



**“Rarely is the  
question asked:  
Is our children  
learning?”**

**—Governor George W. Bush**



Compared to other states, Texas' overall educational record deserves a C at best. Generally, the further students go in the Texas system, the more they fall behind the national curve. The nearest Texas comes to excellence is in fourth-grade math, where it ranks better than 86 percent of the states surveyed. Texas' math performance falls off by the eighth grade to better than just 43 percent of the states surveyed. Texas' overall average score on the SAT college-entry exam ranks a dis-

While Texas' teacher-pupil ratio is surpassed by just 14 other states, the state is otherwise mediocre at best in its investments in primary and secondary education. Texas state spending per pupil ranks No. 32 in the nation. Average Texas teacher salaries rank No. 36. Texas ranks No. 29 in per capita appropriations for higher education and No. 30 in what professors at its public colleges earn.

George W. Bush presents himself as the education governor, inviting

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# EDUCATION

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tant No. 19 out of the 23 states in which a high percentage of students take the test.

Texas may be worse off than these figures suggest. Texas' test scores get a boost from the fact that only students who are in the school system get tested. This excludes major underachievers who simply dropped out of school. Texas has one of the nation's highest dropout rates and ranks No. 45 in the percentage of its adult population that has a high school diploma.

assessments of Texas' record. This is complicated by the fact that educational reforms often take years to bear fruit. Hence Texas' performance during the Bush years was shaped by policies stretching back to the 1980s, and the results of his actions will not surface for years.

Key past educational reforms in Texas include:

- Approving greater pre-school funding (in the 1980s);
- Capping the size of primary-grade

- classes (1980s); and
- Court-ordered increases in spending on poor school districts (1994).

A recent RAND think tank report credited such reforms with improving student performances. RAND found that Texas test scores improved from 1990 to 1996, but still fell below the national average. Laura Bush confused this report's chronology in her Republican National Convention speech when she said the gains occurred "because George led the way."

In 1994, Bush criticized then-Governor Ann Richards for granting too many school districts waivers that allowed them to exceed legally mandated class sizes. Yet the number of

districts receiving these waivers doubled in the 1996-1997 school year and has stayed high in every subsequent school year.

Still, Governor Bush for the most part has not tried to reverse these reforms and has participated in a few new ones on his watch, such as signing a \$3,000 annual raise for teachers in 1999.

Texas realized important gains in its achievement test scores in the 1990s, although it still lags behind the national curve. The greatest shortcoming of the Governor and the Texas Legislature came in 1999 when they failed to invest more of the budget surplus to overcome Texas' educational mediocrity. Instead, their priority was to cut taxes.



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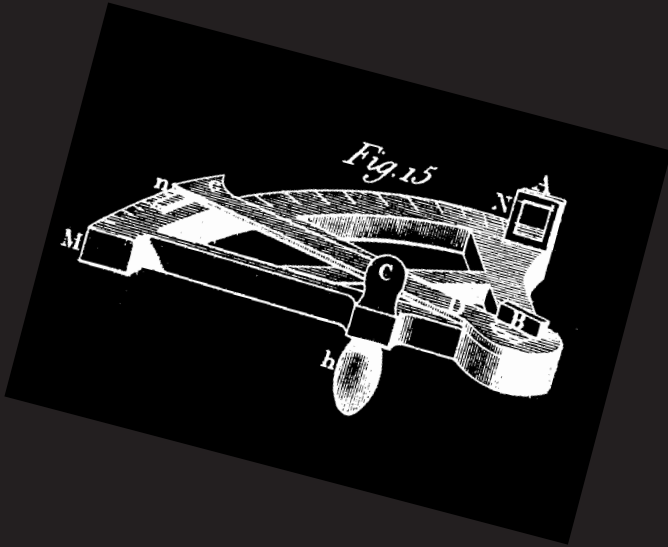
## EDUCATION INDICATORS

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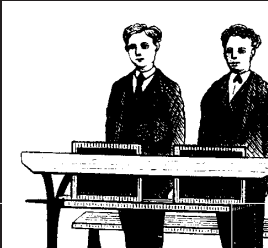
### Education

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# EDUCATION



## INDICATORS



## 1

## SPENDING PER PUPIL

Texas ranks No. 32 in the amount of money it spent on each student enrolled in its primary and secondary schools during the 1996-1997 school year. Texas' mediocre per-student investment has increased 17 percent in inflation-adjusted terms since 1994, after a court ordered the state to spend more on students in poor school districts.



