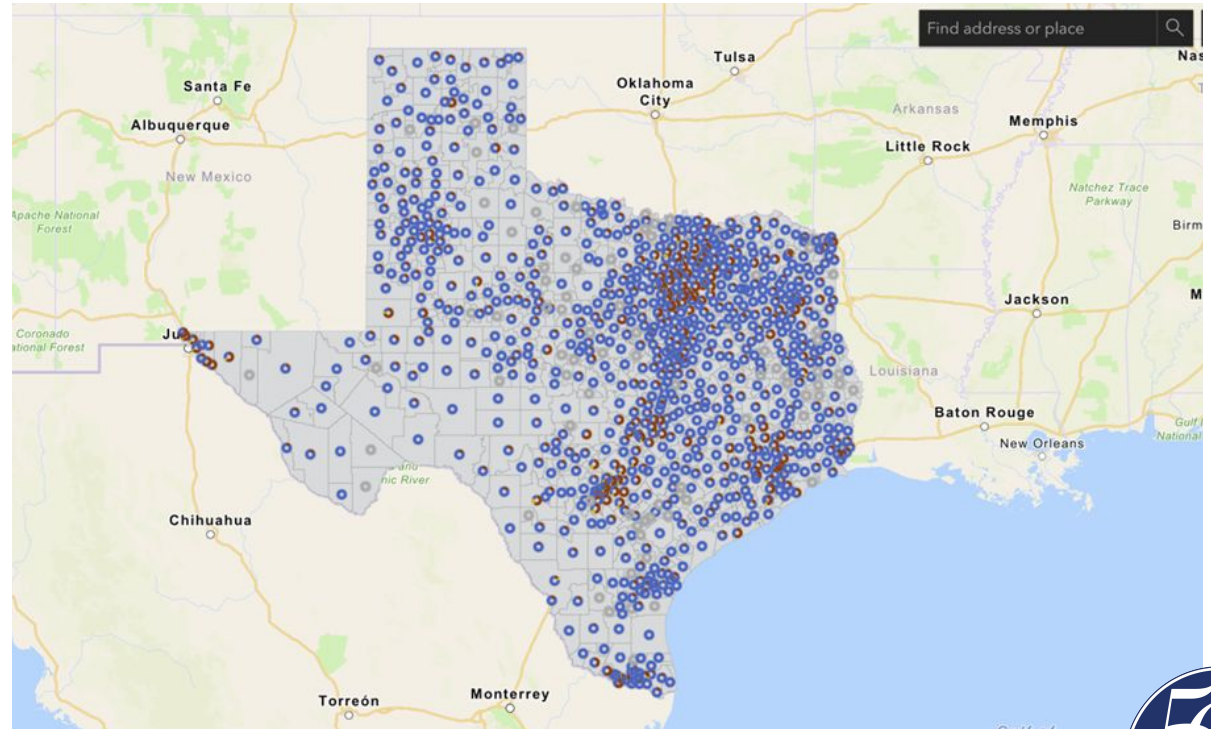
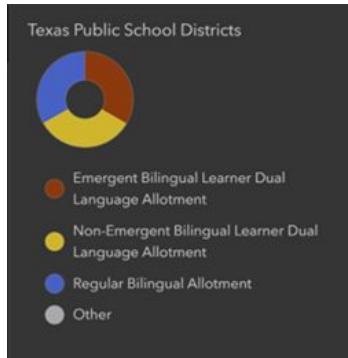
Texas Share of School Funding



