



## Request for Proposals

### Research for Philanthropy Advocates Early Grade Success Policy Work Group

November 2021

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#### Overview

Philanthropy Advocates, a collaboration with Educate Texas, seeks to contract with an experienced research organization to conduct quantitative and policy analysis focused on addressing this question: What is the implementation progress of early childhood policies passed in Texas's House Bill 3 (2019, 85R) school finance reform legislation passed in 2019?

Applicants should have a breadth of research skills with the ability to conduct both quantitative research and policy analysis with the intent to carry out this research project.

Philanthropy Advocates, a collaboration with Educate Texas, is a diverse funders' collaborative of over 55 private, corporate, and community foundations and United Ways. We work to protect, promote, and improve public and higher education in Texas so that all Texas students can achieve their educational goals from cradle to career.

**Our Philanthropy Advocates mission** is to empower Texas philanthropy to invest and engage in effective public and higher education policy and advocacy at the state level.

**Our Philanthropy Advocates vision** is to protect, promote, and improve public and higher education in Texas so that all Texas students can achieve their educational goals from cradle to career.

In 2019, Philanthropy Advocates joined forces with Educate Texas to advocate together on behalf of our state's 7 million public and higher education students. Educate Texas, an educational initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas, is a trusted change agent to strengthen Texas public and higher education. For more than a decade, we have worked side by side with our partners to empower students to realize their dreams and fuel a thriving Texas.

**Educate Texas Mission:** As a trusted change agent, we increase academic achievement and educational equity by leading programs, policy, and partnerships.

**Educate Texas Vision:** All Texas students, especially African-American, Latino and economically disadvantaged students, earn a college degree or credential that leads to a living wage and thriving communities.

## Background

Philanthropy Advocates is a geographically and politically diverse consortium of over 55 private, corporate, and community foundations from across Texas working together to promote, protect and improve public and higher education.

Research, innovation, seeding best practices, and rapid response form the foundation of what Texas philanthropy provides to state lawmakers and policymakers. Since 2012, Philanthropy Advocates has engaged the philanthropic sector to participate in research and advocacy. Philanthropy provides the state “R&D” (research and development), while the state provides the scale necessary to bring proven policy into classrooms and higher education institutions across Texas. In 2019, we joined Educate Texas at the Communities Foundation of Texas, to further our impact.

With our members’ guidance, Philanthropy Advocates concentrates on public and higher education policy issues that have the greatest impact on equitable student outcomes, including early grade success; guided pathways to college and career; effective teaching; and education finance.

Philanthropy Advocates is committed to serving as a trusted, non-partisan resource that provides fact-based data on Texas public schools and postsecondary higher education institutions.

In 2021, Philanthropy Advocates’ membership once again prioritized focusing on commissioning timely, salient research within early grade success, guided pathways to college and career and effective teaching.

All research commissioned by Philanthropy Advocates should be conducted with the objective of educating and informing Texas policymakers and their staff with analysis/synthesis of problem statements within our current key focus areas (early grade success, pathways to college and career and effective teaching). Research findings would provide context and the landscape around problems that could be addressed through policy adjustments. Philanthropy Advocates will disseminate this research to educate and inform policymakers on the findings.

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide objective and non-partisan data on public and higher education in Texas, Philanthropy Advocates is immediately seeking proposals from organizations to conduct research in accordance with deliverable requirements.

## Project Scope

Focused on ensuring students are kindergarten ready and begin their preK-12 experiences positioned for student success, Philanthropy Advocates is commissioning research to answer the following question:

### Research Question:

- What is the implementation progress of early childhood policies passed in Texas's House Bill 3 (2019, 85R) school finance reform legislation passed in 2019?

To answer this question, research should focus on the following objective:

### Research Objective:

Analyze implementation of Texas law, House Bill 3 (2019, 85R) (herein HB 3), to examine implementation progress of the [early childhood policy aspects of the HB 3](#) school finance reform legislation passed in 2019.

### Research Deliverables:

#### Part 1: Analysis of Implementation of Full Day Pre-K in HB 3

##### Deliverables:

- Brief overview of HB 3 (2019, 85R) early childhood policies.
- Conduct a landscape analysis of Texas school districts to determine:
  - Number of school districts implementing full-day pre-K,
    - Disaggregate by pre-K programs that meet the National Institute for Early Education Research definition of quality.
  - Number of school districts that have applied for waivers from implementing full-day pre-K,
  - Number of school districts that have received waivers from implementing full-day pre-K,
  - Overview of implementation waivers and what policy aspects are waived.
  - Identify how school districts that are implementing full-day pre-K are paying for that program.
- Examine public-private partnerships leveraged to implement full-day pre-K programs.
  - Disaggregate by partnerships that meet the National Institute for Early Education Research definition of quality.

- Overview of legislation that enables public-private partnerships to implement high-quality, full-day pre-K.
- To the extent data is available, provide insight into how much philanthropic support is covering costs to fully fund or supplement funding of full-day pre-K programs.