	Rank	State	Annual Spending Per Pupil
	1	New Jersey	\$10,211
	2	New York	\$9,658
	3	Alaska	\$9,097
	4	Connecticut	\$8,901
	5	Rhode Island	\$8,307
	<b>32</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>\$5,736</b>
	46	Arkansas	\$4,840
	47	Idaho	\$4,732
	48	New Mexico	\$4,674
	49	Mississippi	\$4,312
	50	Utah	\$4,045

## 2

## PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO



Texas, South Dakota and Iowa all employed an average of one public school teacher for every 15.3 students in 1997. Just 14 states have a better pupil-teacher ratio. Texas' pupil-teacher ratio improved after 1984, when the Texas Legislature mandated maximum sizes for classes below the fifth-grade level. In the 1999-2000 school year, more than 15 percent of Texas' school districts were granted exemptions that allowed them to exceed these legally mandated class sizes.



	Rank	State	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
	1	Vermont	13.4
	2	Maine	13.5
	3	New Jersey	13.9
	4	Massachusetts	14.1
	5	Connecticut	14.2
	15-17	Iowa (tied)	15.3
	15-17	South Dakota (tied)	15.3
	<b>15-17</b>	<b>Texas (tied)</b>	<b>15.3</b>
	46	Arizona	19.8
	47	Oregon	20.1
	48	Washington	20.2
	49	California	21.6
	50	Utah	22.9





## 3

## TEACHER SALARIES

Texas is No. 36 in the average amount that it paid teachers in its primary and secondary schools in the 1998-1999 school year. Some 82 percent of the U.S. population lives in states that pay teachers more. A study by Sam Houston State University found that 28 percent of Texas teachers have second jobs.

Rank	State	Average Teacher Salary	
	1	New Jersey	\$51,692
	2	Connecticut	\$50,277
	3	New York	\$49,686
	4	Michigan	\$48,711
	5	Pennsylvania	\$48,457
<b>36</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>\$34,448</b>	
	46	Montana	\$31,536
	47	Oklahoma	\$31,107
	48	Mississippi	\$29,550
	49	North Dakota	\$29,002
	50	South Dakota	\$28,386

Texas ranked last in the nation in the ratio of its average teacher pay to the average pay in its private sector in the 1998-1999 school year. Teachers are skilled workers who command a premium over the average private-sector pay in all 50 states. Texas teachers receive the smallest such premium.



Rank	State	Teacher/Private-Sector Pay Ratio	
	1	Rhode Island	1.54
	2	Pennsylvania	1.53
	3	Oregon	1.48
	4	Alaska	1.43
	5-7	Indiana (tied)	1.41
	5-7	Michigan (tied)	1.41
	5-7	Nevada (tied)	1.41
	45-46	Arizona (tied)	1.18
	45-46	Colorado (tied)	1.18
	47	Massachusetts	1.17
	48-49	Washington (tied)	1.16
	48-49	Missouri (tied)	1.16
	<b>50</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>1.09</b>

# 4

## SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COSTS





Texas ranks No. 5 in the total amount of money (almost \$14 billion) that it needs to spend to modernize the physical and technological infrastructure of its schools. But it ranks No. 42 in the *per capita* amount of money that it needs to spend on modernization.

