

MCALLEN AFT NEWS

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TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Enrollment Trends in Texas Public Schools*

Over the last five-year period from school year 2011-12 to school year 2015-16, enrollment grew by 301,149 students, or 7.2 percent. The state of Texas has gained 67,663 public school students in the last school year. This has been the smallest year to year growth of public school enrollment in five years.

Hispanics had the largest increase in enrollment in the current school year adding 2,767,747 students. There was a decrease in White students enrollment by 2,526 (0.17 percent decrease), total White students are 1,513,027 at 28.5 percent. An increased of African American students enrollment increased by 7,386 (1.1 percent increase), Asian students also increased by 11,165 (5.5 percent increase), all other ethnic groups decreased by 269 students (-0.9 percent). Hispanic students now account for 52.2 percent of total enrollment in the state.

Charter school enrollment increased by 8.4 percent this year, while public schools increased by only 1 percent.

Data also shows that most of students enrolled in in public schools are in one or more of these PEIMS “at risk” categories.

64.8 percent—Title 1

59.9 percent—Economically disadvantaged

50 percent—At risk

36.8 percent—Bilingual (English as a second language)

8.7 percent—Special Ed

2.7 percent—Dyslexic

24.3 percent—Career and technical education programs

Texas Largest Public School ISD's

Houston ISD 215,627

Dallas ISD 158,604

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD 113,936

Northside ISD 105,110

Fort Worth ISD 87,080

Highest Texas ISD Superintendent Base Pay

Mark Henry—Cypress-Fairbanks ISD - \$383,402

James Warren Cain—Klein ISD - \$378,000

Susan Hull—Grand Prairie ISD - \$365,795

David J. Faltys—Carroll ISD - \$352,964

Don Stockton—Conroe ISD - \$343,000

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Texas Supreme Court Rules School Finance System Constitutional

The Texas Supreme Court Friday finally announced its ruling in the lawsuit brought by more than 600 school districts against the state's school finance system. The court found that the system is constitutional, despite a lower court ruling from State District Judge John Dietz declaring it unconstitutional. That ruling included 1,508 findings of fact--many of which demonstrated the underfunding and inequity of the school finance system.

The Supreme Court took a position that the state needed to do a lot better in educating its students, but that the court didn't have the authority to compel the state Legislature to act on funding issues. In an opinion from Justice Don R. Willett, the court noted:

Texas's more than five million school children deserve better than serial litigation over an increasingly complicated "system." They deserve transformational, top-to-bottom reforms that amount to more than Band-Aid on top of Band-Aid. They deserve a revamped, nonsclerotic system fit for the 21st century.

But our judicial responsibility is not to second-guess or micromanage Texas education policy or to issue edicts from on high increasing financial inputs in hopes of increasing educational outputs.

Statement from Texas AFT President Louis Malfaro on ruling:

The Texas Supreme Court abandoned its duty to defend the interests of Texas' 5.3 million public school students, walking away from its responsibility to confront our broken school finance system.

The deeply conservative court has held that the state system of school funding meets minimum constitutional requirements, but facts are stubborn things, and the facts remain that Texas schools are underfunded, inequitably funded, and force an inordinate share of the cost of education onto local school districts and their taxpayers, while the state fails to do its full part.

The court hides behind a facile argument of judicial restraint. Past courts have seen the wide variation in access to funding between school districts as a violation of the constitutional requirement that the state support an efficient system of public schools.

As the court acknowledged, "Few would argue that the State cannot do better." The state got the benefit in this ruling of a court that viewed its role as being "limited to reviewing the constitutionality of the system under an extremely deferential standard."

The burden remains on the Legislature to do its job of improving the chances of success for Texas schoolchildren. Students' educational opportunity should not depend on their ZIP Code, and adequate and equitable funding is essential to overcome the many disadvantages a majority of our students faces before they ever set foot in our classrooms.

