



# TSTA NEWS

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## **TSTA: Senate voucher bill creates a private-school entitlement program for the wealthy; will soon cost taxpayers and public schools \$1 billion a year**

TSTA President Ovidia Molina released the following statement:

Parents have a right to send their children to private schools. They don't have a right to send their children to private schools at the expense of other taxpayers.

For starters, Senate Bill 8 will take more than a half billion tax dollars during the next budget cycle from under-funded public schools and spend the money to subsidize private school tuition for wealthy and upper-middle-income Texans. Within five years, the cost will rise to \$1 billion and keep rising. The bill, in effect, creates a private-school entitlement program for the well-to-do, a program that most taxpayers can ill-afford and shouldn't be forced to pay for. These are unregulated private schools with no accountability to taxpayers.

Any claim that these education savings accounts will benefit low-income families who want to send their children to private schools is unrealistic. Most private schools, especially the better ones, charge tuition much more than \$8,000, the value of the education savings accounts or vouchers that Senate Bill 8 would provide. Low-income Texans can't afford to make up that difference.

Senate Bill 8 will do nothing to address the teacher shortage and may very well worsen it, if districts losing tax dollars to private schools are forced to lay off teachers and other employees.

Gov. Abbott claims that public schools will remain fully funded. That is not true because public schools are not fully funded now and never have been under his administration. Even after the extra school funding appropriated in 2019, Texas still spends about \$4,000 less than the national average in per-student funding.

Now, these same public schools will be stretched even thinner as tax dollars begin to flow to unregulated private schools.