



Long-Range Plan for
PUBLIC EDUCATION

Long-Range Planning Public Input Survey Final Results

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Texas Comprehensive Center at American Institutes for Research

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Contents

	Page
Introduction.....	4
Survey Distribution.....	4
Survey Design and Data Analysis.....	4
Survey Results	5
Demographic Questions.....	5
Respondent Role	5
Geographic Representation.....	6
Ethnicity/Racial Representation.....	7
Equity and Access Questions	7
Ranking Results	9
Desired Outcome of Public Education Ranking Results	9
Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention Ranking Results.....	10
Parent Engagement and Empowerment Ranking Results.....	11
Student Engagement and Empowerment Ranking Results.....	12
Open-Ended Comments Results	13
Conclusions.....	14
Limitations	14
References.....	14
Appendix A	15
Appendix B.....	22
Appendix C.....	23
Appendix D.....	24

Introduction

The State Board of Education (SBOE), under Texas law, is required to adopt a Long-Range Plan (LRP) for Public Education. The 18-member steering committee, which is made up of state board members, various stakeholder group representatives, and representatives from three state agencies, is leading the process. The steering committee will recommend long-term goals for Texas schools and will identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the system.

To help the board gather public input that will shape the new plan and set long-term goals through the year 2030, Texas Education Agency (TEA) partnered with the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to develop a long-range planning public input survey to provide an opportunity for stakeholders from around the state to share their views on education.

Survey Distribution

English and Spanish versions of the *Long-Range Planning Public Input Survey* were distributed through open survey links, which allowed interested public stakeholders to participate. The electronic links for the survey were placed on TEA's website and the survey was available from January 25 through March 2, 2018, for approximately five weeks of data collection. The survey links were also distributed by TEA staff to several Texas education organizations, parent organizations, community and business associations as well as district leadership personnel. The survey links were also distributed to the Long-Range Plan steering committee members and they were able to encourage participation from their regions. A copy of the full English version of the survey is included in **Appendix A**.

Survey Design and Data Analysis

The online surveys were housed in SurveyGizmo, an online survey management system. Closed-ended questions were analyzed via the online system. The results from the English version and the Spanish version were combined. The remainder of this report will refer to the combined results of both surveys.

The first set of questions asked respondents to select the role they represented while completing the survey, indicate which Texas region they resided in, and their ethnicity/racial category or categories of identity. The next questions focused on the general purpose and outcome of public education and four prioritized topics selected by the LRP steering committee. These topics are Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention; Equity and Access; Parent Engagement and Empowerment; and Student Engagement and Empowerment. For several questions, survey respondents were asked to rank the top three options that they felt TEA should adopt in order to strengthen Texas' education policy or better target the needs of students, educators, and families. The final rankings were determined by a weighting process, which was calculated within the SurveyGizmo system.¹

¹ The overall ranking for each response option was derived from a score in which being ranked as more important receives a higher weight (the weights for 1, 2, and 3 rankings are 3, 2, and 1, respectively). Each response option is given a score that is the sum of the weighted count of 1, 2, and 3 rankings provided by respondents. The response option with the highest score is assigned the overall 1 ranking, with the response options with the next two highest scores assigned overall rankings of 2 and 3. For more information see <https://help.surveygizmo.com/help/ranking-grid>.



In addition to ranking concepts, strategies, and outcomes, respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional suggestions on what should be considered for the long-range plan for each topic area in the survey. These open-ended comments were coded into major themes based on the options listed for each topic area as well as new themes that emerged. Dominant themes are displayed in this report and a complete Excel file of all comments has been provided to TEA.

