



A Historical Summary of Major Texas Education Reforms 1975 to 2004

1975 – House Bill 1126

Bilingual education is required in grades kindergarten through three, optional at grades four and five.

Equalization aid program for low wealth schools is created for districts with 125 percent of state average property wealth eligible.

State compensatory education program is created to provide supplemental funding based on the number of low-income pupils enrolled in Texas schools.

School districts are required to pay their local share of foundation program. The amount of the local share is based on state estimate of local property wealth. Local state tax rate is 30¢ per \$100 of value in 1975 and 35¢ per \$100 of value in 1976.

Study of school funding system is mandated with report to legislature in 1977.

1977 – Senate Bill 1

Local share calculation is revised.

Local “agricultural use” values are used to adjust state property wealth estimates of local districts’ tax property wealth.

Equalization aid funding are increased. Two tier equalization aid is created: poorest districts’ aid increases from \$70 to \$210 per pupil and the second poorest quartile is eligible for up to \$188 per pupil.

Teacher salaries are increased. The base salary is increased to \$9,400 in 1977-78 and \$9,490 in 1978-79. Steps 11-12-13 are added.

A new study of state funding system is mandated.

1979 – Senate Bill 350

Local share and related state aid is adjusted to reflect property tax exemptions provided in HB 1060.

State compensatory education funding is increased to \$44 per pupil.

State demonstration program is created for gifted and talented students.

Equalization aid is increased to \$275 per pupil in 1979-80 and to \$290 per pupil in 1980-81.

State aid adjustment is provided for fast growing districts.

State maintenance and operations allotment are increased from \$115 to \$128 in 1979-80 and \$139 in 1980-81.

State special education program requirements are rewritten to comply with federal laws.

Teacher minimum salaries are increased by 5.1 percent.

A state basic competencies testing program is created: Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS). Testing required in third, fifth and ninth grades.

1979 – HCR 90

A study is required of curriculum for all Texas public schools.

1981 – *U.S. vs. Texas*

U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas rules in *U.S. vs. Texas* Motion to Enforce: Requires Texas to implement bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) programs for all limited-English-proficient (LEP) pupils.

May 1981

Governor appoints Bilingual Education Task Force to draft state plan.

July 1981

School finance provisions are incorporated in the state appropriations bill:

- Maintenance and operations allotment is increased from \$139 to \$220 per pupil.
- Teacher salaries are increased by 7.5 percent pay in grades one through six, 8.5 percent pay in grades seven to nine, 8.5 percent pay in grades 10 to 14, and 6.5 percent in pay grades 15 to 18.
- Equalization is increased from \$290 to \$350 per pupil in 1981-82 and to \$360 per pupil in 1982-83.
- Compensatory education funding is increased from \$44 to \$50 per pupil.
- Vocational, special education and gifted and talented funding is increased.

1981 – SB 477

Legislature creates expended state bilingual education and ESL programs for LEP pupils in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. It mandates bilingual education in kindergarten through sixth grade and ESL at the secondary level.

1983 – House Bill 246

State uniform curriculum and essential elements are established for grades kindergarten through 12.

May 1984

Legislature fails to develop agreement on school finance legislation.

Select Committee on Public Education (SCOPE) is created.

June 1984

Constitutionality of Texas funding system is challenged.

June 1985

Select committee (SCOPE) submits report recommending major school reforms.

July 1984 – House Bill 72

Major education reforms include:

- increased equalization funding
- increased teacher salaries
- district performance reports
- career ladder for teachers
- planning period for teachers
- no pass – no play
- exit testing for diploma
- four year pre-school program
- dropout reduction programs
- teacher testing (TECAT)

October 1986

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) completes first statewide dropout study, revealing (for the first time) the magnitude of the problem.

May 1987

Litigation is filed challenging constitutionality of Texas school funding system.

May 1987

Legislature adopts HB 1010 requiring the counting and reporting of dropouts.

October 1988

Texas Supreme Court rules that the Texas school funding system violates the state constitution.

June 1990

Texas legislature revises funding system to attempt to address court mandate to equalize public school funding system.

January 1991

Texas Supreme Court rules that the Senate Bill 1 funding system is unconstitutional.

May 1991

Texas legislature adopts SB 351 creating a County Education District-based funding system.

January 1992

Texas Supreme Court rules SB 350 provisions are unconstitutional.

May 1993

Texas Legislature adopts Senate Bill 7 revising state funding system.

Wealthy districts are provided five options to reduce wealth.

District performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), attendance, dropouts and other criteria are used to create ratings for an accountability system.

Procedures for removal of students to alternative education centers outlined.

May 1995

Texas Supreme Court upholds constitutionality of SB 7.

Limited funding is provided to help equalize facilities funding.

State Board of Educator Certification is created.

May 1997

The Essential Elements are upgraded to reflect higher expectations for students. The new curriculum standards are the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Pre-kindergarten reading is emphasized.

Program be phased in over five years requires students who do not pass the TAAS to be automatically retained in grade.

Texas adopts HB 588 the "Ten Percent Plan" that provides automatic admission to state-funded institutions of higher education to the Texas students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their graduating class.

2003

Texas State Board of Education adopts new passing standards for the Texas Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) based exam. The board rejected its panel's recommended passing score levels due to concerns with projected high numbers of students who would not meet the new passing standards. It was also concerned about the related implications for school and school district accountability ratings. The board provided a two-year phase-in for the higher passing levels.

The State Board of Education allows use of 2002 test score data for accountability ratings, to ensure that school district ratings are not impacted by students' performance on the new test. However, the board did not delay provisions for automatic in-grade retention of third graders who do not meet the passing standard in reading.

Texas modifies dropout counting procedures to conform to standards of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Texas legislature debates school funding issues, but provides no additional state equalized funding. Instead, all districts (regardless of wealth) are provided \$200 per ADA (per student) – thus maintaining the same levels of inequities found in the Texas system.

2004

The Texas legislature convenes for a special session focusing on school finance. No consensus is reached, and no changes are made to the system.