

Inequalities these that  
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among many

[Economics](#), [Budget](#)



Inequalities of The Texas Education System      The Texas education system inadequately provides resources for its school systems and as a result, the education of millions of students lags behind the national level and continues to cripple the potential of the state but most importantly the students that are not being invested in. This issue is due in part by the political culture that has developed in the state casting a thin window of opportunity to improve the education system of the state. The most important factor to recognize when identifying why schools in Texas are not performing at their optimal level is to first understand the political culture that has been instilled from hundreds of years of traditionalism within the state. Looking back in the history of the state, Texans believe strongly in the traditionalistic and individualistic culture. In an individualistic sense, Texans have been expected to deal with tasks like education on an individual basis.

People within a society are responsible for taking care of themselves and must work for themselves rather than seek assistance elsewhere. This is why in an educational sense people are to seek resources like school funding on a localized basis where the money is coming directly from their pockets rather than looking for state or federal aid. Traditionally the elite of society presume upon their rightful place and any change in this system is not wanted by these individuals. In Texas the elite or wealthy in the state hold much of the political power and because of this changing the hierarchy is very difficult. For example, in the education system many board members of the Texas State Board of Education are from wealthy families carrying political influence and many have never even taught as teachers before

securing their positions as members. This results in a disconnect between officials in Texas and poverty riddled school districts.

These officials have a difficult time relating to these areas that they have most likely never had to live or teach in. Its ideals like these that are proudly embraced among many in the state but often leave people lost in a system they have no control in. These developed political cultures are the basis of many issues within the Texas education system.

The most notable and controversial issues facing education is how to fund it. The debate of whether the state of Texas should be held accountable for giving its students a quality education at a high cost had been a delicate and heated topic. Although the quality of education is important to the development of the economy many politicians are reluctant to dedicate large amounts of money toward that sector.

In the past people have tried to fight the state government hoping they would have to take responsibility for providing funds to all districts in need. The Supreme court case of San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez in 1972 laid the basis of what the government's responsibility was when it came to funding schools. Some claimed that areas with a lower property tax base were automatically disadvantaged compared to areas of affluence, this in turn would violate equal protection of the law. In 1973 the court ruled that this policy did not directly show bias toward all poor people and they also argued that the right to education is not specifically stated in the constitution and as a result not a fundamental right (2). This case

solidified the idea that the Texas government had to only provide the bare minimum for the education system and did not have to fill the gaps left behind in less privileged areas. This conclusion echoes ideas of individualistic culture expressing the belief that every individual citizen is responsible for cultivating their own success and they should not depend on government for providing advantages to all citizens.

But many believe that the government has a duty to educate all of its citizens equally, if not for the personal success of each child than better yet for the success of the state and the nation moving forward. This minimum expectation from State government to provide aid to school districts has also affected the educators who are not being invested in but are expected to perform at unreasonably high rates. The high turnover of educators in Texas is extremely disruptive and makes the system inefficient because of the instability of employment. For example if you look at Dallas Independent School District turnover rates between the years 2013 and 2015 have increased by almost 3%. These statistics are high to begin with and cost the Dallas county an average of 80 million dollars a year(5).

The main reason for these elevated rates are related to the poor investment in teachers. These teachers often start with comfortable salaries but they have limited opportunities to receive raises through the years of employment which gives little incentive to get teachers actively involved and motivated in their schools. But the most common reason teachers in Texas choose to quit their jobs in the education sector is because of the massive amount of stress and responsibility they are faced with. Teachers are

unprepared for the load of work that is often thrown their way and they must frequently take work home on the weekends and must pay for materials that the schools do not provide.

They hold a massive weight on their shoulders but seem not to be receiving support from their government. Another concerning issue that seems to be growing in Texas is the alarming rate of resegregation in many parts of the state. Even after the landmark decision in *United States vs. Texas* that mandated the extensive desegregation of all public Texas schools in 1970, problems of segregation have re-emerged in many areas of the state (6).

According to the *Dallas Morning News*, about half of public school students go to schools that are at least 80% minority or 80% white(7). These districts or schools filled with mostly minorities tend be low- income hispanics or blacks. These areas of concentrated poverty among minority groups causes the systematic segregation of poor and wealthy students.