Survey Results

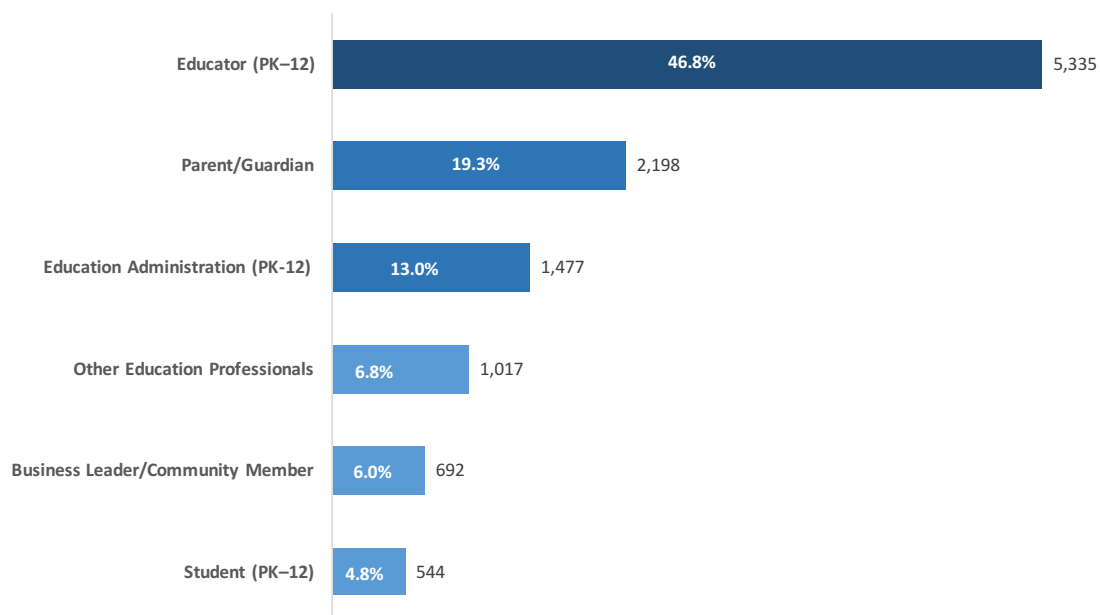
A total of 11,462 respondents participated in the survey, with 9,544 respondents completing all survey questions. All respondents (completions and partial) were included in these analyses and as a result, the number of responses presented will vary by question.

Demographic Questions

Respondent Role

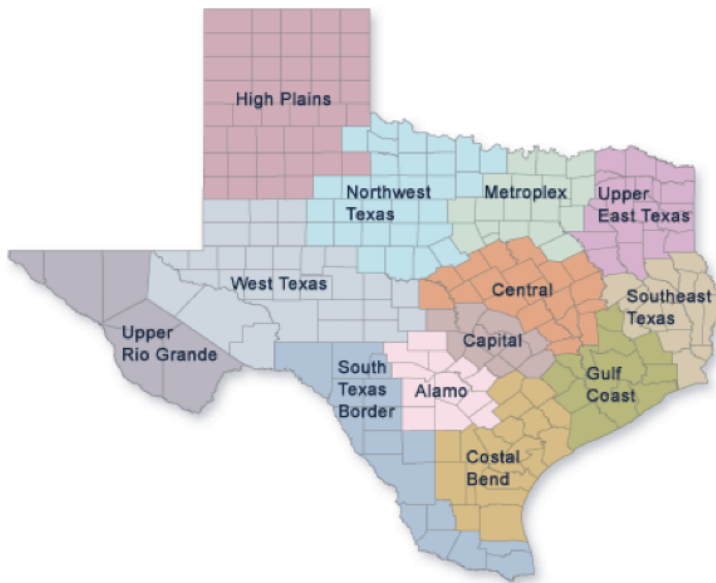
Respondents were asked to select the role they represented as they completed the input survey. **Figure 1** displays the role, percentage of responses, and counts for the role selected by respondents. Over 5,300 respondents selected Educator (PK-12) as their primary role, 1,477 selected Education Administration (PK-12), while another 1,017 selected other education-related titles. Some respondents wrote in school-based positions (i.e., school librarians, school counselors, and paraprofessionals) and they are also included in the Other Education Professionals category. A total of 2,198 respondents indicated that they were a parent/guardian. Respondents were allowed to select only one primary role as they completed the survey. However, about 1.3% (n=144) selected Other and wrote in their work titles or multiple stakeholder roles.