Go to the interactive map:
<https://idra.news/TxMapSchoolFundingShare>



Texas Bilingual Education Funding

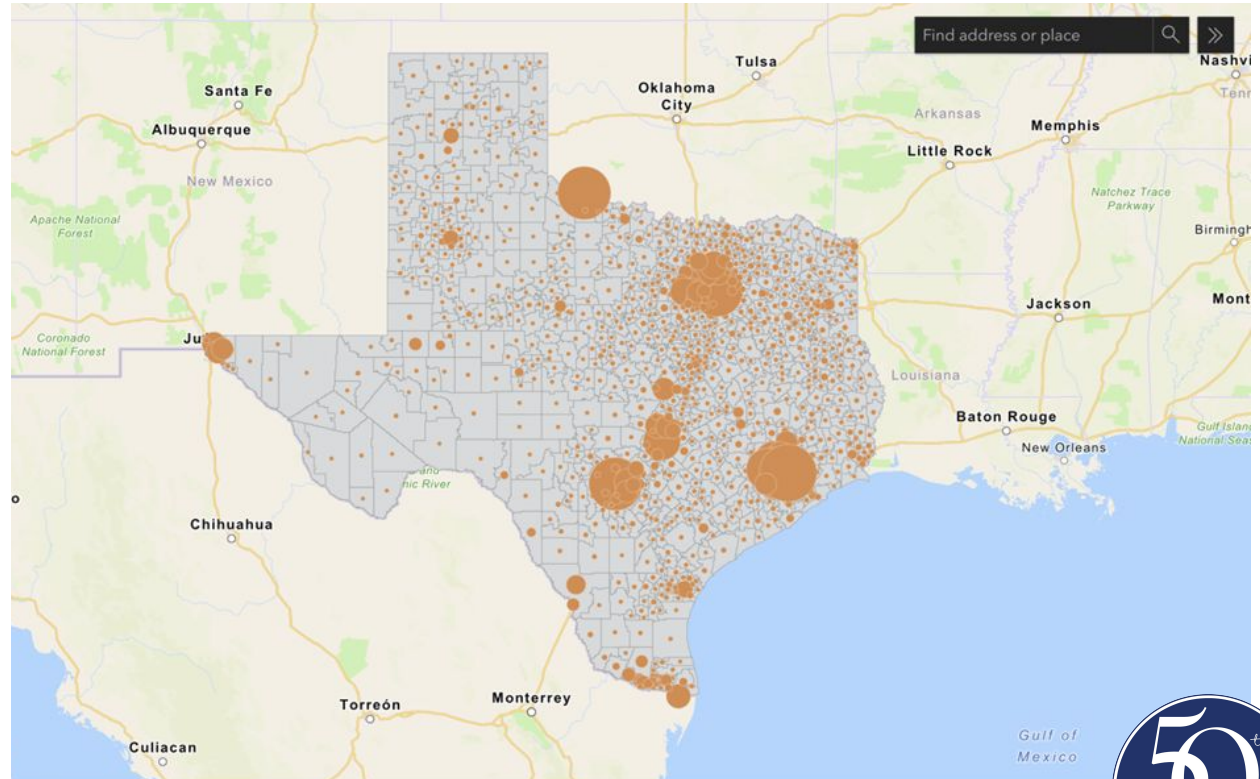
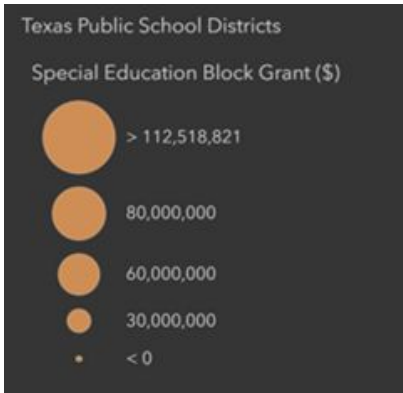


Go to the interactive map:

<https://idra.news/TxMapSchoolFundingBE>



Texas Special Education Funding



Go to the interactive map:

<https://idra.news/TxMapSchoolFundingSPED>



Current Challenges for Excellent and Equitable School Funding



The state school funding system should be based on actual costs to provide an equitable, excellent education to students, including students of color, students from families with limited incomes, and students who require additional programs, supports and services.

Yet, the state continues to underfund schools, support inequitable funding systems, and promote schemes that would divest from our public school system.