This results in an unequal distribution of opportunities. This cycle is hard to break because many families are stuck in these poor areas and the students of these areas will not receive quality education leaving them to not be able to seek economic opportunities in the future. Many of these students dropout of school or enter in to the “ school-to-prison-pipeline” and for many generations this cycle continues.

It is reasons like these that it is too much of a risk to not provide the children of today the education they need to build a better state for generations to come. Not investing in Texas education leaves Texas vulnerable to economic

hardships from a society that lacks well-informed citizens. But instead the state relies on funding plans based on poverty taxes policies that produce unequal revenue between wealthy and poor districts and uneven disruption of these tax dollars cuts resources from poorer regions of the state that can only provide the bare minimum. The government cannot expect property tax to be an adequate solution for all school districts in Texas to provide these basic needs. Seeking help from the courts has also proven to be useless as they have resisted to intervene in setting stricter and more specific responsibility for school funding. The first step would be to review the areas and districts that lack funding in the poorer regions of Texas and pass legislation that could reserve such funds for these disadvantaged areas. This would mean that a great deal of research would have to take place to investigate specifically which districts are at a disadvantage so they can be helped by the Texas government. Periodic reviews would also be beneficial to track and regulate inflation that has raised the cost of education continuously.

These changing rates must be analyzed and applied to the current funding budget and must be updated often to assure the right modifications are put in place. The Texas government must set aside a specific amount of money per year for these areas or come up with a better disruption system of funds to be created, allowing for wealthier regions to dedicate some funds they do not need to other parts of Texas for education. Not only must we assure that there are enough resources provided for Texas students, we must also make sure that the tools given to these schools are utilized in the most effective

and efficient way possible allowing for every dollar to be spent at its maximum value.

Programs like the IFA and the NIFA are supporting this idea and making great improvements in school facilities especially in areas of poverty. The Instructional facilities allotment (IFA) ,” directs state aid to property-poor districts to assist with debt repayment on qualifying bonds and lease-purchase agreements.” This program since its birth in 1997 has enabled poor districts to receive money to build and improve facilities that are essential to assure that the environment that these students are being taught in is a safe and useful one. Similarly, the New instructional facilities allotment (NIFA), helps maintain newly constructed schools. But in the last five years these programs funding has enormously decreased which hinders the access to well-equipped facilities for poorer districts. Expanding and continuing these programs could enable disadvantaged areas to have the same learning environment as affluent school districts and allow all students to start at the same base for opportunities. But the bases of a quality education cannot only be measured by the facilities that students learn in, instead the quality of education is achieved by the teachers who inspire students to excel through learning. Having to be responsible for these students education can be a huge task.

Teachers must be better prepared and trained to handle the great duty that lies ahead of them. They also must be given the freedom to teach with realistic standards that can improve students lives in the real world rather than forcing teachers to relay a regimented and strict guide on what to teach

with no flexibility. This can be seen through the pressure from school districts for teachers to teach towards test and state exams rather than covering topics in depth and allowing students to explore its content. Lastly, we must reward extraordinary efforts that these teachers put forth and like any other profession teachers should be given incentives when they are exceling and supporting their students to their highest potential.

Under review, when teachers showcase merit, they should receive continuous raises and bonuses so they feel appreciated and can remain invested in their career and most importantly inspire their students. Lastly, the most important factor that could help these schools run in a more effective manner would be for the head officials of the education system to fully understand their duty to these students. For example many members of the Texas state board of education do not have much experience as teachers or they have never lived in areas where funding for schools are low and resources are at a minimum. Assuring that these members have the necessary qualifications for their positions would make them more aware of the problems of the system and they will be better equipped to solve them. In conclusion, The Texas Education system has many factors that prevent the Schools of Texas To provide a quality education to all of its children and that inhibits the improvements to the states future citizens and economy.

Politicians of the state must realize that the current ideological mindset toward the education system is hindering the capability of millions of students and they must broaden their willingness to change for the better of



the public. This isn't just for the students of today but for the improvement for generations to come for a better future for Texas.