



Association of Texas Professional Educators®

OPPOSE SB 8/CSSB 8

ATPE members oppose SB 8, whether it's the voucher bill approved by the Senate last month, which would drain funding from our public schools, or CSSB 8, which not only funds private school vouchers but also hands over even more power to Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath to completely redesign our testing and accountability system.

CSSB 8 does not eliminate standardized testing. It actually increases the number of tests by more than double. Along with the increase in tests, the bill similarly changes the law on school accountability ratings, tying those to even more standardized tests than under current law.

Dubbed a “parental rights bill” by its sponsors, SB 8/CSSB 8 ironically reduces parents’ and students’ rights in exchange for a voucher. The legislation requires private schools and other vendors accepting voucher money to notify parents that state and federal laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), do not apply to them. Students who would be entitled to certain rights and benefits in a public school’s special education program would lose rights upon moving to a private school.

The Legislature this session has failed to engage in the process of solving actual issues, such as providing teachers with a living wage and improving the working and learning environments in public schools.



Opposition to CSSB 8

May 15, 2023

ATPE opposes SB 8, whether it's the voucher bill approved by the Senate last month, which would drain funding from our public schools, or CSSB 8, which not only funds private school vouchers but also hands over even more power to Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath to completely redesign our testing and accountability system.

The simple truth is that vouchers are a binary issue. A legislator cannot be a public education supporter and a voucher supporter; the two are mutually exclusive. A vote for a "limited voucher" is every bit as repugnant as a universal voucher, and as the commission at the end of the newest mutation of SB 8 makes painfully clear, the only reason to pass a limited voucher is to start walking the path toward a universal one.

Just because diverting public funding from already under-resourced public schools to private schools is an inherently anti-public education action, that does not mean that public school supporters oppose private education. In fact, the Legislature is doing both public and private schools a grave disservice by pitting them against one another. Unfortunately, division and isolation seem to be the current political zeitgeist.

The Legislature this session has failed to engage in the process of solving actual issues, such as providing teachers with a living wage and improving the working and learning environments in public schools. Many other critical issues outside of public education continue to go ignored without an effort to meaningfully bring together stakeholders to address either Texans' or the Legislature's policy priorities.

Despite this, ATPE, along with our fellow public educator organizations, have continued to bring forward solutions. For example, we have brought forward language that would increase access to special education services, including through private placement, that was not a voucher. Our proposal—very much unlike a voucher—would ensure that students continued to receive both their federal due process rights and the full measure of funding to which they are entitled under the law. Our solution would have fostered partnership instead of division between public and private educators as well as parents, and it would have ensured that increased parental engagement didn't come at the cost of funding and the right to a free and appropriate quality education. However, good public policy for the state's 5.4 million students does not seem to be the goal of those who are pushing SB 8 or other vouchers. Sadly, their goals seem to be purely political.

However, ATPE and public educators in general continue to believe that a majority of legislators in the Texas House aim to do what is right by the state's 5.4 million public school students. It is for them that we offer up both the following specific reasons to oppose CSSB8/SB8, as well as messages collected over the weekend from educators across the state.

1. **CSSB 8 does not eliminate standardized testing. It actually *increases* the number of tests by more than double.** Along with the increase in tests, the bill similarly changes the law on school accountability ratings, tying those to even more standardized tests than under current law.
2. CSSB 8 would allow the commissioner of education to design new Texas Success Initiative Assessments (TSIA tests) to replace STAAR no later than the 2027-28 school year. The commissioner is an individual appointed by the governor and is not even required to have a background in education. **As commissioner, this single, unelected state official would have unprecedented authority to redesign our entire education system, starting with the implementation of new standardized tests and new accountability measures for public schools.**
3. **At the high school level alone, CSSB 8 provides for a net increase of one test compared to current state law for a total of six tests (only three of which are required by federal law).** Under the direction of the commissioner, current end-of-course (EOC) exams would be replaced by assessments for 11th grade students based on English language arts and mathematics content they studied in prior years. CSSB 8 would require Texas colleges and universities to use the new high school exams to determine entering students' placement into freshman courses. Students would also take pre-TSIA tests in the ninth grade. U.S. history and biology tests would remain in place.
4. **In elementary and middle schools, the education commissioner could require even more student testing—three times during the school year under an experimental “Through-Year Assessment” plan.** Compared to the current law, only the eighth-grade social studies test would go away. CSSB 8 would still require math testing every year in grades 3 through 8, reading tests every year in grades 3 through 8, and science testing in grades 5 and 8. In other words, students in elementary and middle schools could take up to 42 tests under CSSB 8, compared to 15 tests required by current state law.
5. **Altogether, CSSB 8 would increase the number of standardized tests students take from third grade through high school from 20 to 48!**
6. **CSSB 8 would negatively affect school district and campus accountability ratings, unsurprisingly making public schools appear worse while simultaneously funding private schools.** As noted above, even more tests would factor into a public school's accountability grade. The legislation also calls for the commissioner to “establish, modify, and increase” standards to continuously improve student performance. Starting immediately, College Career & Military Readiness (CCMR) cut scores would have to be increased every four years.
7. **Both SB 8 and CSSB 8 call for using state funds to give parents access to education savings accounts (vouchers) that would pay for their children's private or home school tuition.** The vouchers would give parents average state and local funding without regard to the student's individual weighted entitlement and without federal funding. Students with a disability would receive an additional \$1,500, potentially far less than what they are entitled to under federal law. The state comptroller and selected “education assistance” organizations would also take a cut of the appropriations (up to 8%) up front for administrative costs.
8. **Dubbed a “parental rights bill” by its sponsors, SB 8/CSSB 8 ironically *reduces* parents' and students' rights in exchange for a voucher.** The legislation requires private schools and other vendors accepting voucher money to notify parents that state and federal laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), do not apply to them. Students who would be entitled to certain rights

and benefits in a public school's special education program would lose rights upon moving to a private school.

9. Public schools will lose money if vouchers are allowed for private and home schools. Smaller public school districts will lose even more money under CSSB 8 than under SB 8. Unlike the Senate version of SB 8, the House's CSSB 8 eliminates temporary "hold harmless" funding for small public school districts to offset the inevitable financial losses they will incur as a result of the voucher legislation. The measure was included in the Senate version of the bill in an attempt to convince rural lawmakers to support vouchers, especially in areas of the state where private school options are scarce and vouchers less likely to be utilized. The "hold harmless" provision would give those public schools \$10,000 for each student who unenrolls from the school to instead take a voucher in the first five years of the program, after which time there would be no help for public schools that lose vital funding under this bill. **The House's CSSB 8 eliminates the "hold harmless" funding altogether.**

10. Voucher students would still have to take the state standardized tests, but their private schools would not have to administer the tests. That means **our public schools would be responsible for administering tests to voucher students they don't even teach or receive funding to oversee. This would likely create another unfunded mandate for public schools.**

11. Unlike the public schools, private schools accepting taxpayer-funded vouchers won't receive accountability grades tied to their students' performance on the tests, they won't face the risk of closure or a state takeover, and they won't even be required to ensure their students meet minimal education standards. In fact, there is an entire new section of the law under SB 8/CSSB 8 that would be devoted to protecting the private schools' "autonomy" and freedom from governmental regulation.

12. CSSB 8 creates a commission, with two-thirds of its members to be appointed by the governor and lieutenant governor, to develop and make recommendations for improvements to the education savings account program. Based on its political makeup, **the commission would undoubtedly make recommendations to expand ESAs next session.**

The following comments were collected over the weekend from educators across the state in response to CSSB 8:

Shari Barat

Richardson, TX

Retired middle school educator

Standardized testing is such a hot topic and pushing it through w/out public input only further maligns the public from legislators. I absolutely will never support a voucher system that takes even a nickel from public education. TX needs to support public education, not pillage the budget.

