



Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

THE PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CHURCH

Parental Choice Priorities for 88th Legislature

As the primary and principal educators of their children, parents must be free to determine the best educational environment for their children whether that be public, charter, private, or homeschool. Their choices should not be limited by family income or zip code. The bishops support parental choice programs, especially for the poor and children with special needs, to increase access to quality education options for all students.



Texas parents
need more
options to
improve their
children's
future

PUT THE BEST INTEREST OF CHILDREN FIRST



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Parental choice continues to be a top priority of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops. This is why **the Catholic Church in Texas educates nearly 63,000 students in Catholic schools and more than 350,000 public school students in catechism classes.**

We support legislation that establishes Education Savings Accounts (ESA) or scholarships that include the following provisions:

- Funding for tuition and fees, textbooks, curricula, academic assessments or post-secondary entrance exams, tutoring, and therapy
- Funding sources could include state revenue, private philanthropy, and state tax credits
- Financial accountability using random audits of ESAs by a third party
- Academic accountability by administration of a norm- or criterion-referenced assessment each year (current practice at accredited schools).
- Preferential option for the poor by ensuring students with the greatest academic and financial need are prioritized.
- Homeschool families can voluntarily participate. Any who do not want to accept it are free to continue to homeschool in any manner they choose.
- Safeguards and protections for the privacy, autonomy and religious freedom of participants by ensuring that educators are not required to modify their creed, practices, admissions policies, curriculum, performance standards, or assessments to serve ESA students.

"Parents themselves enjoy the right to choose freely the kind of education — accessible and of good quality — which they wish to give their children in accordance with their convictions."

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Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*

"Parents who have the primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children must enjoy true liberty in their choice of schools."

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Pope Paul VI, *Gravissimum Educationis*

While most students will continue to benefit from thriving public schools, parental choice programs provide **hope for the thousands of families** who need better access to personalized educational options.

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops is the association of the Roman Catholic bishops of Texas. The TCCB represents 16 dioceses and 20 active bishops. Through the TCCB, the bishops provide a moral and social public policy voice, accredit the state's Catholic schools, and maintain archives that reflect the work and the history of the Catholic Church in Texas.