Figure 1: Respondent Role



Geographic Representation

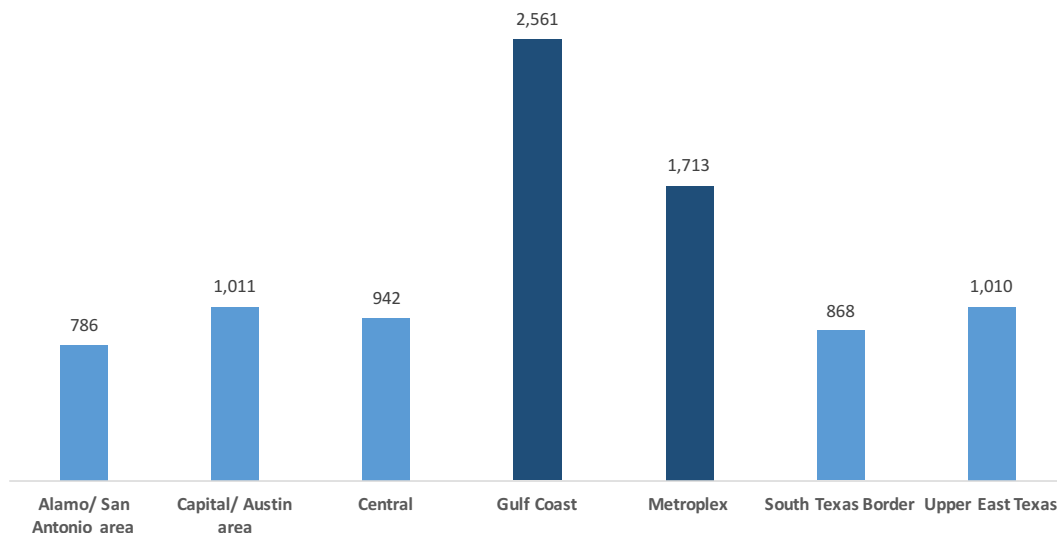
Figure 2: Texas Region Map²



In order to gauge the geographic regions of Texas represented within the survey results, respondents were asked to identify the region closest to their residence. The region map (Figure 2) was provided so respondents could determine in which region they resided. A total of 11,368 respondents selected their region from the map. Seventeen respondents indicated that they lived outside of Texas and their responses were removed from further analyses. Figure 3 displays the seven regions represented by survey respondents. A table with complete region results is

presented in Appendix B. The Gulf Coast region had the largest number of respondents (n=2,561), followed by the Metroplex region (n=1,713), and the Capital/Austin area region (n=1,011) and Upper East Texas region (n= 1,010).

Figure 3: Number of Respondents per Texas Regions



² Map Source: The Texas Comptroller’s Economic Region Map. Retrieved from the Texas Politics Project at https://texaspolitics.utexas.edu/archive/html/pec/features/0302_02/regmap.html

Ethnicity/Racial Representation

As a part of the demographic questions, respondents were asked to share the ethnicity/racial category or categories with which they identify. Respondents were allowed to select multiple categories; therefore, respondents can be represented in more than one category. A total of 12,126 responses were captured for this item, with the largest responses found in the White (n=8,413; 69.4%), Hispanic/Latino (n=2,222; 18.3%), and the Black/African American (n=853; 7.0%) categories. One hundred and thirty-one respondents declined to answer the question. Complete results can be found in **Appendix C**.

Equity and Access Questions

The following two questions were adapted from the Vision Coalition of Delaware: Statewide Survey of Public Opinion on Education in Delaware (Gerstein, Bocian, and Agne, 2016). Respondents were asked to use a scale from Poor to Excellent to rate the job Texas public schools are doing in providing all students with equitable access to the following supports and opportunities. **Table 1** displays the response rates (in percentages) to the equitable access items. In general, respondents felt Texas schools are doing a good job in providing equitable access in areas such as advanced level coursework, technology in classrooms, and extracurricular activities. Over 35% of respondents selected Fair when considering the job Texas schools are doing to provide equitable access to non-academic support, opportunities for community service projects and life skills development. Approximately 55% of respondents selected Poor when rating the job Texas schools are doing to provide equitable access to funding.

Table 1. Response Rates to Equitable Access Item					
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	No Responses
	%	%	%	%	%
Advanced level coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement, dual credit)	6.8	21.0	45.2	20.4	6.7
Classrooms equipped with technology (e.g., computers, internet)	15.7	30.2	38.9	13.5	1.7
Effective educators	6.7	27.2	50.7	14.1	1.3
Extracurricular opportunities	6.3	16.8	42.5	31.5	2.8
Exposure to arts and culture	21.6	34.7	31.5	10.1	2.1
Funding	54.9	28.5	12.1	2.0	2.5
Non-academic support (e.g., counselors, social workers)	30.3	36.7	25.2	4.7	3.0
Opportunities to complete community service projects	23.6	37.4	24.7	4.4	9.9
Opportunities to develop life skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving, critical thinking)	19.0	39.3	33.5	6.0	2.1

Number of Respondents range from 9,343 to 9,401

Respondents were also asked to use a scale from Poor to Excellent to rate the job Texas public schools are doing in meeting the needs of the following groups. **Table 2** displays the response rates (in percentages) to the meeting needs items. In general, respondents felt Texas schools are doing a good job in meeting the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs), students of color, students with disabilities/special needs, students who are gifted and talented, and parents. Nearly 60% of respondents selected Fair or Poor when considering the job Texas schools are doing to meet the needs of students living in poverty, while approximately 50% of respondents selected Fair or Poor when rating the job Texas schools are doing to meet the needs of students living in the foster care system.