Until that time ANY accountability system is bogus; instead public education should be rating the legislature that is trying to privatize education.

Jennifer Pellham

Mansfield, TX

Teacher

I do not think it will benefit the students and teachers of this state.

Karen Michael

Waco, TX

Prek teacher. 21 years in public education, former Special Ed teacher

I do believe we need to omit STAAR testing and all that wasted money . Money can be used in more favorable manner. Voucher system will be the end of services for my precious Special Ed students and current ones. Privatization and vouchers are not the answer. Our students need support and that will be diminished. I'm their voice.

Paul Wynne

Fort Worth, TX

Retired

We do not need more testing. Nor do we need more mandates. We need to be working on getting kids back into the routine of meeting behavioral and academic expectations. This is accomplished by caring professional educators developing mentor relationships, meeting needs, and working with students to achieve success. This happens during instruction not assessment. Assessment, especially assessment for political grandstanding rather than education, is useless.

Jeri Ross

Wimberley, TX

Teacher

The claim that vouchers provide equity is a false narrative in that private education providers are not required to teach every student. Many people of color reject public education for private schools and boomerang back to public schools because their children are rejected by private entities. Private education will only avoid the sin of segregation if they are required to teach any student that comes before them. Private schools are not equipped with professionals trained in special education and behavior management, so they simply send those they cannot support back to public schools. Public schools should get the funding, not private schools, who are not doing the work. Our public school professionals can beat the private school non-professionals hands down. We know they only want our best students, not the students who really need help.

Shad Green

Georgetown, TX

Educator/Coach

Schools and teachers need more funding, not less.

Gayle Sampley

Atascocita, TX

Retired elementary behavior teacher

Vouchers in any form, and by any name are bad for Texas kids. VOUCHERS DO NOT GIVE PARENTS CHOICE; they give private schools power to choose their student body paid for with public money. ALL Texas children deserve a free and appropriate public education.

Teri Naya

Fort Worth, TX

Reading Interventionist

It pulls money away from public schools.

Daniel Miller

Amarillo, TX

Teacher

Public tax dollars should be used to support public schools—not private institutions that are not held to the same rigorous standards & laws. Further, any substantive changes to the STARR should go through rigorous public comment & debate because state testing requirements impact every student in Texas.

Jennifer Bowland

Round Rock, TX

Elementary Dyslexia Specialist

I have been an educator for 18 years. Vouchers is not what the education system needs in Texas. Politicians are making this about their own personal agendas and are not supporting the views of their constituents. There should always be public testimony and input especially from stakeholders who are in the trenches. This is a slap in the face to all professional educators in Texas. If you think you have a recruitment and retention problem now, who do you think will want to teach when they see we have no support from the legislators. The Texas constitution provides education to all students; a voucher program would not make things better or more equitable. It would just continue to widen the gap. Please vote Senate Bill 8 down because Texas educators are watching and are hoping you have the heart to do what's right for educators and students in Texas.

Ginger Franks

Woden, TX

retired teacher

Vouchers will do much harm to our public school system. The changes being discussed need to be reviewed and have input by the public.

Nancy Carlson

Stephenville, TX

Retired

Vouchers and charter schools do not offer any reasonable solution to school excellence. Public schools are the answer to provide quality education with certified teachers. Students with special education needs are best served in public schools and are routinely rejected by charter schools. Vouchers will not serve students with special learning needs. Fund public schools and they become and are quality schools. Fund certified teachers and they become and are quality educators.

Standardized testing in its current state is NOT Standardized testing. Standardized tests are the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), California Achievement Tests (CAT), Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) with reliability and validity Norris. The state Tests TEKS, STAARS, TAKA, etc., are NOT Standardized Tests. They are criterion based Tests and have NO comparability from year to year. The publishing companies are making tons of money from these Tests that do NOT serve our students, teachers, or education community.

Kristin Shelton

Austin, TX

PK Teacher

I oppose SB 8 because money that should be used for educating everyone will be taken and sent to schools that have no oversight or accountability measures. I am most worried that students in Special Education will lose their protections and rights under I.D.E.A. In my classroom, we have students speaking seven different languages, students whose parents are in the military and students whose

family incomes qualify them for free or reduced lunch. These students deserve the best chance for success. Moving money out will make it harder for me to support these youngest learners.

Susan Biggers-Horn

Bedford, TX

Facilitator (teach teachers)

It is not good for students due to increased testing. Using the vouchers for private education but not taking care of SPED and 504 kids is wrong. On top of that the private schools won't have the same accountability as the public schools, yet the public district would have to provide testing areas and proctors.

Vincent Brouillard

Georgetown, TX

Teacher

Notwithstanding that despicable manner in which the bill was submitted, the voucher aspect is untenable, changes to the accountability system and the testing situation. Public input should be required. Full stop.

Isabel Wood

San Antonio, TX

Current educator

As a Texas public education supporter, I oppose Senate Bill 8. There's something for every Texan to hate in Senate Bill 8, whether it's the:

- Voucher program that takes public funding out of public schools and taxpayer oversight;
- Hasty, unvetted changes to the state's accountability and standardized testing system; and/or
- The way House members are trying to push this bill throughout without public input.

I urge you to vote NO on the committee substitute to Senate Bill 8.

April Snelson

Canyon, TX

Middle school teacher

Vouchers should NOT be allowed in public schools because it affects ALL students and takes away funding for them. Also, any changes that are made to state testing must be thoroughly reviewed before any hast decisions are made. Vote NO to SB 8.

Amy Diehl

Bedford, TX

I'm a high school English teacher and a parent of two students in SE.

Vouchers will destroy public education by removing money and safeguards for IEP and 504 students. Standardized using needs to be minimal, noninvasive, and not tied to any methods of evaluation for students or teachers ; it should be used once annually for data gathering and growth only.

Barbara Haire

El Paso, TX

Educational Diagnostician

Taking away funds from public school to provide vouchers for private school is bad for students who are in public schools. We are now seeing the ramifications of Covid and lockdown on our 3 and 4 year olds now entering school. Taking away funding to provide vouchers for private schools will have a dramatic effect on the resources needed to support students in public schools.

Luis Alain Fabela

Brownsville, TX
Music Teacher

We need to allocate more resources to public schools not to deprive them of financial and political support.

Donna Bahlinger

San Antonio, TX
Retired Special Education Teacher

I am opposed to SB 8 due to the voucher provision. Public funds should not be used for private or home schools. Public schools educate all students, using public funds. Private schools are not mandated to educate all students. Many private schools do not accept all students, including students with special needs. Public funds should not be used for schools that are not mandated to accept and educate all students.

Holly Morgan

Dayton, TX
High School Registrar

1. I oppose vouchers. Public money should NOT be given to private institutions. 2. There has been no review of the overhaul of the testing system, AND you're adding more tests! 3. The changes proposed have not been reviewed AND you're trying to pass legislation without public hearings. 4. And again - TAXPAYER MONEY SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS.

We pay taxes for the betterment of our society; if we take that money from our public institutions that better our society, how is that in the public interest? An educated populace is of vital importance to our society, and by removing money from our public education systems, it's like we're saying that we don't care about the future of our society.

Debbie Lozano

Helotes, TX
Teacher

We need to fund public schools and not private schools.

Lola Myers

Teague, TX
Retired secondary teacher

I am opposed to vouchers in any form for TX public schools.

I am also opposed to these unvetted changes to the state's testing and accountability programs. We have seen too much of this sort of "hurry up" fix to issues. Forget the vouchers and resolve the testing/accountability problems with legitimate input from experienced educators.

David de la Garza

San Antonio, TX
Retired/Gifted&Talented Specialist

Any bill containing vouchers is a detriment to public education. I am opposed to any vouchers in the state of Texas.

ELIZABETH KALINEC

Spring, TX

Retired eighth grade math teacher

I oppose SB 8 because it contains a voucher. I also oppose the committee substitute's hasty, unvetted changes to the state's standardized testing and accountability system. These types of changes need thorough review and should not be pushed through without public input.