Current Challenges

State leaders seem determined to pass voucher programs that take public funds from public schools with no reporting, oversight, or public accountability.

- Senate Bill 8
- Senate Bill 176
- Senate Bill 2354
- Senate Bill 2483

5 reasons private school vouchers would hurt students

1 Private school vouchers drain money from public schools

Private school vouchers take scarce money from public schools – that serve 92% of Texas students – and give it to private school operators who are not accountable to taxpayers. Public schools stand to lose lose about \$10,000 per student in state and local funding. But the cost of running those schools remains. The lights have to stay on.

2 Funding private school vouchers means using taxpayer dollars to fund discrimination

Private schools are not required to serve all students, so they can deny admission, enrollment and educational services at their discretion. This includes students with disabilities, emergent bilingual students, students of different religions and diverse identities.

3 Voucher programs don't improve academic outcomes

Studies show that students who use vouchers to attend private school don't perform any better than their public school peers. On average, students attending private schools with vouchers did less well on tests relative to their similar peers in public schools.

The best way to strengthen public schools is to strengthen public schools!

4 Voucher programs subsidize affluent students already attending private schools

Most vouchers programs fall far short of covering the full cost of a private school education. The national average tuition for private school is more than \$12,000. This means that families are often left to cover additional tuition costs making the real beneficiaries of voucher programs families who can already afford to pay the difference between the voucher and the actual cost of tuition. Only wealthy families end up enjoying the subsidy of a private voucher.

5 Private schools lack state accountability for academic and financial performance

Private schools have almost complete autonomy for how they operate, including how they manage their finances and what they are required to disclose to parents and the public. Private schools are not required to administer the STAAR, to be rated under the state's A-F school accountability system, or to transparently account for their funds and spending.

It is the state's responsibility to provide excellent, well-funded public schools for all students.

Get policy news alerts: <https://idra.news/SubscribeMe>

www.idra.org @IDRAidra

facebook twitter instagram youtube

idra

Current Challenges

School funding formulae are not based on the real costs of educating Texas students and rely heavily on property taxes, continuing a long history of underfunding schools that serve students of color and students from communities with limited wealth and incomes.

The state must invest in the basic allotment to raise per pupil funding for all students and for special student weights. This increase should be adjusted for inflation.



Current Challenges

Texas is failing to invest in educators, contributing to teacher shortages that harm students.

The state must make meaningful investments in teacher recruitment, preparation and retention to address workforce shortages, especially in high-need fields, such as bilingual education, special education and STEM.



School districts must ensure transparency in spending decisions, including through robust family engagement programs that allow all families to participate in policy and practice decisions.



Time to Act:

How to be engaged on school funding issues today



Call to Action: Know What's Happening

★ Sign up for updates and follow organizations and panelists on social media!

- IDRA eNews and Advocacy Alerts, available in English and Spanish
- Trinity University - Center for Educational Leadership
- Edgewood ISD
- The National Coalition on School Diversity
- Every Texan
- The San Antonio Alliance
- MALDEF

★ Use IDRA's data resources, including interactive maps, to understand school funding in your community.



Call to Action: Continue to Organize

- ★ **Continue to build intergenerational coalitions focused on pursuing fair school funding**
 - IDRA Education CAFEs can help community-based groups push for change locally

- ★ **Follow and join coalitions!**
 - Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition (TLEEC)

- ★ **Let us know how we can support your local work**



Call to Action: Engage in Change

★ Engage with your state and local elected officials! Have your voice heard.

- Find your representatives and contact them
- Testify at hearings at the state capitol or in your local school district
- Support young people who are interested in being more involved in what is happening in their schools





IDRA

Celina Moreno, J.D., President & CEO
5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101
San Antonio, Texas 78228
210-444-1710 • contact@idra.org

www.idra.org

www.facebook.com/IDRAedu

Twitter: [@IDRAedu](https://twitter.com/IDRAedu)



Achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college