Table 2. Response Rates to Meeting Needs Item					
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	No Responses
English Language Learners (ELLs)	12.8	29.6	38.6	11.3	7.7
Students of color	13.2	27.8	39.6	11.6	7.8
Students living in poverty	23.1	34.6	29.4	7.4	5.5
Students living in foster care system	20.7	29.0	27.1	5.4	17.8
Students with disabilities/special needs	19.2	27.5	35.0	13.8	4.6
Students who are gifted and talented	12.6	29.0	41.3	13.0	4.1
Parents	11.6	32.9	40.6	8.5	6.4

Number of Respondents range from 9,334 to 9,404

Ranking Results

The following ranking results were generated from a set of questions that focused on the general purpose and outcome of public education and three of the four prioritized topics selected by the LRP steering committee. These topics are Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention; Parent Engagement and Empowerment; and Student Engagement and Empowerment. Survey respondents were asked to rank the top three educational concepts that they felt Texas schools should include in the LRP for Texas. The list of concepts was produced from LRP community conversations as well as input from TEA.

The ranking results are presented in **Tables 3 through 6**. Within each table, the ranked concepts are listed as well as the total number of respondents who ranked the concept as one of their top three choices. As mentioned earlier, the final ranking was based on weighting and the number of times the concept was selected as a top three choice.

Desired Outcome of Public Education Ranking Results

The first ranking question was as follows: “*What is the desired outcome of public education in Texas? (Please rank your top 3 choices.)*” Respondents ranked “To teach communication, problem-solving, critical thinking and other employability skills” first, followed by “To prepare students to be productive citizens of society” and “To develop lifelong learners” as the top desired outcomes of public education.

Rank	Ranked Concept	N of Rankings
1	To teach communication, problem-solving, critical thinking and other employability skills	9,303
2	To prepare students to be productive citizens of society	8,221
3	To develop lifelong learners	6,263
4	To teach academic knowledge and skills	5,053
5	To teach ethics and morals	1,661
6	To help students develop basic life skills (e.g., hygiene, nutrition)	1,148

Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention Ranking Results

The second ranking question was as follows: “What strategies could Texas schools use to prepare, recruit, and retain effective teachers across the state? (Please rank your top 3 choices.)” As shown in Table 4, respondents ranked “Ensure teachers in our highest need schools are paid at least as much as teachers in more affluent schools within the same district” first, followed by “Create leadership and advanced career opportunities for teachers who want to remain in the classroom” and “Ensure school leaders have the flexibility to staff their schools based on the specific needs of their students and communities” as the top methods to address educator preparation, recruitment, and retention.

Table 4. Ranking Results for Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention Item		
Rank	Ranked Concept	N of Rankings
1	Ensure teachers in our highest need schools are paid at least as much as teachers in more affluent schools within the same district.	4,567
2	Create leadership and advanced career opportunities for teachers who want to remain in the classroom.	4,415
3	Ensure school leaders have the flexibility to staff their schools based on the specific needs of their students and communities.	4,221
4	Provide mentoring for beginning teachers in their first few years in the classroom.	4,097
5	Ensure that teacher preparation programs focus on the skills and practices most linked to student achievement.	3,654
6	Evaluate whether the professional development teachers are getting is actually helping them provide better outcomes for their students.	3,417
7	Provide opportunities for professionals in specialized fields to become teachers, particularly in subjects in high demand such as math, science and bilingual education.	2,347
8	Ensure all teachers consistently receive feedback on their performance, including teacher evaluations.	1,015

Parent Engagement and Empowerment Ranking Results

In order to rank the parent engagement and empowerment strategies, the next ranking question was as follows: “What are the most important actions Texas schools can take to increase parent engagement and empowerment? (Please rank your top 3 choices.)” “Provide classes on how families can help children at home” was ranked as the top action to consider, with “Provide assistance to increase parent participation (e.g., transportation, child care)” and “Increase communication between schools and families (e.g., social media, newsletters)” rounding up the top three choices.

Table 5. Ranking Results for Parent Engagement and Empowerment Item		
Rank	Ranked Concept	N of Rankings
1	Provide classes on how families can help children at home.	6,189
2	Provide assistance to increase parent participation (e.g., transportation, child care).	5,454
3	Increase communication between schools and families (e.g., social media, newsletters).	4,515
4	Hire parent liaisons to connect families with schools.	4,206
5	Increase school events that invite families into the school building.	4,178
6	Create and support opportunities for school personnel to make home visits to families.	2,705



Student Engagement and Empowerment Ranking Results

The last ranking question was as follows: “What strategies could Texas schools use to increase student engagement and empowerment? (Please rank your top 3 choices.)” As shown in Table 6, respondents ranked “Create career and postsecondary learning experiences for students to explore their own interests” first, followed by “Allow students to be more responsible for their own learning” and “Create opportunities for students to engage in the community” as the top three strategies that should be considered when attempting to increase student engagement and empowerment in Texas schools.