Kristie Hernandez

Dallas, TX

Teacher

Vouchers take money away from Public Schools. Private schools and other non-public schools are not held to same standards and accountability as public schools and should not receive public funds.

Colleen Frerichs

Austin, TX

Retired - Master Special Education Teacher

I OPPOSE SB 8 because of the Voucher allowance which takes taxpayer accountability out of the equation and will affect 5.4 million students and educators. Further, I also oppose the hasty changes to the state accountability and testing system that has not been vetted to benefit Texas students. This is being put out in an underhanded political fashion against the wishes of the majority constituency of Texas.

Cristela Rocha

Austin, TX

Middle School Teacher

Senate Bill 8 will flip the switch to where decisions will be made without input from those of us who are in the classroom. It will not help our students, but rather cause more damage with more testing. I have had students cry and their anxiety quickly increase because they have to take one more test. Protect our state so it can truly be for the students. Protect our state so that educators, parents and students have voice and not silenced by those that have not stepped into a classroom. Walk a day in our shoes.

Holly Holder

Amarillo, TX

Elementary Principal

Our students and our schools deserve BETTER! Using public funds to support private education will only further the gap that exists due to socio-economic status. Low income students won't be able to attend the private schools because private schools aren't located in their neighborhoods and their parents can't afford the gas to get them there. In addition, states where vouchers have been implemented have seen tuition in private schools skyrocket, making it impossible for low income students to be able to afford private schools, even with the \$8,000 voucher, which is significantly higher than the state pays per pupil to public schools at this time. Our tax dollars will go to help people who can already afford private schools for their children while taking valuable dollars away from public schools that are already under funded. If those dollars can be used to homeschool students, many families will take the funds and severely under educate their children. Of course, some parents do a great job homeschooling their children, but many do not. Our society depends on having educated citizens as adults, and I fear that we

will not be able to function with adults who got little to no schooling while their families increase their income each year with those funds.

The changes in the state accountability system feel like we are being thrown a bone to turn away from the vouchers. They are hasty and without valid data behind them. While I definitely feel that changes need to be made, I also feel that changes made without the proper information and data will not serve students well. Those changes need to include mandatory state testing for students who are attending private and charter schools as well as homeschools if they are to receive public funds.

If your goal is to destroy public education, this is where it will begin.

Angela Honaman-Elizalde

North Richland Hills, TX

1st grade teacher

Public money needs to go to public schools to support those students. Also we need to consider the input of teachers before making changes to standardized tests.

David Belcher

Wichita Falls, TX

Classroom teacher

As an educator in Texas public schools for 22 years I believe that SB 8's voucher legislation will take valuable resources away from Texas children, and it is a slap in the face to educators who are committed to providing the best educational experience to all Texas children. The included State assessment changes have not been thoroughly and properly researched. It is irresponsible to make such changes to the State assessments at this time. Please oppose SB 8 and please also oppose any legislation that includes school vouchers.

Katasha Varner

Fort Worth, TX

I oppose SB 8

SB 8 will harm public education in Texas.

Meghan Corder

Belton, TX

Teacher

Vouchers take money away from public schools and put it in the hands of people who are already well-off.

Desiree Strick

Magnolia, TX

Teacher

I oppose Senate Bill 8 for three reasons: the diversion of money to private schools, the increase in standardized tests, and the omission of a public hearing for SB 8. First, the public schools are already struggling monetarily. I teach English in a public junior high school. We can't teach certain books because they have not been replaced in years and fall apart in kid's hands. Similarly, we have had to use the same "consumable" textbooks for years, meaning the kids can't annotate. On another note, most of the children I teach are either in the special education program or have extensive accommodations. These children wouldn't be accepted into private institutions or struggle to find programs that fit their needs. These are reasons why funding can't be diverted from public schools. Also, standardized tests can't increase. Standardized test prep takes extensive time away from regular classwork. Students arrive

behind grade level, so the teacher can't teach the TEKS completely through novels and projects. In order to even have students score "approaches" on STAAR, the teacher has to greatly prioritize, which means the teacher's focus is getting kids accustomed to the specific STAAR question stems, and question types, including ECRS and SCRs. To illustrate, after STAAR, I had the time and flexibility to teach units on King Arthur, Greek Mythology and a novel. My kids already have been reading more in volume than they were before STAAR and exploring broader vocabulary and content. Furthermore, STAAR doesn't ensure kids are provided with needed academic intervention. If a student fails the STAAR, the student doesn't attend summer school or repeat the grade level. The student is enrolled in a "power" class and is still promoted to the next grade with two English class periods a day (one remediation and one regular). As a result, students are even more behind academically. Lastly, without a public hearing, lawmakers send the message that teachers' voices don't matter.

Robert Zamora

El Paso, TX

Middle School Math Teacher

Funding public education offers sustainability and more opportunities for improvement to current systems or directing money away from the many children in public education will require adjustments to lower what is presently in place and decrease the opportunities. Along with that, our students don't need more testing, especially at the sacrifice of instructional time, which has been greatly limited already.

Rachel Olivarri

San Antonio, TX

Teacher

No vouchers !

Luis Garcia

McAllen, TX

This bill is going to hurt millions of students and thousands of public teachers.

Many public schools are struggling now with this bill it is going to really cause many more problems.

Heather Chapman

Buda, TX

School counselor

Public schools are the heart of a community and are seriously lacking funds to do the important job at hand, well. Vouchers will only exasperate the challenges we already face.

Changing the state accountability system and testing with such haste is an unvetted move that will rest on the backs on CHILDREN. Student mental health is already at an all time low after the pandemic. These changes will further complicate schools which are resource hubs for a majority of families.

The public does not support this bill.

Teachers do not support this bill.

Allow it to die. Do not pass this bill!

Maegan Holycross

Kopperl, TX

Teacher

I oppose SB 8 because it contains a voucher. I also oppose the committee substitute's hasty, unvetted

changes to the state's standardized testing and accountability system. These types of changes need thorough review and should not be pushed through without public input.

Karen Tiffin

New Caney, TX

Instructional Technology

I am in steep opposition to school vouchers. Vouchers do not give true school choice to families. Students still must qualify to get into private schools. Also, most students who cannot afford private school, will still not be able to afford private school. Also, private schools are not held to the same standards as public schools such as state testing and accountability. Public schools are also required to accept all students, no matter their ability, IQ, behavior,, and family circumstances, and are expected to teach these students and then these same public schools are graded by the state on test scores, attendance, and dropout rates. It is wrong to take taxpayer money and give it to people who can already afford the luxury of private schools and not hold those schools to the same standards as public schools.

Patti Morton Gibbs

Nocona, TX

Retired - Special Education Counselor

Vouchers will redirect much needed funds from already struggling public school districts, which will, in turn, decrease the quality of public education provided to our students. My main concern is that special education students will be most negatively impacted. Private schools do not have to accept students and usually won't if they have behavioral or severe academic needs. This could be devastating to already struggling students and their teachers and paraprofessionals.

In addition, changes to the assessment and other accountability items should be thoroughly reviewed before implemented not just added to a bill at the last minute. That would not seem to be the most effective implementation process.

James Kohlwes

Crystal City, TX

Science Teacher

School Vouchers disrupt any semblance of equality that might exist towards the provision of a fundamental human right. Just because you do not like the nature of the education system today does not give you a rationale to make it worse. Everybody deserves a fair opportunity to excel on their own merits, not on whether their parents have more money or want to have more control over what their child learns and how.

Vickie Rabb-Wiggins

Forney, TX

Dyslexia instructor

I am against vouchers because it will take away from public education resources. I also oppose the committee substitute's hasty, unvetted changes to the state's standardized testing and accountability system. These types of changes need thorough review and should not be pushed through without public input.