## Part 2: Analysis of School District Literacy Plans & Reading Academies

### Deliverables:

- Conduct a landscape analysis of published literacy plans following HB 3 (86 R), that required all Texas school boards to publish literacy plans on their website.
  - Include disaggregated information by rural, urban, suburban and total enrollment size.
- Examine common trends among literacy plans with opportunity to identify/inform best practices in improving early literacy outcomes.
  - Overlay information with relevant school district student demographics and educator demographics, specifically as it relates to primary and secondary languages, students and educators of color, number of educators certified in bilingual/dual language/ELL instruction, and number of educator exemptions for courses in bilingual/dual language/ELL instruction.
- Analysis of the implementation of reading academies as outlined in HB 3.
  - Include disaggregated information by rural, urban, suburban and total enrollment size.
- Analysis of the science of teaching reading exam certification required of teacher candidates who teach students in grades Pre-K-6 in HB 3.
- Sampling of district adoption and teacher implementation of reading practice requirements, including the incorporation of a phonics curriculum that uses systematic direct instruction in K-3 and reading diagnostics.

## Part 3: Analysis of Use of Early Education Allotment

### Deliverables:

- Examine the use(s) of the Early Education Allotment created in HB 3. Determine trends in the use of this allotment.
  - Include disaggregated information by rural, urban, suburban and total enrollment size.

## Project Phases

The scope of this project will consist of three primary phases reflective of grant payment installments, each on one statement of work. The first phase will involve identifying a project plan and timeline. The second phase of the project will consist of conducting the research. The third phase will involve developing final deliverables.

## Scope of Work

Research commissioned by Philanthropy Advocates may be a mixture of quantitative and qualitative work, as well as synthesis of work done in the field and applied with a statewide, statutory and regulatory context to inform the primary audience – Texas policymakers.

Successful proposals will identify necessary data sources and methods for addressing the research questions. Once data needs and research methodology are identified, the researcher will be responsible for executing the research project and developing the outlined deliverables. The scope of work includes securing any necessary ERC data, data sharing agreements and/or IRB approvals needed. The researcher will also be responsible for developing a robust project plan that outlines regular status updates, interim analyses/findings and timelines for drafts and annual reports. The project plan should include regular meetings with Philanthropy Advocates staff and the researcher.

All research should be presented in a written narrative report-style format, along with easily consumable communications materials (i.e one-pager summary of findings, presentation slide deck, infographics, key messages, and graphics for social media platforms) emphasizing key findings from the research.

The final report should include a description and explanation of the research and methodology, (including the statutes and rules examined and any engagement with state agency staff, postsecondary institution leads, and/or other stakeholders) along with links to access any research/data that is referenced or the source of data for all metrics and findings.

The final report should include a clear set of findings, a conclusion, and any potential policy opportunities related to research findings. The final report should include an acknowledgement to Philanthropy Advocates for commissioning the work.

## Timeline and Deliverables

Deliverables should be final by July 1, 2022. The researcher will work with Philanthropy Advocates staff to determine an appropriate timeline for the work based on research needs and deliver a project plan.

A draft project plan is required within an applicant's proposal. A final project plan should be complete within one month of signing the grant contract.

## Period of Contract

The period of the initial contract is December 31, 2021 to July 1, 2022.

## Proposal Requirements

Philanthropy Advocates will award grants to nonprofit organizations, public entities, or for-profit organizations with demonstrated experience and capacity to engage diverse audiences in important education issues. Each organization may only submit one proposal.

Proposals should include the following:

1. **Qualifications and Experience of Firm and Personnel** – demonstration of knowledge and experience related to project scope; reputation for on-time delivery; and commitment to collaborative approach. Please include references for similar projects and staff biographies of key personnel that would be assigned to the project, as well as a list of the organization's Board of Directors. The successful applicant should demonstrate their understanding and impact in policy analysis.
2. **Proposed Research Design** - demonstration of research expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research with preliminary, high level approach to methodology, data collection strategy, and analytic deliverables. Please include:
  - a. Where data will be housed and processes for ensuring secure data transfer and management.
  - b. Identification of individuals who will manage and facilitate the project, including resumes.
  - c. Sample work products that demonstrate ability to complete this project. Emphasis should be on showing the quality of deliverables and work, rather than the content.
3. **Work Plan** – a plan outlining the tasks, activities, timeline and evaluation plan necessary to provide the deliverables outlined above.
4. **Budgets (Organization and Project)** – Please include the proposed project and the organization budget. The project budget must detail costs necessary to accomplish the

project objectives and activities outlined in the task/activity plan, including travel. Proposals should include a full project budget and requests should not exceed \$100,000. Should applicants determine a budget exceeding \$100,000 is necessary to deliver high quality deliverable requirements, applicants should identify the request amount and include rationale for the purpose of these additional dollars.

5. **W-9** – completed W-9 for the organization: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>
6. **Latest organization financial audit.**

If selected as grant recipient, ACH information will be required within two days of award notification.

### **Proposal Submission & Questions**

Applications are due by end of day Friday, December 3, 2021.

Applicants should submit proposals via email to Becky Calahan, Deputy Director of Philanthropy Advocates, at [bcalahan@cftexas.org](mailto:bcalahan@cftexas.org). Please reach out to Becky as necessary with questions in advance of submission.