Table 6. Ranking Results for Student Engagement and Empowerment Item		
Rank	Ranked Concept	N of Rankings
1	Create career and postsecondary learning experiences for students to explore their own interests.	8,074
2	Allow students to be more responsible for their own learning.	6,856
3	Create opportunities for students to engage in the community.	7,343
4	Provide opportunities for students to voice their opinions in schools.	4,743

Open-Ended Comments Results

Respondents were also allowed to share open-ended comments following each priority topic. **Table 7** displays the question topic as well as the emerging themes that were captured from the first scan of the open-ended responses. The emerging themes are listed in alphabetical order. Additional analyses of the open-ended comments were conducted and the results are provided in **Appendix D**.

Table 7. Open-Ended Topic and Emerging Themes	
Prioritized LRP Topic	Emerging Themes
Desired Outcome of Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academics • Critical thinking • Eliminate and/or reduce testing • Ethics/morals • Life skills • Prepare for college and/or career • Productive citizens
Educator Preparation, Recruitment and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better insurance and retirement benefits • Eliminate and/or reduce testing • Funding • Increase salary • Reduce class sizes • Reduce paperwork • Respect for teaching profession • Teacher autonomy
Equity and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build business partnerships • Eliminate and/or reduce testing • Increase funding/reform Robin Hood policy • Increase technology in schools • Offer advanced coursework statewide
Parent Engagement and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address language barriers • Increase communication • More parent engagement opportunities • Offer parent classes/parent education • Parent accountability • Welcoming environment/school culture
Student Engagement and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate and/or reduce testing • Increase critical thinking classes • Increase real life classes- vocational, life skills • Increase student voice and listen to them • More internships/working experiences
Additional Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the students with special needs • Address the whole child/mental health • Eliminate and/or reduce testing • Increase equitable funding/reform funding policies • Increase parent and student accountability • Respect and value teachers • Teacher compensation and benefits

Conclusions

To gather public input that will inform the long-range planning process and assist the LRP steering committee as they set long-term goals through the year 2030, the LRP public input survey was designed. This survey provided an opportunity for stakeholders from around the state to share their views on education. Over 11,000 respondents completed the survey from regions across the state. Educators comprised the largest group of respondents, followed by parents.

The Long-Range Planning steering committee has the task of developing a vision of education in Texas. Survey respondents were able to voice their opinions regarding the general desired outcome and purpose of public education as well as the four prioritized topics. These topics are Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention; Equity and Access; Parent Engagement and Empowerment; and Student Engagement and Empowerment. The views gathered from this public survey ensure that the visions and recommendations of the LRP for Texas education will include the perspectives of Texas residents.

Limitations

The data summarized in this report is only from self-selected survey respondents. Given that TEA serves over five million students, this report provides a small snapshot of the views and opinions of those Texas stakeholders who were aware of the survey and voluntarily completed it.

References

Gerstein, J., Bocian, M., & Agne, K. (2016). Vision Coalition of Delaware: Statewide Survey of Public Opinion on Education in Delaware. Wilmington, DE: Gerstein, Bocian, Agne Strategies. Retrieved from <http://visioncoalitionde.org/news/education-survey-results/>

Rothstein, R., Jacobsen, R., & Wilder, T. (2008). Grading education: Getting accountability right. New York, NY: Economic Policy Institute, Teachers College Press. (as referenced in Georgia's Plan: A Vision for Public Education)



Appendix A



Long-Range Plan for **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Texas Public Input Survey

The State Board of Education (SBOE), under Texas law, is required to adopt a Long-Range Plan for Public Education. The 18-member steering committee, which is made up of state board members, various stakeholder group representatives and representatives from three state agencies, is leading the process. This survey has been designed to capture the viewpoints of community members from across the state of Texas exclusively. The public input gathered will help the committee shape the new plan and set long-term goals through the year 2030. We value your voice and appreciate you taking the time to provide input to inform the development of the plan.

To learn more about the development of the Texas State Board of Education's Long-Range Plan for Public Education, visit https://tea.texas.gov/SBOE/long-range_plan/.