	Rank	State	\$ Millions Needed
	1	New York	\$50,676
	2	California	\$32,901
	3	Ohio	\$24,978
	4	New Jersey	\$22,029
	<b>5</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>\$13,654</b>
	46	South Dakota	\$650
	47	Wyoming	\$634
	48	New Hampshire	\$620
	49	North Dakota	\$545
	50	Vermont	\$333



## 5

## FOURTH-GRADE PROFICIENCY

The National Assessment of Educational Progress grades public and private school students in participating states. One-quarter of the fourth graders in New Jersey and Texas tested “proficient” in math in 1996. Only four of the 43 participating states did better.

	Rank	State	Students Proficient in Math
	1	Connecticut	31 %
	2	Minnesota	29 %
	3-4	Maine (tied)	27 %
	3-4	Wisconsin (tied)	27 %
	5-6	New Jersey (tied)	25 %
	<b>5-6</b>	<b>Texas (tied)</b>	<b>25 %</b>
	39	South Carolina	12 %
	40-41	Alabama (tied)	11 %
	40-41	California (tied)	11 %
	42-43	Louisiana (tied)	8 %
	42-43	Mississippi (tied)	8 %

Some 29 percent of fourth graders in Texas and six other states tested “proficient” in reading in 1998. Fourteen of the 39 participating states did better, with Texas hitting the national average.

	Rank	State	Students Proficient in Reading
	1	Connecticut	46 %
	2	New Hampshire	38 %
	3-4	Massachusetts (tied)	37 %
	3-4	Montana (tied)	37 %
	5-6	Maine (tied)	36 %
	5-6	Minnesota (tied)	36 %
	15-21	Missouri (tied)	29 %
	15-21	New York (tied)	29 %
	15-21	Washington (tied)	29 %
	15-21	Kentucky (tied)	29 %
	15-21	Maryland (tied)	29 %
	<b>15-21</b>	<b>Texas (tied)</b>	<b>29 %</b>
	15-21	West Virginia (tied)	29 %
	35	Nevada	21 %
	36	California	20 %
	37	Louisiana	19 %
38	Mississippi	18 %	
39	Hawaii	17 %	

Note: Seven states did not take the math test; 11 states did not test for reading.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Educational Progress, Washington, D.C. Math data for 1996; reading data for 1998.

Websites: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=98481> and  
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=1999500>



## 6

## EIGHTH-GRADE PROFICIENCY

The National Assessment of Educational Progress grades public and private school students in participating states. Some 21 percent of the eighth graders in Texas and Virginia tested “proficient” in math; 21 of the 40 participating states performed better.

Rank	State	Students Proficient in Math
	1	Minnesota 34 %
	2	North Dakota 33 %
	3-4	Montana (tied) 32 %
	3-4	Wisconsin (tied) 32 %
	5-8	Connecticut (tied) 31 %
	5-8	Iowa (tied) 31 %
	5-8	Maine (tied) 31 %
	5-8	Nebraska (tied) 31 %
	<b>22-23</b>	<b>Texas (tied) 21 %</b>
	22-23	Virginia (tied) 21 %
	34-36	New Mexico (tied) 14 %
	34-36	South Carolina (tied) 14 %
	34-36	West Virginia (tied) 14 %
	37	Arkansas 13 %
	38	Alabama 12 %
	39-40	Louisiana (tied) 7 %
	39-40	Mississippi (tied) 7 %

Some 28 percent of eighth graders in Arizona and Texas tested “proficient” in reading; 20 of the 36 participating states scored better.



Rank	State	Students Proficient in Reading
	1-2	Connecticut (tied) 42 %
	1-2	Maine (tied) 42 %
	3	Montana 38 %
	4	Minnesota 37 %
	5	Massachusetts 36 %
	21-22	Arizona (tied) 28 %
<b>21-22</b>	<b>Texas (tied) 28 %</b>	
	31-32	California (tied) 22 %
	31-32	South Carolina (tied) 22 %
	33	Alabama 21 %
	34-35	Hawaii (tied) 19 %
	34-35	Mississippi (tied) 19 %
	36	Louisiana 18 %

Note: Ten states did not take the math test; 14 states did not test for reading.