Jennifer Westbrook

Nacogdoches, TX

Instructional Paraprofessional teaching reading and math intervention

The state standardized test system needs a complete overhaul, but the only way to do so in a way that

works and will give accurate information while also keeping the best interests of the students in mind is by getting educators and child development experts involved in the process. Anything other than this is just repackaging the same problem. Also, any bill involving education should be a stand alone bill without anything mixed in that is not specifically related to the bill itself- i.e. no vouchers.

Jim Kinnear

Big Spring, TX
Retired. Teacher

As a Texas public education supporter, I oppose Senate Bill 8. There's something for every Texan to hate in Senate Bill 8, whether it's the:

- Voucher program that takes public funding out of public schools and taxpayer oversight;
- Hasty, unvetted changes to the state's accountability and standardized testing system; and/or
- The way House members are trying to push this bill throughout without public input.

I urge you to vote NO on the committee substitute to Senate Bill 8.

Shannon Hix

McKinney, TX
Instructional Coach

Vouchers will take money away from public schools and requiring more standardized testing will not fix the problems in education. We need good quality teachers, that is going to require that you pay better and make conditions better to attract and keep good teachers. We could not find one decent candidate to fill 3 positions on my campus. One quit, one we asked to leave, and the third is transferring to another campus. 3 classes of students suffered through this school year and I am heartbroken for them. Taking money away from public schools will doom the teachers and kids that attend there.

Arlisa Hrcir

Franklin, TX
Tech Apps Teacher

I believe this bill will remove taxpayer oversight from public dollars and affect 5.4 million public school students, their parents and guardians, and Texas educators, doing a great disservice to Texans and Texas educators. I also believe the testing portion is being rushed and that is never good for our students.

John Milner

Bandera, TX
Retired. 31 years in Texas public education. 16 years as teacher/coach. 15 years as high school counselor.

I oppose SB 8 because anything with a voucher as part of it will be detrimental to public schools, rural districts in particular. My life's work is in public schools mostly in rural area. Any senator or representative that votes in favor of any bill with a voucher attached to it will lose my vote in the future.

Abigail Baiza

San Antonio, TX

I am a 2nd and 3rd grade social studies teacher.

Voucher program that takes public funding out of public schools and taxpayer oversight; Hasty, unvetted

changes to the state's accountability and standardized testing system; and the House members are trying to push this bill throughout without public input.

Joelle Garcia

Plano, TX

Teacher

SB 8 does not benefit all students in Texas and will remove money from an already struggling public school system. SB 8 is a feeble attempt to create a financial segregation. When parents and families already have school choice, our Governor and other supporters of SB 8 has misrepresented the bill to voters and has not allowed transparency of what the bill DOES NOT provide.

Stephanie McCugh

Bowie, TX

4-6 grade social studies teacher

I work in a rural, title 1 school district that serves many low socioeconomic families. Taking money from my district to serve a voucher program would greatly impact my ability to teach my students. I worry that my role would be eliminated with reduced funding and with my current position, I am able to go in depth about our country's creation and values we hold dear. I can take time to teach about our founding fathers and what they stood for. I worry that by reducing money to our districts like mine, students will miss out on key lessons and get a quick covering of important facts.

Perry Daniell

Fort Worth, TX

Teacher

Vouchers in any form as well as standardized testing are both ways to defund free, equal, public education! Every child deserves the right to an education no matter Socio-Economic status. Standardized testing doesn't work and only benefits the company producing the test and those getting kickbacks.

Charles Beall

Taylor, TX

High school math teacher

The committee substitute for SB 8 contains a comprehensive overhaul of the state's accountability/standardized testing system—the sort of changes that normally result from interim studies and multi-year commission reviews. The changes are hasty and far-reaching, and the promise of changes to standardized testing is being used as a "spoonful of sugar" to make the "medicine" of a voucher go down. The committee's initial plan to vote on this bill without a public hearing—which was stopped by a House vote Wednesday, May 10—and its subsequent plan not to hear public testimony do a disservice to Texans. The changes in this bill will remove taxpayer oversight from public dollars and affect 5.4 million public school students, their parents and guardians, and Texas educators. It's safe to say the testing changes in this bill would have an impact on at least a third of the state's population. So why the rush?

Margie Turner

San Antonio, TX

Current teacher

Stop trying to make voucher programs part of the republican agenda! We don't want it! Defunding public education is a disgrace!

Kristin Gartman

Houston, TX

Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist

I work with students who have a visual impairment. My students require additional services to provide them with the ability to access information in their academic environment as well as training to travel independently in both the school and community. These additional services require specially trained individuals which must be hired to provide the appropriate services. Charter and private schools would be required to hire these specialized individuals on a contract basis in order to be in compliance with IDEA. That means they would have to spend more money to accommodate these students in their programs. Since charter and private schools do not have to enroll every student that wants to attend, they have the ability to exclude students who would require more individualized needs. By granting vouchers to allow parents to move their children to charter and/or private schools, you would be defunding the public school system and all the children that remain in the public school system will be denied opportunities due to budget constraints. If you really want to make our education system better, then fund it appropriately so that all children have the same opportunity, not just the ones that charter or private schools select to enroll.

Becky Shuffield

Midlothian, TX

Public School library Media Specialist

Parents already have choice. My husband & I chose a private Christian school for our kindergarten daughter and paid for it ourselves. I didn't want government help in the form of a voucher to help pay for it. It was our sacrificial choice.

Stephanie Laplante

Big Spring, TX

Classroom Teacher - High School Chemistry

Post pandemic teaching is driving teachers out of the classroom. I stay because these kids need people who care and can show them an appropriate example of how to handle stressful situations. Physical and mental health issues are now plaguing our teachers. Students are killing themselves. If we add more stressful accountability measures to schools, we are going to stress an already fragile system. Our students deserve better than a broken system. Most elementary students already have recess and free play time removed. There is a curriculum for three year olds. More has to be done, but not by forcing developmentally inappropriate actions against students. Vote No to Senate Bill 8.

Lisa Vanecek

Comanche, TX

8th Grade Math teacher

I oppose SB 8 for many reasons. Vouchers will not solve the problems with public schools. In fact, they will only become worse with a voucher system. Those parents who can already afford to send their students to private school already do if a viable private school option is in their area. The small amount of money allotted will not change who can go. But taking that money away from public schools will result in teachers who are not qualified, fewer teachers, and less resources for students.

State mandated testing is already an issue. Please don't make it a larger issue by changing things yet again with no research to back up those changes. Teachers and parents need to have an input on any changes to state testing.

Robin Zorkic

Houston, TX

Teacher

Not good for kids, teachers or Voting Texans. The problem is the breakdown in families, culture and values not the public education system. Teachers can't teach if the students and families are not held accountable for behavior.

Sharon Stripland

Paris, TX

Teacher

Vouchers are not the answer for Texas schools. It will not provide equity to all areas of the state, and will take needed funding away from public schools. Parents already have a choice in where their children go to school! And the majority of private schools don't have the capacity to increase their enrollment by a substantial amount. This basically will only benefit those families who already send their children to private schools, who are financially capable of paying tuition, not the low income families that are most likely to have students in low performing schools. Private schools typically don't want the kind of students that this bill is supposed to benefit, that's why wealthy parents send their kids to these schools so they don't have to mingle with a diverse population. Online options for education aren't feasible either with the requirement to have devices and wifi that are sufficient for the demand. We learned through the covid years that online learning doesn't produce high achievement, especially in younger students!

Senate Bill 8 is just BAD FOR TEXAS!

Shana Shupick

Weatherford, TX

5th grade teacher of 26 years!

Vouchers are NOT the answer we need. My taxes need to stay right here in these public schools where I live. If I want my children to go to a different school, then I will move to that school district. I'm pretty sure if we work on making public schools better, vouchers shouldn't even be a thought. Testing needs to be overhauled. I've seen TASP, TAAS, TAKS, and now STAAR - all have had issues. We've hit an all-time high disaster with this new format. Kids are expected to stare at a screen for hours, and then sit still and quiet for even longer once they're finished!