Please complete the survey by 5:00 pm (CT) Friday, March 2, 2018, so that we may review and consider how best to incorporate your input into the plan. The survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete.

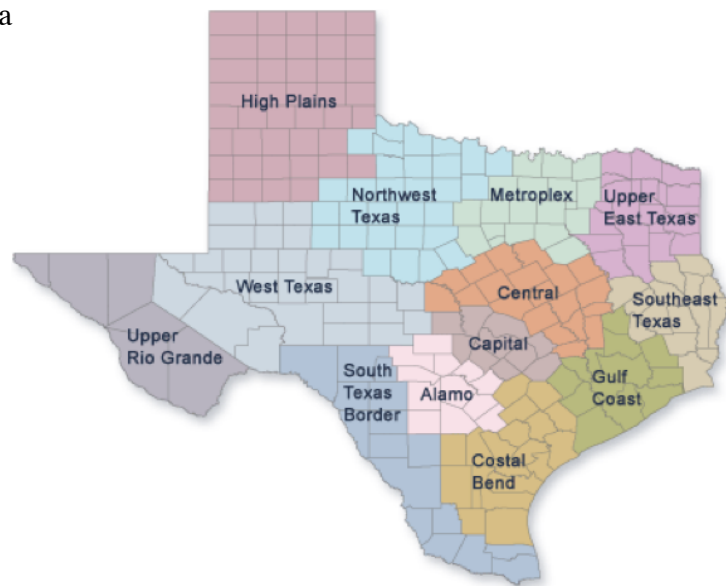
The survey is being conducted in partnership with the Texas Comprehensive Center at American Institutes for Research. Staff from AIR will be responsible for analyzing the data and sharing the results with the Long-Range Steering Committee.

1. Please select the role you represent as you complete this survey.

- Student (PK–12)
- Postsecondary Student
- Parent/Guardian
- Educator (PK–12)
- Education Administrator (PK–12)
- Higher Education Professional
- Business Leader
- Community Member
- Other (Please specify.):

2. In what region of Texas do you live? (Please select region closest to your residence.)

- Alamo/ San Antonio area
- Capital/ Austin area
- Central
- Coastal Bend
- Gulf Coast
- High Plains
- Northwest Texas
- Metroplex
- Southeast Texas
- South Texas Border
- Upper East Texas
- Upper Rio Grande
- West Texas
- I live outside of Texas.



3. Please select your ethnicity/racial category or categories. You may check as many as apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other (Please specify.):

Outcome of Public Education

4. What is the desired outcome of public education in Texas? (Please rank your top 3 choices.)

- To develop lifelong learners
- To provide opportunities for all children to reach their potential
- To help students develop basic life skills (e.g., hygiene, nutrition)
- To prepare students to be productive citizens of society
- To teach academic knowledge and skills
- To teach ethics and morals
- To teach communication, problem-solving, critical thinking and other employability skills

Other suggestions for the desired outcomes of public education?

Prioritized Topics

In developing the Long-Range Plan, the committee has prioritized four topics to be included. These topics are Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention; Equity and Access; Parent Engagement and Empowerment; and Student Engagement and Empowerment. The following questions will focus on the prioritized topics and how Texas schools can be strengthened in these areas.

5. What strategies could Texas schools use to prepare, recruit, and retain effective teachers across the state? (Please rank your top 3 choices.)

- Create leadership and advanced career opportunities for teacher who want to remain in the classroom.
- Ensure all teachers consistently receive feedback on their performance, including teacher evaluations.
- Ensure school leaders have the flexibility to staff their schools based on the specific needs of their students and communities.
- Ensure teachers in our highest need schools are paid at least as much as teachers in more affluent schools within the same district.
- Ensure that teacher preparation programs focus on the skills and practices most linked to student achievement.
- Evaluate whether the professional development teachers are getting is actually helping them provide better outcomes for their students.
- Provide mentoring for beginning teachers in their first few years in the classroom.
- Provide opportunities for professionals in specialized fields to become teachers, particularly in subjects in high demand such as math, science and bilingual education.

Other suggestions for preparing, recruiting, and retaining effective educators?



6. On the scale from poor to excellent, please rate the job Texas public schools are doing in providing all students with equitable access to the following supports and opportunities:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	No opinion
Advanced level coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement, dual credit)					
Classrooms equipped with technology (e.g., computers, internet)					
Effective educators					
Extracurricular opportunities					
Exposure to arts and culture					
Funding					
Non-academic support (e.g., counselors, social workers)					
Opportunities to complete community service projects					
Opportunities to develop life skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving, critical thinking)					

Suggestions for increasing equity and access in schools, particularly in the areas of advanced coursework, funding, and technology?

