



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW STATEWIDE VOTER SURVEY SHOWS STRONG, BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR
INCREASING STATE FUNDING OF TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Large majority of Texas voters favor the state increasing its share of dollars going to education in order to provide some property tax relief for local taxpayers

AUSTIN, TEXAS--A new statewide voter survey released by the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium (TEGAC) shows broad, bipartisan support for increasing state funding of Texas public schools. TEGAC released the polling data ahead of the School Finance Commission's public hearing in Austin today.

The survey, conducted by Baselice & Associates, Inc., and funded by TEGAC found:

- ❑ Initially, 67 percent of Texans favor the state increasing its share of dollars going to education in order to provide property tax relief for local taxpayers. After hearing more about it, 71 percent favor increasing the state share in order to provide property tax relief.
- ❑ 81 percent of Texans favor a requirement that local education tax dollars sent to the state must be used for public education, and not used to fill other budget shortfalls or fund other programs. After hearing more about the issue, 86 percent favor this requirement.
- ❑ 54 percent of Texans favor increasing the state's share of public education dollars from the current 38 percent to 50 percent. After hearing more about the issue, 68 percent favor increasing the state's share.

"We know well-funded, high-quality public schools shape our future, ensuring a well-trained, highly-skilled workforce and better quality of life for Texans," said Wynn Rosser, PhD, President and CEO of the T.L.L. Temple Foundation and Chair of the TEGAC Leadership Committee.

"The state's financial contribution to public education has declined significantly over most of the last six to eight years, leaving local taxpayers to shoulder a disproportionate amount of the burden. It's time for the state to step up and increase funding for public education," said Kristi Hassett, Board Member, Lewisville ISD, and member of Texas Association of School Boards.

As recently as 2000, the state's share of education funding was over 50 percent, but the Texas Legislature has since reduced its share to 38 percent. Local property taxes are high because the state isn't paying as much of its share for public schools as the state has in the past.

"Whether it's our ability to attract new businesses, prepare the workforce of tomorrow or bring jobs to our communities, there is vital importance in addressing school finance. It's crucial to our economic development

and the education of our kids,” said Sandy Dochen of IBM, who chairs the Education and Workforce Committee of the Texas Association of Business.

The TEGAC survey was conducted by Baselice & Associates, Inc. Jan. 20-23, 2018 among N=501 registered voters. The margin of error to the results is +/- 4.4 percent at the .95 confidence level.

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About TEGAC

The Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium (TEGAC) is a statewide funders’ collaborative made up of 44 Texas grantmakers from across the state that works to empower Texas philanthropy to invest and engage in effective public education policy and advocacy at the state level. TEGAC works to fill data holes around critical public education issues by providing objective, high quality data to Texas policymakers and the public. Find us online at tegac.org, on Twitter @TEGACTX and on Facebook @TEGACTX.



TEGAC Statewide Voter Survey Overview

The TEGAC survey on public school funding was conducted by Baselice & Associates, Inc. Jan. 20-23, 2018 among N=501 registered voters. The margin of error to the results is +/- 4.4 percent at the .95 confidence level. Key findings include:

- ❑ Initially, 67 percent of Texans favor the state increasing its share of dollars going to education in order to provide property tax relief for local taxpayers. After hearing more about it, 71 percent favor increasing the state share in order to provide property tax relief.
- ❑ 81 percent of Texans favor a requirement that local education tax dollars sent to the state must be used for public education, and not used to fill other budget shortfalls or fund other programs. After hearing more about the issue, 86 percent favor this requirement.
- ❑ 54 percent of Texans favor increasing the state's share of public education dollars from the current 38 percent to 50 percent. After hearing more about the issue, 68 percent favor increasing the state's share.

The statements which correlated most with the informed positions above are:

- ❑ 90 percent agree that "Money matters in public education, and that money should be well spent."
- ❑ 83 percent agree that "Texas public education is the key to the future economic success of Texas – individually and within our larger communities."
- ❑ 69 percent agree that "The state's financial contribution to public education has declined significantly over most of the last six to eight years, leaving local taxpayers to shoulder a disproportionate amount of the burden."
- ❑ 82 percent favor increasing state funding for public education upon hearing, "Well-funded, high-quality public schools shape our future, ensuring a well-trained, highly skilled workforce and better quality of life for Texans."
- ❑ 78 percent favor increasing state funding for public education upon hearing, "Our ability to attract new businesses and bring jobs to our communities is enhanced when we support and fund our public schools."
- ❑ 69 percent favor increasing state funding for public education upon hearing, "Local property taxes are high because the state isn't paying as much of its share for public schools as they had in the past. More state funding of schools is needed to relieve some of the burden on local taxpayers."

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