



## Taxpayers and School Funding

### Key messages:

Texas taxpayers need to know...

- Public school districts DO NOT receive additional operating revenue from increasing school taxes due to property value increases.
- The state is spending \$339 LESS per student today than in 2008, and \$795 LESS per student when considering inflation.
- The state's contribution to funding public school district operations has decreased from 50% (2008) to 43% (2017), while the corresponding local share has grown from 50% to 57%.
- The state should spend all property tax dollars paid to public school districts on public school districts; instead, the state is spending its "savings" from property value growth on priorities outside of education.

### Action Alert Headline:

- Texas Taxpayers Deserve "Taxpayers"
- SUBHEADING: Taxpayers is a taxpayer's right to understand where the state is spending their property tax dollars paid to support school district operations.

### Action Alert Message:

While rising property values benefit property owners in the long run, local taxpayers often receive sticker shock when their local property tax bill arrives. But, did you know, **public school districts do not receive additional operating revenue from increasing school taxes when property values increase?\***

**How does that happen?** School districts get funding primarily from local property taxes and contributions from the state. Since school districts are held to a certain level of funding for operations, increasing property values means the state reduces the amount it sends to school districts to meet that funding level. So essentially, the state uses the windfall from school district taxes generated by property value growth to reduce its own obligation to fund public schools allowing legislators to divert tax dollars meant for public school districts to the state's general fund. Most Texas taxpayers do not know this.

The majority of taxpayers also don't know that the State is spending **\$339 LESS** per student than in 2008, and **\$795 LESS** per student when adjusted for enrollment growth *and* inflation – a nearly **20% decrease** from 2008. From 2008 to 2017, **the State's share of funding public education has decreased from 50% to 43%, while the local share from property taxes has grown from 50% to 57%.**

So, while public schools are struggling to meet the demands of an increasingly at-risk student population, pay teachers competitive market salaries and benefits, and provide technology, facilities and programs that will benefit all students, the State has actually been reducing its contribution to funding public education.



The Texas Legislature is in session right now, and we want them to take action and create “Taxpparency” for Texas taxpayers and spend the dollars meant for public school districts **on** public school districts and not divert it to the state’s general fund.

**Action:**

Contact your elected officials in the Texas Legislature and ask them:

- ☐ NOT TO DIVERT TAX DOLLARS meant for public school districts to the state’s general fund!
- ☐ NOT TO REDUCE THE STATE’S CONTRIBUTION to public school district funding!
- ☐ TO BE TRANSPARENT in their use of spending the windfall from property value growth!

**Subject line of the message:**

Be Taxparent! Keep property tax dollars in education!

**Message to your legislator:**

Tell your legislators you feel they are not being transparent when they use their “savings” from property value growth to fund other state priorities, and that you expect your tax dollars, paid to your public school district, to remain in public education. Share your personal experiences and the issues you see impacting your local school district to make the message more meaningful to legislators.

**Example:**

As the Legislature considers school finance, I ask that you work to increase the State’s share of funding so that local property tax dollars can stay in our local community and benefit local students. Thank you for your service to Texas.