7. On the scale from poor to excellent, please rate the job Texas public schools are doing in meeting the needs of the following groups:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	No opinion
English Language Learners (ELLs)					
Students of color					
Students living in poverty					
Students living in foster care system					
Students with disabilities/special needs					
Students who are gifted and talented					
Parents					

8. What are the most important actions Texas schools can take to increase parent engagement and empowerment? (Please rank your top 3 choices.)

- Create and support opportunities for school personnel to make home visits to families.
- Hire parent liaisons to connect families with schools.
- Increase communication between schools and families (e.g., social media, newsletters).
- Increase school events that invite families into the school building.

- Provide assistance to increase parent participation (e.g., transportation, child care).
- Provide classes on how families can help children at home.

Other suggestions for increasing parent engagement and empowerment?

9. What strategies could Texas schools use to increase student engagement and empowerment? (Please rank your top 3 choices.)

- Allow students to be more responsible for their own learning.
- Create career and postsecondary learning experiences for students to explore their own interests.
- Create opportunities for students to engage in the community.
- Provide opportunities for students to voice their opinions in schools.

Other suggestions for increasing student engagement and empowerment?

10. Do you have any additional input for the Texas Long-Range Plan Steering Committee? Thank You!

Thank you for completing this survey. Your response is very important to us.

To learn more about the development of the Texas State Board of Education's Long-Range Plan for Public Education, visit https://tea.texas.gov/SBOE/long-range_plan/.

Appendix B

Response Rates for Geographic Region Survey Item

Region	Number	%
Alamo/ San Antonio area	786	6.9
Capital/ Austin area	1,011	8.9
Central	942	8.3
Coastal Bend	580	5.1
Gulf Coast	2,561	22.6
High Plains	623	5.5
Northwest Texas	287	2.5
Metroplex	1,713	15.1
Southeast Texas	403	3.6
South Texas Border	868	7.6
Upper East Texas	1,010	8.9
Upper Rio Grande	108	1.0
West Texas	459	4.0

Appendix C

Response Rates for Ethnicity/Racial Category Survey Item

Ethnicity/Racial Category	Number	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	247	2.0
Asian	261	2.2
Black or African American	853	7.0
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin	2,222	18.3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	39	0.3
White	8,413	69.4
Other	91	0.8

Appendix D

Open-Ended Comments Results

To further analyze the open-ended comments, themes and corresponding terms were identified and clustered to determine the number of times a theme was mentioned. The following tables display the results of the analysis and sample comments corresponding to each theme. The total number provided includes all written comments. The themes are listed along with the count and percentage of comments, starting with the theme most often noted. Given the variety and range of comments written by survey respondents, the percentages provided for each topic will not equal 100%. Various comments could not be captured under a theme (i.e., political commentaries, unrelated personal testimonies); therefore, they are not represented in the tables.

Themes and Sample of Open-Ended Comments: Desired Outcome for Public Education (n=2,504)	
Eliminate and/or reduce testing (n=188; 7.5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less state testing, especially in grades 5–8 (4 years), where students can take up to 20 mandated state exams (counting retakes). Stop teaching to take tests. If you teach them properly, being able to take a state test will come easily.
Ethics/morals (n=175; 7.0%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In today's society, it's come to the point where ethics and morals need to be taught in school as well because so many children are not receiving that at home.
Prepare for college and/or career (n=132; 5.3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare students for a career. Everyone will not go to college. Some students need training in a technical skill so they can be a productive citizen. To prepare students for military service, skilled jobs, or further education as they see fit.
Academics (n=102; 4.1%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should learn academic skills alongside social emotional skills.
Productive citizens (n=86; 3.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare students to be productive citizens of society who are ethical and have morals. Prepare students to possess skills and competencies to be successful in 21st century workplace and society.
Life skills (n=68; 2.7%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An understanding of basic life skills, such as home economics, shop, etc.