Eric Frontz

El Paso, TX

Asst. Director of Athletics

Not good for anyone students, administrators or teachers.

Hana Kaudelka

Palestine, TX

Second grade teacher

I am 23 years old and this is my second year teaching. I teach in a rural district and I am struggling paycheck to paycheck, and with the student loan pause about to be over I am very concerned about my finances. I feel as a college educated, licensed professional, that I should not be facing these problems. However, there's push for more paid certifications and unpaid professional development. We have expectations like we make 6 figures, but we have a pay that is insulting. It is so disheartening that there is no way I will ever make 'good' money as a teacher (as a college educated person, at that). Only two years in, I've been searching for other options and I know I will not remain a teacher my entire career

unless something changes. Talking to my colleagues, about 90% teachers in my school are looking for another option. That seems like an exaggeration, but it is not. If this bill passes, I can see our education system to continue to hemorrhage teachers at an even faster rate. Myself included. You are losing the most important profession by not listening to those who are actually in the frontlines. We need change now, or you will have no one left to run this sinking ship.

Deborah Walton

Midland, TX

Teacher

This bill is not best for all students. It will further divide the academic success of students and widen the gap.

Cindy Chapman

Levelland, TX

High School Teacher

Vouchers and unreviewed changes to accountability. I am all for changes to our current system, but these changes need to be reviewed by teachers who are also allowed some input.

Allison Harrell

Dallas, TX

Middle school Special Education teacher

I oppose vouchers. I oppose increasing standardized testing and changes to the accountability system without the input from educators.

Jason Mauss

Houston, TX

Teacher

As a Texas public education supporter, I oppose Senate Bill 8. There's something for every Texan to hate in Senate Bill 8, whether it's the:

- Voucher program that takes public funding out of public schools and taxpayer oversight;
- Hasty, unvetted changes to the state's accountability and standardized testing system; and/or
- The way House members are trying to push this bill throughout without public input.

Keith Jeffcoat

Boerne, TX

Teacher and parent

This Bill has intended harm to the education system in the form of vouchers that will steal funding from students in public education and pay for private businesses with public money. These businesses will not have any of the accountability that public school have.

Cassandra McDonald

Quinlan, TX

Special education teacher

Vouchers will not help education by putting tax dollars into mostly unregulated private schools.

Nina Phelan

Cedar Park, TX

Current Teacher

Vouchers would be a death knell to public education. We need more support and more funding right now, not less. Also, allow us to get our feet under us with brand. new accountability system before changing it yet again. It's almost impossible to hit a moving target.

Richard Yoder

San Antonio, TX

I am a middle school English teacher.

Voucher programs allow for the use of public school tax dollars collected for the "common good" to be used for private education without the taxpayer's permission regardless if you are acting as our elected representatives. Additionally, the amounts being granted through the voucher program are much higher than what the average taxpayer pays unless they have a home worth \$8 million dollars. If you must have your vouchers, then give the taxpayers the right to select yearly where their school taxes are directed. If they choose public education, it goes there. If they choose vouchers, it goes there. If the taxpayer wants to do split funding, it can be done. From those monies collected, the state could then send out voucher funding based on the pool of money available. This misuse of our school tax dollars through school vouchers for private education should not be left solely to our elected officials. It's simply not right.

Additionally, many people who pay no school taxes due to not owning property or having a non-permanent mobile home on land will benefit from this program. If your goal is to truly not hurt public education through this plan, then all real property, whether it has a permanent home or not, must be taxed for school funding purposes. Members of this partisan committee should not be given control of the taxpayers' voice when it comes to the distribution of school tax dollars. If you want people to have school choice, then you must give them funding selection voice.

Thank you.

Jennifer Cain

Cedar Park, TX

Secondary ELAR Curriculum Coordinator

As a public school educator as well as a parent of two children in the public education system, I oppose any bill that supports vouchers. I urge you to vote no to any kind of voucher program and to keep funding in public schools.

Although I would appreciate less emphasis on standardized testing and accountability, I do not agree with the methods being taken. Any shifts to assessment measures should be based on recommendations from educators and based on research studies.

Edwina Ybarra

McCamey, TX

Teacher

SB8 takes AWAY funding from our/my students and provides PRIVATE schools taxpayers money that I helped to accumulate. I am held accountable for testing tied in to my reviews, but the private school do not. You have ultimately given the private schools a raise and once again we are left out in the cold. Raises for teachers and other staff cannot supposedly not be funded because of the expense. Whereas, there is NO time frame for the idiotic vouchers EXPENSIVE cost over the future years, more costly than our raises. You will take money from the poor and give to the rich. I did not vote to give more money to them. Lastly, walk in the shoes of teachers across the state in the rural, poor, and larger school districts, etc. That educate students politicians will never see or meet. But

Governor and It gov want vouchers for the rich? Campaign in those type of schools, and let the people know what you think, without private schools in the vicinity.

Yekaterina Ivanov

League City, TX

Elementary School Teacher

While I agree that we definitely need some big changes to the state testing accountability system, I do not think that this should be used as a way to get vouchers passed. It does not seem right to push this through without the input of the public and of the educators who this will affect in a huge way.

Vouchers still are harmful for education and if the senate knows how much state testing is a problem, then there should be a separate bill regarding that (put together with time and input from the public as well as educators and research). It is disturbing that the legislature knows that testing is an issue but is using it to bribe people into supporting vouchers by connecting them to this bill instead of addressing it separately; it implies that they do not really care about the harms of testing or the changes needed there, they just care about getting vouchers through at all costs.

Sarah Gregory

Round Rock, TX

Teacher and parent

We need to invest in public education for our children and our shared future. I do not support vouchers, nor do I approve of the rushed process that does not include the voices of educators and parents. Our children deserve greater investment in their learning and their futures.

Brandon Dieterich

Mart, TX

HS Principal

Vouchers

Stephanie Turano

Plano, TX

Teacher

I am absolutely against using public funds for private education choices. That will be a death sentence for an already fragile public school system.

Jenny Brown

Bedford, TX

Elementary special education resource teacher

Students DO NOT need more testing or stress. Students need the opportunity to learn, grow, and develop socially and emotionally. Students are not taught these social and emotional skills in most homes due to technology, busy schedules, and lack of parent involvement. It falls on the schools. With more testing, this further distracts from building relationships between peers and teachers. In a society that seems to be falling apart, with school shootings and mass shootings in the market place, what is really the most important thing? That we can say we test our students non stop and we place an unforeseen amount of stress on teachers, staff, and students? OR, that as a state, we start caring for the individual student. We truly start looking at the whole student and celebrate their personal growth and accomplishments. Not every student can pass a test, especially my special education students. That does not mean they have less value as a person. We should be celebrating growth from where we started at the beginning of the year to where we are at the end of the year, NOT what a one day test can tell us.

PLEASE VOTE AGAINST HB8. It is not good for the students in Texas. It is not good for the teachers in Texas. It will not support the good of our great state.

Kathryn Summers

Tyler, TX

Teacher

This takes money out of public schools, which is already underfunded as is. The state expected teachers to do way too much for little money and funding already, if this bill passes won't solve the problem. If anything it will make it worse for public schools especially since the kids using the vouchers will still have to take the STAAR, but not through the private school they are going to. It would fall on the public schools shoulders, which isn't fair to the schools or teachers. The students who they didn't teach would count towards the school accountability rating which isn't right.

Johnathan Siefert

Pinehurst, TX

Master Teacher (TIA)

1) Vouchers will not solve the problems we have in public education. Private schools are not held to the same content standards or state testing. These other options to public school also have the authority to say no to enrolling specific groups of students at most risk. Taking money away is not the answer. We need to invest in public education, strengthen the support for teachers, and increase teacher pay to attract the best.