## 7

## SAT SCORES

Colleges use the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to screen applicants. Comparing average state SAT scores is complicated by the fact that the percentage of high school students who take the SAT varies from state to state. This table just analyzes the 23 states where at least 45 percent of high school students took the test in 1999. Only three of these states had lower SAT scores than Pennsylvania and Texas, which were tied. Texas SAT scores have shown little improvement over the past five years (a period in which the percentage of Texas students taking the test has stayed relatively constant).

	Rank	State	Average Score
	1	Washington	1,051
	2	Oregon	1,050
	3	New Hampshire	1,038
	4	Alaska	1,030
	5	Massachusetts	1,022
	19-20	Pennsylvania (tied)	993
	<b>19-20</b>	<b>Texas (tied)</b>	<b>993</b>
	21	North Carolina	986
	22	Georgia	969
	23	South Carolina	954



Note: Analysis limited to the 23 states where at least 45 percent of high school students took the SAT.

## 8

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES





Texas ranks No. 45 in the percentage of people age 25 and older who had a high school diploma in 1998. This poor performance reflects Texas' elevated dropout rate (see the next indicator).

	Rank	State	Percentage
	1	Washington	92.0 %
	2	Alaska	90.6 %
	3	Wyoming	90.0 %
	4	Colorado	89.6 %
	5	Minnesota	89.4 %
	<b>45</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>78.3 %</b>
	46	Kentucky	77.9 %
	47	Mississippi	77.3 %
	48	Tennessee	76.9 %
	49	Arkansas	76.8 %
	50	West Virginia	76.4 %

## 9

## HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Texas ranks No. 46 in the percentage of people age 18 to 24 who had not graduated from high school and who were no longer in school in 1998. High school dropouts make up one-fifth of Texas' adult population.



	Rank	State	Percentage
	1	North Dakota	5.3 %
	2	Maryland	5.5 %
	3	Vermont	6.4 %
	4	Hawaii	7.7 %
	5	New Jersey	8.2 %
	<b>46</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>19.8 %</b>
	47	New Mexico	21.4 %
	48	Nevada	21.8 %
	49	Arizona	22.9 %
	50	Oregon	24.6 %

# 10

## HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS



Texas ranks No. 29 in per capita tax appropriations for higher education (\$204 per person in fiscal year 2000). These data do not include support from Texas' Permanent University Fund, a large, public university endowment. This provided the equivalent of \$13 more per person for higher education in Texas.



	Rank	State	Spending Per Person
	1	Mississippi	\$331
	2	New Mexico	\$313
	3	North Carolina	\$300
	4	North Dakota	\$296
	5	Wyoming	\$291
	<b>29</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>\$204</b>
	46-47	Montana (tied)	\$157
	46-47	Pennsylvania (tied)	\$157
	48	Rhode Island	\$152
	49	Vermont	\$107
	50	New Hampshire	\$80



## 11

## PUBLIC COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR SALARIES

Texas is No. 30 in the average amount it paid instructors at its public colleges and universities (\$47,310) in the 1997–1998 academic year. Some 75 percent of the U.S. population lives in states that pay their professors more.



	Rank	State	Average Salary
	1	New Jersey	\$62,227
	2	Connecticut	\$61,529
	3	California	\$61,092
	4	Delaware	\$59,493
	5	Michigan	\$57,810
	<b>30</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>\$47,310</b>
	46	Mississippi	\$41,785
	47	Arkansas	\$41,319
	48	Wyoming	\$40,186
	49	North Dakota	\$39,041
	50	South Dakota	\$37,525

## 12

## SPENDING ON PUBLIC LIBRARIES



With the \$12.88 a head that it spent on public libraries in fiscal year 1997, Texas ranks No. 46 in per capita library expenditures.

Rank	State	Spending Per Person	
	1	New York	\$39.63
	2	Ohio	\$39.62
	3	Indiana	\$35.70
	4	Alaska	\$33.86
	5	Connecticut	\$33.73
<b>46</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>\$12.88</b>	
	47	Arkansas	\$11.95
	48	Tennessee	\$11.43
	49	West Virginia	\$11.39
	50	Mississippi	\$9.85