Themes and Sample of Open-Ended Comments: Educator Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention (n=3,462)

Better pay, insurance and retirement benefits (n=1,926; 55.6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay teachers as professionals and take care of those who have and will retire. Teachers should be treated at least as well as state employees.
Eliminate and/or reduce testing (n=421; 12.2%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get rid of the STAAR test. It has ruined education because it fails to hold back students that have not passed STAAR tests in the elementary and middle school grades. • Create State exams to fit all learners, even low level, and non-readers.
Funding (n=148; 4.3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that proper funding is provided for districts with the more difficult student demographics. • Teachers need appropriate teaching materials and resources. Teachers should not pay out of pocket for supplies.
Respect for teachers and teaching profession (n=134; 3.9%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are losing too many good teachers because of lack of respect in the classroom. • Create a culture where teachers are seen as professionals once again, valued and appreciated.
Reduce class sizes (n=105; 3.0%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller classroom sizes, which means schools need additional funds to hire more staff to reduce the student-to-teacher ratios. • Ensure that classes have the proper ratio or provide aides for help. A worn-out teacher will not be effective or stay.
Reduce paperwork/workload (n=95; 2.7%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think educators are given so many responsibilities outside of what they were hired to do: teach our children. This in turn causes burnout and causes teachers to leave the profession. • Stop all the needless paperwork and regulations.
Teacher autonomy (n=51; 1.5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting teachers teach from their own creative minds and not be forced to follow strict curriculum or routines. • Support the teachers and give them back control of the classroom. Allow them to educate and not just prepare for testing.

Themes and Sample of Open-Ended Comments: Equity and Access (n=2,709)	
Reform state funding (n=1,461; 53.9%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the level of state spending to school districts to allow each district the financial ability to provide the types of programs and resources most desired by the communities they serve. • The legislature should address school finance. Eliminate Robin Hood program.
Increase access to technology/ Upgrade technology (n=513; 18.9%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure funding so that every school has the facility and technology needed for 21st century skills. • The State should make sure that all areas have access to high-speed internet and that students at all levels have access to computers. Rural districts and small districts suffer in this area.
Eliminate and/or reduce testing (n=198; 7.3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the ridiculous standardized testing. We will opt out for our child. • Remove the STAAR and EOC tests so that focus can truly be on advanced coursework.
Increase access to advanced coursework (n=141; 5.2%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize more distance learning opportunities where students could spend a few hours per week with top-level teachers in advanced coursework settings. • Provide more opportunities for small rural schools.
Build partnerships (n=112; 4.1%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More partnerships with community colleges to offer college credits while in high school. • Districts and schools should build relationships with companies to help provide resources, job experiences, and mentors.

Themes and Sample of Open-Ended Comments: Parent Engagement and Empowerment (n=1,738)	
More parent engagement opportunities (n=395; 22.7%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let parents and teachers work together on projects, field trips, and educational opportunities in and outside the classroom into the communities to foster a stronger bond to help our students succeed. Create multiple opportunities (i.e., Meet the Teacher, Parent Night, etc.) that provide accessibility to parents with non-traditional work schedules.
Two-way communication (n=184; 10.6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to the concerns parents are voicing. Train principals and teachers to communicate consistently and effectively with parents and bring them in as partners in education.
Offer parent classes/parent education (n=132; 7.6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There needs to be more required parent training and connection between school, parents, and community. Teach classes online to parents on lessons to support learning.
Parent accountability (n=96; 5.5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create partnerships with parents so all parents can take some responsibility in their child's education and not be the school's total responsibility. Parents need to be held accountable too. Poor student behavior is keeping learning from happening in many classrooms.
Address language barriers (n=72; 4.1%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools staffed with translators reflecting top five languages spoken. More translation supports for teacher-to-home communication.
Welcoming environment/school culture (n=66; 3.8%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parent liaison should be a communications professional who can build a pipeline between parents and schools. Parents have to feel invited, welcome in the schools and feel that they are important to their child's success

Themes and Sample of Open-Ended Comments: Student Engagement and Empowerment (n=1,629)	
Eliminate and/or reduce testing (n=292; 17.9%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the emphasis on testing. As a teacher of 23 years, I have watched them destroy education. In students, it has ruined motivation and critical thinking. In teachers, it ruined morale and creativity.
College and career readiness experiences (n=163; 10.0%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students need to have the opportunity to pursue career oriented programs. This would allow some students to graduate with a skill that will help them find work. Starting at the elementary level, students need to hear and understand that their learning does not end in high school. We need to prepare them to be college and career ready from the beginning.
More internships/vocational experiences (n=117; 7.2%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't force kids to go to high school if they want to be plumbers, or mechanics. Create vocational programs coupled with apprenticeships to keep them engaged and give them skills. Not all students are going to college. Bring back vocational classes and job placement programs.
Student voice and listen to them (n=101; 6.2%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow students to be more involved with input and choices. They are the ones getting the education and they should be in the conversation.
Increase real life activities - life skills (n=88; 5.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get them involved in enriching activities that teach them leadership and life skills. More exposure to the real world – make education applicable. More project-based learning.