



PHILANTHROPY ADVOCATES

a COLLABORATION with EDUCATE TEXAS

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES IN FOCUS: EARLY GRADE SUCCESS

Philanthropy Advocates empowers philanthropy to invest and engage in public and higher education policy and advocacy.

We work to protect, promote, and improve public and higher education so that all Texas students can achieve their educational goals from cradle to career. At the foundation of such an effort is a focus on **early grade success**.

Texas philanthropy knows the value of high-quality early childhood education as evidenced by decades of philanthropic investment in ages zero to eight. Overwhelming research indicates full-day, high-quality pre-K paves the way for student success by improving school readiness and early grade achievement.

THE CHALLENGE

THE IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING PRE-K

Data from the Texas Education Agency suggests early education and pre-kindergarten enrollment was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with enrollment reduced by 22%¹. The importance of fully funding pre-K is now more important than ever to ensure these students are located and re-enrolled.

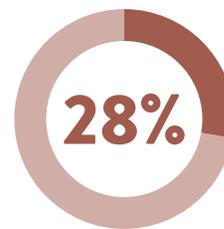
EARLY GRADE SUCCESS IS CRITICAL

A focus on early grade success is even more critical in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts are predicting a significant “academic slide,” in particular for young English Learners and low-income students.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN TEXAS

The Texas Education Agency defines an English Learner as “a student whose primary language is not English and whose English language skills are such that the student has difficulty performing ordinary classwork in English.” English Learners have always made up a significant portion of the Texas public school population.

Texas schools educate the greatest proportion of English Learners in the U.S.



of Texas' pre-K through 3rd grade enrollment are English Learners².

WHY EARLY BILINGUAL EDUCATION MATTERS



Research shows this is the age range when the brain is most ready and able to acquire two or more languages.



Helping students become bilingual has well-documented cognitive benefits for children.



Bilingual students strengthen the ability of the state to compete in a global, multilingual economy.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS



Protect funding for full-day pre-K that was part of HB 3 (2019) so students may close learning gaps and have a level playing field for success.



Protect and increase state financial support for bilingual education, ESL programs, and early childhood education in schools through per-pupil funding.



Improve the educational environments for young Texas English Learners by strengthening educator preparation programs, student progress monitoring, and family engagement practices.



Create a state strategic plan to guide action that addresses the needs of English Learners across all early learning systems.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Multiple languages are not to be feared, they're an asset in your classroom. And if you're lucky enough to have multilingual children in your classroom, embrace it and make it to the benefit of everybody.”

Sarah Baray, PreK4SA

LEARN MORE ABOUT PHILANTHROPY ADVOCATES' POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

View our research at philanthropyadvocates.org/EGSRResearch

View our 2021 policy recommendations at philanthropyadvocates.org/2021Leg

Visit the Texas English Learner Initiative website bilingualtetexas.org

CONNECT WITH ONE OF OUR EXPERTS. LEARN MORE.

Follow us on Twitter: [@TX_philanthropy](https://twitter.com/TX_philanthropy)

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