



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. Together, we work to ensure that Texas students begin on a strong path to **early grade success**.

THE CHALLENGE

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING IS FOUNDATIONAL FOR ACADEMIC & CAREER SUCCESS

From birth to age 5, children develop linguistic, cognitive, social, emotional, and regulatory skills that predict their later functioning in many domains.^{1,2} When children receive high-quality early educational experiences, the results are long-term and expansive. Examples include, reduced need for placement in special education classes in later childhood; higher academic achievement; lower rates of high school incompletions, juvenile arrests, and welfare assistance as an adult; and higher instances of wealth in later adolescence and early adulthood.³

Students participating in high-quality early learning programs are put on a path towards achieving third grade literacy proficiency.⁴ Students who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times less likely to graduate high school on time.⁵ In the 2020-2021 school year, 39% of third graders were reading at grade level.⁶ There was a decline across all proficiency levels between 2019 and 2021, both in reading and math proficiency.⁷

PRE-K ENROLLMENT DECLINES

Full-day, high-quality pre-K is a key strategy within a suite of early educational experiences to ensure students are on track to achieve social-emotional and academic success, including literacy proficiency.⁸ Texas pre-K enrollment has declined. Impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, pre-K enrollment decreased by 21 percent between school years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.⁹ Given the disruptions to learning and the declines in early childhood enrollment, it is even more imperative that early childhood programs be effective for students and families.

In 2019, the Texas Legislature significantly invested in strategies meant to ensure Texas students are engaged in early educational experiences and on track for foundational early literacy success. School districts across Texas have been working to leverage the state's investments made in House Bill 3 (2019, 86R), and philanthropy continues to support programmatic implementation through private investments.

RESEARCH FOCUS

Focused on ensuring the state's investments in early childhood learning are implemented programmatically and sustained in policy, Philanthropy Advocates is working with the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) and Texans Care for Children to examine implementation progress of the early childhood policy aspects of House Bill 3. Information we learn through this research will provide insight into opportunities to further ensure Texas students have access to foundational early learning experiences.

ENGAGE

This work is made possible by pooled funding from Philanthropy Advocates members in our Early Grade Success policy work group. **Invest your dollars and expertise in this research and in our efforts to ensure Texas students begin their educational experiences on a strong path towards success.**

Contact Becky Calahan to engage with this work: bcalahan@cftexas.org

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