2) While I think the current state testing is laughable, I understand the desire to make changes. There are just too many questions around the changes, why is it so rushed? What not get input from teacher? Why can't we have tests that do not require a 38% to be considered passing? Showing student growth is the most important and current testing and accountability do not accurately measure this. And with out teacher input and public hearing, there is little trust that the new changes will make any improvement.

3) There is 30 billion in excess budget that can be used to help support, fund, and improve public education. Public education will always be the only option for some and needs to be supported so it is the first choice of all Texans.

Melanie Tanner

Hurst, TX

Retired Middle School Counselor 6,7,8

Senate Bill 8 does not seem to support public education in Texas. Having been retired for less than 2 years, it seems the voice of the public educator is no longer being heard. Free public education has provided Texas with the doctors, beauticians, veterinarians, small business owners, teachers, accountants, welders, and politicians etc that help to make our state strong and powerful. How many legislators have a public education, not a private education. Public education is a right for all and needs to be fortified with all resources necessary to give all an equitable education. Standardized testing and accountability does need some overhaul yet these changes need to be well researched and carefully vetted by educators. Careful consideration of how this needs to look takes time and input. Covid has put children behind in their education as expected however this in no way is a reflection of the dedication of public school educators. Gains are being made in large amounts. The gap from so many months of lost education is becoming smaller each day. Please recognize the wonderful work of your Texas educators in this free educational setting that helps develop our fine citizens.

Sarah Wolfe

Forney, TX

Special Education Teacher

It is not what is best for education.

Robyn Little

Wichita Falls, TX

Teacher

Senate Bill 8 has numerous flaws. The primary one is the violation of the Texas Constitution. However, I can also share my personal experience as a teacher with over 20 years experience.

I'm the product of public education. I graduated college in only 3 years, and I've since earned my Master's degree. For all but one year of my career, I've taught in public schools. In 2006, I had to take a job in a private school because of the timing of a move. My fellow private teachers did not have to be certified or have a degree in the subject area they taught. For example, our chemistry/biology teacher had a degree in criminal justice. I was hired over the phone, without an interview, because I had my degree and certification, and the principal was ecstatic about my qualifications. I had a student who had a learning disability and dyslexia. When I asked the counselor where to find her accommodations, she told me, "We don't do that here." As a part of SB8, students with disabilities are part of the focus, but I'm betting most parents won't realize that their child might not get the same services as they did in public education.

In addition, we regularly "kicked out" students who didn't conform. The school didn't have to fulfill any duty to educate "every child." In addition, the books were outdated, even though students were required to pay to "rent" the school's books each semester.

The private school also provided nice scholarships to low income families who couldn't afford the tuition.

Public schools are not failing Texas students! This has become the narrative that some politicians want the public to believe so that they can push their own agendas. Teachers and administrators across the state work diligently to provide EVERY student with an equal education indiscriminately.

Diana Wood

College Station, TX

CTE Teacher

Vouchers gut rural/low income schools. Tax money should stay in the community where it is generated. If parents choose private schools, it is their choice. Our tax dollars should not be supporting private school and students/families who are abandoning their communities.

Melinda Hernandez Zarate

Brownsville, TX

High school teacher

I oppose vouchers for charter and private schools and unvetted changes to testing.

Franklin Gibson

New Caney, TX

Teacher

Because I do not like it

Susana Surber

Rowlett, TX

Teacher

Why do politicians keep making changes to education without having any experience as educators? Public has the right to weigh in on the decisions that will affect us. Stop trying to give public dollars away to businesses (charter and private schools).

Matthew Stepan

McKinney, TX

Middle School Teacher

As a public school teacher I see the benefits of a high quality public education everyday. All students deserve the opportunity to learn and grow in great schools with rigorous core academics, excellent enrichment courses, and extracurricular activities providing opportunities for young Texans to become leaders, innovators, and contributors in their community. For most Texans those great schools are their neighborhood public schools. Voucher programs threaten the effectiveness of these schools by posing the risk of slashed funding, loss of prestige in the public eye, and diminished enrollment. Inevitably these vouchers will empower only some, but not all, qualified young Texans to find a fit with private schools...but the many left behind due to financial, transportation, academic, or other reasons will have an objectively worse education with fewer choices, higher teacher to student ratios, and less resources. Our kids deserve better. Please don't leave any of my students behind. Vote NO on Senate 8 and any other bills proposing ESAs or vouchers. Remember, y'all means all, save our public schools and invest in the future of every Texan!

Catherine Solis

San Antonio, TX

Education student and parent of schoolchildren

This bill has changes to it that the public has not been able to comment on it changes from one single once a year flood testing group to testing throughout the air, causing testing stress, mental anguish, and anxiety for children that are already struggling post pandemic

Emily Spenk

Fort Worth, TX

Intervention Specialist

As much as I think we can improve how we assess students, forcing this bill through is NOT the way to do it. Public funds should be used for public schools. I adamantly oppose vouchers for private school attendance. Districts struggle with recapture alone. We should not be taking even more money from tax payers to go to private schools that don't have to the same accountability that public schools do.

Carrie Cooper

Austin, TX

Teacher

I am opposed to Vouchers, and I am opposed to any changes to standardized testing that has not been thoroughly vetted.

Megan Bartlett

Conroe, TX

2nd grade Educator

This bill does a disservice to Texans. This bill is far reaching and moving at much too quick of a pace.

Stephanie Bayer

McKinney, TX

Teacher

I oppose Senate Bill 8 because it contains a voucher program. Vouchers should not be allowed, as they will bleed funding and resources from public schools.

Also, SB 8 contains an overhaul of the state's accountability and assessment system, which is hasty. Although it needs to be overhauled if not eliminated entirely, it should not be done in such a hasty and one-sided manner or process.

Lastly, that brings me to the final opposition to this bill which is the way that the Texas legislature is attempting to mouse it through without input from the public.

Jennifer Moore

Lantana, TX

24 year middle school English and Reading teacher

Public school dollars and taxpayers' money does not belong with vouchers and in private or charter schools. In addition, the overhaul to the testing system that is being proposed here is ridiculous. This is not an improvement from the current testing scenario at all. This is way worse. Furthermore, the fact that the committee chairman is trying to rush this bill through without public testimony (or only "invited" testimony on Monday) and in the middle of the night on Wednesday in a hush hush manner should send up red flags to everyone involved! Shame on anyone who would vote for something in education in this manner!

Brenda Baker

Cedar Creek, TX

Special Education Teacher - public school

I oppose Senate Bill 8. I am also a tax payer and in my 30th year as an educator in Texas. I love what I do, but it has been a struggle all 30 years because of low wages. Almost every teacher has to have some sort of additional income to make ends meet. I feel that public education is to be funded by the public through taxes. I don't feel that my tax dollars should go to someone who chooses private education for their child and that's their choice. But my tax dollars should not go towards funding someone's choice of private education.

Clinton Glaesmann

Waco, TX

Principal

This will undermine our ability to serve all students and will erode the foundation of public education.

