



Priorities for Texas Schools

1. Turn Texas Standards into Tools for Thinking — Not Lists for Memorizing

Texas students deserve academic standards that help them analyze, design, create, and solve problems rather than lists of disconnected facts to memorize. Our current standards are too numerous, too shallow, and too focused on recall. We must rewrite them to emphasize deep understanding, critical thinking, and the ability to use the ideas and practices of each discipline to make sense of the world. Students need to learn how to **figure things out**, not just repeat what is already known.

2. Center Student Motivation, Engagement, and Belonging

Students thrive when they feel valued, challenged, and connected to a community. Schools should be places where students explore interests, experience joy in learning, and feel a sense of belonging. When motivation and relevance are at the center, students don't just attend school — they *want* to be there. Texas must prioritize policies that make learning meaningful and foster curiosity, creativity, and purpose.

3. Focus Policy on Learning, Not Compliance

Too many current policies treat schools like systems that need policing rather than communities of learning that need support. Compliance-driven approaches waste time and stifle innovation. Texas must shift toward policies that give teachers the space to teach, schools the freedom to innovate, and students the opportunity to engage in real learning. Accountability should measure growth, inspiration, and opportunity rather than focusing solely on test scores.

4. Support and Empower Teachers as Professionals

Teachers are experts who deserve trust, respect, and meaningful support. Instead of adding requirements and restrictions, Texas should empower teachers to collaborate, observe each other's practice, and grow — the way professionals in other fields do. Strong teaching comes from shared expertise, not external mandates. Teaching is hard work, and we must do everything possible to help educators succeed.

5. Invest in What Truly Matters

A strong education system requires strong investment — in high-quality instructional materials, professional learning, student support services, arts and enrichment, and modern resources for emerging industries and workforce needs. Funding should follow research and student outcomes, not political trends. When we invest wisely, we strengthen our communities and our state's future.

6. Innovate in Teaching Instead of Leaning on Tradition

Texas cannot prepare students for the future with teaching methods built for the past. We need forward-thinking instructional approaches that develop creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving. Innovation should be supported, encouraged, and scaled rather than being treated as a threat to tradition. Our students' future depends on our willingness to evolve.

7. Build Accountable Systems That Actually Reflect What Families Value

High-stakes testing has failed to improve learning and does not reflect what parents, students, or educators value. If we want meaningful accountability, we must ask better questions: Do students feel inspired? Do they feel safe and supported? Are they given opportunities to grow, belong, and develop their talents? Surveys of families and students would give far more accurate information about school quality than a single test on a single day.