Aaron Bodey

Robinson, TX

High School Teacher

This bill attempts to undermine the education system rather than funding it appropriately and passing legislation that works to fix the problems caused by underfunding and overzealous state testing. The proposed voucher system and increased testing are meant to fix the wokeness of our education system, but I'll only perpetuate the issues that are truly to blame. Firstly, it will spread the 43rd lowest education budget over more schools and take funding from taxpayer funded institutions and move it to solely privately funded ones. Secondly, there cannot be the competitive market desired if all competitors are not competing by the same rules. A private school may claim superiority, but these claims are not

supported by comparable metrics. Consider high stakes STAAR testing. Our current system is predicated on the idea that 20 STAAR tests from 3rd-11th grades, in addition to regular teacher assessments, district benchmarks, diagnostic assessments, and three college entrance exams (TSI, ACT, and SAT) are beneficial for student achievement and effective at measuring school effectiveness. Regular testing and growth-focused diagnostic assessments (e.g., NWEA's MAP) are vital to an effective, data-driven education system, but the testing load placed on the youngest members of society is unnecessary and borderline unbearable. More of the same is not the answer. Move to an assessment such as MAP and require all K-12 institutions requesting access to taxpayer funding to administer this single measure, ensuring that all schools are running the same race. If the committee wants Texas to lead in education, then it must start by examining the real problems faced by those in the trenches, not those propagated by politicians, talking heads, and lobbyists, and reject this bill in all of its forms. As a parent, I want what's best for my three children, and as an educator for over a decade, I want what's best for my students; this bill is not it.

Lena Angel

Katy, TX

Teacher

I do not support funds being diverted from public schools to charters. My children and the children of Texas deserve a quality education free from religious zealots and extremists trying to indoctrinate them and destroy the public education system. You know this bill is wrong which is why you're trying to avoid public testimony.

Barbara Spears

Katy, TX

Bus driver

It's the right thing to do

Shelley Fielder

DeSoto, TX

Teacher

School vouchers take money away from public education.

Bryan Bell

Red Oak, TX

Current Middle School Teacher

Vouchers is not what's best for all kids in Texas. For years public education has been extremely underfunded, and now we are being told we are failing, because the bar keeps moving up. It's embarrassing that our state leaders want to take away funding and use tax dollars to fund private schools. Not at all acceptable.

Stefanie Villegas

Anson, TX

8th Grade Math Teacher

Senate Bill 8 does not support public schools and ties the hands of public educators in regards to curriculum and instruction.

Judy Fisher

North Richland Hills, TX

Retired Sp Ed teacher

The majority of the students were low income students. If you pull public school funds, those students won't get the extra support in an immersive environment that will help them be more successful as adults. Since I taught in a smaller (90,000 population) town I saw many of the students in the community in different stages of their lives. They were not as isolated as students in specialized schools. Public schools are struggling now to provide adequate education opportunities. Less money will not help Texas schools.

Brian Alford

College Station, TX

Teacher

Once vouchers enter the system, I will leave education. They are horrible for education. Invest in public school!

James Davis

Houston, TX

Teacher

This bill does not support the purpose and people involved in public education.

Cori Gilbert

Corpus Christi, TX

Teacher

Schools in Texas need improvement to help each and every child reach their full potential, but revamping the accountability system to add even more testing is not the focus that is needed for our current children/future leaders. Our children are already assessed more than is necessary which reduces the meaningful learning time and leads many district and/or schools to focus mainly on the testing. All children should have adequate time for learning which includes problem solving and critical thinking skills. Rigorous testing inhibits the curiosity of children and blocks the natural learning process. Private schools are viewed as providing an enhanced learning environment and curriculum so looking into why they are successful and working to create a model of their methods would be the best place to start. Yes, all students, teachers, schools, and districts need to be held accountable to ensure the children are receiving the best possible education, but standardized high-stakes testing is not the answer. All stakeholders should work together to set goals, create a learning plan that is ideal for the child, and work together to help the child meet and exceed the goals for their education. It is time to really take a stand for our children and their future. No more standardized tests! Take time to visit schools, talk to children, and ask for feedback from teachers that spend seven hours a day helping children with their education.

Heather Hull

Kingwood, TX

Current Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments

I oppose tax dollars being spent to fund schools that are outside of government oversight. I feel that the integrity of the public school system will be diminished if this bill passes!

William Tippet

Roanoke, TX

Teacher/coach

Vouchers will impact the wealthy more than the average student..

Jeffrey Thomason

Quinlan, TX

Teacher/Athletic Director

It takes money away from public education.

Amy Kastner

Austin, TX

teacher

This will drain critical funding from our schools and only benefit more affluent students. It will effectively destroy equitable opportunities for children in our state and drive more teachers out of the profession.

Alan Hanna

Lubbock, TX

Band Director in Stanton ISD

I oppose any legislation that takes funding away from public schools. I believe it is destroy the ability for lower social economic students and rural areas to have strong and productive schools. I also oppose all mandated standardized testing because I believe it does not help educators achieve true learning with their students. Districts are being forced by the TEA to teach to these test which disrupts the continuity of teaching and stops meaningful curriculum being offered students.

Scott Klinge

Kerrville, TX

Teacher

It is not good for students, schools, teachers, parents or guardians. It is not in the public's best interest. It hasn't been discussed AT ALL. STOP this madness!

Christopher Langford

Winona, TX

High school special Ed teacher and coach

Why would we send my tax dollars to a private school without it being held to the same standard as public schools are? Whether it be with accountability or financial integrity.

Jennifer Stoffle

Fort Worth, TX

Teacher

I oppose SB eight because the best way to help public education is to add more funding to public schools. Politicians who pass SB8 are stealing funding to help the wealthy educate their children with vouchers. Passing SB8 is stealing from the rest of middle and lower income Texans and their children. Vouchers are only destroying Texas's ability to provide quality public education. Any politician, trying to help privatize education is only trying to help destroy public education. Hence vouchers are in no way helpful to the educational system except to deny all children in Texas a quality education. Once vouchers drain public education funding, and public education is gone, minority families, and lower income families will not be able to educate their children. Do not pass SB8 and please add substantial raises for educators and auxiliary staff to the bill. As a 25 year classroom teacher, I beg you to do what is right.

Kerini Burns

Leander, TX

Librarian

It would take much needed funding away from public schools.

Michelle Brown

Willis, TX

Teacher

Voucher program that takes public funding out of public schools and taxpayer oversight; Hasty, unvetted changes to the state's accountability and standardized testing system; and/or The way House members are trying to push this bill throughout without public input.

Anita Marquez-Hernandez

Weslaco, TX

Teacher

Instead of offering vouchers because some teachers are teaching things they shouldn't, you should write legislation to prohibit these topics from the classroom. Many private school teachers aren't certified and many private schools teach very religious lessons. How would that be an improvement from "woke" lessons. I don't, nor do I know, anyone who teaches CRT or anything similar to those off topics. Perhaps if the children will be going to private schools, then those teachers must meet the same requirements as us. They should be state certified and up to date, teach the TEKS, participate in Reading Academies, and be evaluated various times per year according to TTESS or similar. The scales must be even if they're going to be compared to public school teachers.

Matthew McCullough

Red Oak, TX

7th grade science teacher

Unvetted? What happened to transparency? Let educators who are actually on the front lines have a say!

And then let's not forget that public vouchers go against public education!

Meagan White

District administration

It will create economic segregation and be detrimental to the progress of public education.

Katrina Comp

Instructional math coach

I work in a title 1 school and I feel vouchers will cripple public education. I have worked as a math teacher for 28 years.

Matthew Anderson

Dallas, TX

Teacher

I oppose SB 8 because I do not believe vouchers are in the best interest of students and communities. A healthy, functioning public school system is essential to the wellbeing of people all over Texas, and vouchers undermine this. I also oppose changes to our standardized testing and accountability systems until further input is sought out.

Shirley Rhodes

Houston, TX

Teacher

Unfair, hasty, and biased

Teresa Wisdom

Garland, TX

Special Education-paraprofessional

Money taken from public schools without the citizens of Texas knowledge. Is unconstitutional we the tax payers should have been made aware of this. Why is it that when money is needed to be allocated for other needs of state. The first thing to be cut is always Education. The leaders of Texas have proven over and over. That the students of Texas are of no importance to you. Why don't you take money from Greg Abbotts pay? He's doing a lousy job and a disservice to the students of Texas. You should all be ashamed of yourselves. Put the students first for a change. I'm a tax payer I should have some say where my tax dollars are allocated. Special Education students are denied many needs in the classroom. Because there are no funds , our students are in need of many accommodations. Like stimulation tools, weighted vest , cushions, pencil grips, calming hand grips, headphones. The list goes on , it's not fair that teachers and paraprofessionals are not paid sufficiently to afford to buy the necessities from our own pockets. We should have a say where our tax dollars go!! Leave our money alone!!

Anna Bartsch

Andrews, TX

Educator

Public Schools have enough problems without taking the money they get to keep. Robinhood impacts too many schools and they must then pass bonds in their respective school districts just to be able to upgrade the infrastructure required by the state with all of the mandates to "improve" or "upgrade" so that students can function as productive citizens in the future. IF the children truly are our "Future" then let's give them the foundation that they need and deserve to be able to do what it is that we require and request of them.

Tracey Smith

Eules, TX

Reading Interventionist in a Title 1 Elementary School

SB8 will take MY taxpayer funds and allow them to be used for private education of others which I do not approve of. If someone chooses to send their child to private school that is THEIR choice and should be done at THEIR expense, NOT paid for with taxpayer funds.

This bill if passed will rob funds from already severely under-funded public schools, especially low income Title 1 schools like the one where I work. Teachers are already spending thousands of dollars a year out of their pocket and are leaving the profession in droves. This bill will make it even harder to be an educator and the staffing crisis will rise to epic proportions.

William Peters

Temple, TX

Teacher

You will effectively take money from schools who desperately need it. I keep hearing parent choice. This term is being used as if the parents will decide that they want their child to attend a private school. The fact is even with the voucher the parent will still need to pay more money (which

the parents are not being told), and the school will need to approve the student attending their campus (which the parents are not being told), so where is the parent choice?

Robbie Reinhardt

Franklin, TX

Currently teaching elementary school. 25 years of experience in public education.

This bill will hurt rural school districts. The nearest private school from our town is over 40 miles away. Parents will have to provide transportation for their child. Also, private DO NOT have to accept all students who apply or provide services for students with intellectual or physical disabilities like public schools do. These vouchers will take funding away from public schools who are already underfunded. Veteran teachers like myself are becoming few and far between and this will only cause more challenges for our public school system.

Jose Garcia

Stanton, TX

Math Teacher

I oppose Senate Bill 8 because funds will go into a Charter School system that doesn't hold teachers or students accountable the same way public schools do. The money belongs to underpaid educators in public school systems that are held to a higher standard by making sure educators are held accountable for T-TESS goals and STAAR test results. We work endless hours to make sure we are meeting the needs of every student. We give up our personal time after school to tutor students without getting paid for it. We work after hours to grade endless amounts of papers to make sure we get students accurate feedback on their work. We buy our own supplies and endless amounts of materials to make sure we are creating interactive lessons. We do this living paycheck to paycheck when educators should be compensated for their time instead of outsiders assuming we are just glorified babysitters. Teaching is a demanding job and we are putting our hearts and all our energy in making sure students are meeting standards.

Karen Wood

English Teacher

Vouchers weaken public schools by diverting funds and oversight. Designate that funding to help strengthen public schools that serve all children.

sharla straw

Littlefield, TX

Teacher

Vouchers would shut down small schools! Small schools are the best!

Vouchers would be detrimental to us.

Chris Abbott

Retired middle school teacher Lamar CISD

Without oversight in private schools students will not be getting what they would receive in public schools. Sending money in vouchers is just throwing money away with no control.

Travette Jarma

Cameron, TX

Current educator

As a taxpayer and educator this bill goes against everything public education stands for. We want to

support public education. If a family wants to send their child(ren) to private school then it's their financial responsibility to do so. As a taxpayer I should have a vote on how my money is to be used.

Debbie Lozano

Helotes, TX

Teacher

We need to fund public schools and not private schools.

Perry Daniell

Fort Worth, TX

Teacher

Vouchers in any form as well as standardized testing are both ways to defund free, equal, public education! Every child deserves the right to an education no matter their Socio-Economic status. Standardized testing doesn't work and only benefits the company producing the test and those getting kickbacks.

Vincent Brouillard

Georgetown, TX

Teacher

Notwithstanding that despicable manner in which the bill was submitted, the voucher aspect is untenable, changes to the accountability system and the testing situation. Public input should be required. Full stop.

Lena Angel

Katy, TX

Teacher

I do not support funds being diverted from public schools to charters. My children and the children of Texas deserve a quality education free from religious zealots and extremists trying to indoctrinate them and destroy the public education system. You know this bill is wrong which is why you're trying to avoid public testimony.

PHYLLIS JARZOMBEK

Floresville, TX

Retired/ paraprofessional /teacher

I oppose this because it is taking public moneys from the public school system. If you pass vouchers any bill with vouchers attached, it will hurt the public-school systems and its students.

Jeff Clary

Spring, TX

Retired 8th Grade Science Teacher, Klein & CyFair ISD

I am a retired public educator and I vote...feel free to check the voting records.

I am appalled at the rush to push through SB8 without open debate and public input. This approach to government represents the reason that the average citizen finds our current political situation so distasteful. So, for starters, slow down and listen to the people. Solicit public comment and hear what we are saying.

Next, I have worked with both the most struggling of students and those who soar. And one thing I know about all of them is that their parents love them and truly want the best for them...each and every one. Sadly, as we see time and again, parents who are already struggling to get through and stay afloat, simply do not have the bandwidth to research schools and take their kids to this campus or that. So, creating a voucher system, by any name and in any form, will siphon off resources and leave our most struggling population of students stranded in underfunded schools.

Public education does work. And it can continue to work. So instead of trying to dismantle schools, please recommit to investing in them. If somebody has the time, energy, and desire to pull their student from their local public school, great. But we should not punish the students left behind.

Vote NO to any voucher legislation. Vote NO on SB8.

Charles Beall

Taylor, TX

High school math teacher

Voucher students would still have to take the state standardized tests, but their private schools would not have to administer the tests. That means our public schools would be responsible for administering tests to voucher students they don't even teach or receive funding to oversee. This would likely create another unfunded mandate for public schools.

Unlike the public schools, private schools accepting taxpayer-funded vouchers won't receive accountability grades tied to their students' performance on the tests, they won't face the risk of closure or a state takeover, and they won't even be required to ensure their students meet minimal education standards. In fact, there is an entirely new section of the law under SB 8/CSSB 8 that would be devoted to protecting the private schools' autonomy and freedom from governmental regulation.

Linda Tabor

Fredericksburg, TX

Retired teacher

Oppose vouchers.

Pam Lawrence

Crossroads, TX

Special Education Para Educator

This bill would be detrimental to the student population I have served for 17 years. SPED students and their families need the protection of IDEA that public schools provide.

Calvin Greene

New Braunfels, TX

Public Member

Senate Bill 8 is only a decoy to help the legislature to try and phase out public education and provide a voucher program which is unfair to everyone because students are cheated out of a quality education because legislatures will be lining their pockets with the funding that these. Private and charter schools are willing to pay to get this bill passed. Many families can't afford chartered or private schools and you are taking funding from public education and over testing students as well as lowering the standards and decreasing safety precautions in public schools in order to force to hands of parents which you hope to end public schools and increase voucher programs.

We must look closely into our legislatures and lobbyist as well as our PACs because they are supposed to represent our voice that we bring forth for the education system and the students but if you look at SB 8 majority of the names on the list that is our representatives will tell us one thing but vote against our desires because they are trying to stay in favor of the populist. No matter stands strong and we are more powerful than the Texas State Legislature when we stand together because election time is nearing, and they need a large group backing and losing ATPE would be detrimental. So, vote NO to SB8.

Lydia Wagner

Kerrville, TX

Teacher

I oppose SB 8 because it would take away tax dollars from public school when we already know schools are under-funded. Also, our kids are over-tested. Why would it be necessary to test students by the state multiple times a year over multiple content areas? This is already happening at the district level.