

Texas Parents Anxious About Their Child’s Education, with Hispanics and Spanish-Speakers the Most Worried.

Written Testimony Submitted to the House Public Education Committee
July 26, 2022

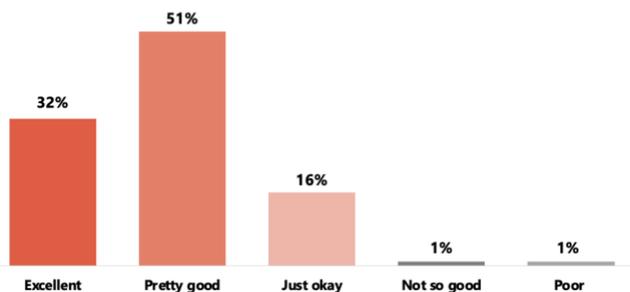
This interim, Texas 2036 commissioned several statewide polls to determine how parents feel about their child’s public education. There are three key takeaways from this data that we wanted to highlight for you today:

1. Parents like their child’s school, but they are worried about the quality of their child’s education.
2. Parents rely on data to inform their understanding of how their child performs academically.

1. Parents like their child’s school but are worried about the quality of their child’s education and their ability to engage at school to support their children.

When asked to rate the quality of their child’s public education, **83% rated their child’s school as “Excellent” or “Pretty Good.”** This is good news for Texas schools. It indicates a high level of parental satisfaction with the quality of their child’s school.

How would you rate the education that your child is getting from their school?



However, **there is a tension in our results that should not be ignored.** 60% or more of parents reported sincere concerns around their child’s

academic performance, their child’s preparation for life after graduation, and their ability as a parent to engage to support their child. When we looked at these numbers by some of the state’s most vulnerable sub-populations, the numbers got even higher.

65% of parents are worried about whether their student is prepared for life after high school. The most worried in this category were Spanish-speakers (86%), Hispanics (74%) and parents of 6th - 8th grade girls (73%).

61% of parents are worried they do not know how well their child is really doing. Spanish-speaking parents (83%), special education parents (72%), bi-cultural parents (71%), and Hispanics (71%) were among the most concerned.

61% of Texas parents are worried their school will not listen to their concerns. Once again, the most worried were Spanish-speakers (78%), followed by bi-cultural parents (72%) and parents of 6th - 8th grade girls (70%). **This is perhaps most alarming – those parents that are most concerned about their children’s learning and future feel the least empowered to support their children.** Parental empowerment requires that parents have the ability to impact their child’s education, yet nearly two-thirds of parents do not feel like their schools will listen to their concerns.

2. Parents rely on data to inform their understanding of how their child performs academically.

Parents need access to high-quality data on how their student is performing to address these

concerns. When we asked parents in our statewide parent survey what sources of data they use to understand how their child is doing, 74% reported that they use information from the STAAR test to understand their child's progress. Hispanic (80%) and Spanish-speakers (91%) were among the groups who most rely on the STAAR exam for information.

We found similar results in our 2021 statewide voter poll. When we asked voters how important having standardized testing data was so that the state could target resources to help students improve their reading, 93% of Texas voters said having this data was important to them. In that same poll, we found that 88% of Texas voters – including 82% of voting parents – believe that we need to care/know enough about how all students are learning to measure their progress.

Where do we go from here?

What is the answer to the disconnect between parents' overall satisfaction with their public school and their simultaneous concerns about their student's academic progress?

Simple: Texas should equip parents with the data they need to actively engage in their child's education.

There will be ongoing discussions this interim and during the legislative session on ways the state can actively empower parents to take part in their student's education. Clear, objective data is one of the best tools that we have to ensure parents know how their child is doing, and that parents can work with their school districts in response to their child's academic performance. Standardized testing is a tool to empower parents to understand their child's and their school's academic performance and intervene to support their children when needed. Without actionable data,

parents lack the necessary information to fully engage in support of their child's academic future.

The need to equip parents with data on their student's outcomes is pressing. The best outcome that we can look for in terms of total student performance is how that student does after high school graduation. We have several different ways that we can measure this outcome while the student is in the K-12 system:

- 90% of Texas high schoolers graduate from high school.¹
- 63% of students are considered College, Career, and Military Ready.²
- 26% of Texas high school graduates received a 4 year, 2 year, or Level 1 Level 2 certification program 6 years after graduation.³

Parents are their child's first and greatest teacher. They need access to academic information to support their students. In order to do this, the state needs to assess students annually and in core subjects. Then be intentional about providing that information to the child's parents. The only way the state can overcome the academic deficits it currently faces is by viewing parents as powerful partners in this change and equipping them with the data they need to advocate for their child.

Mary Lynn Pruneda

Senior Policy Advisor

Texas 2036

marylynn.pruneda@texas2036.org

325-665-9460

¹https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/account/va/va_graduation.html

²https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/cgi/sas/broker?_service=marykay&_program=perfreport.perfmast.sas&_debug=0&lev=S&prgopt=reports/tapr/ccmr.sas

³https://issuu.com/texaseducationagency/docs/tea_annual_report_03-04-22_rev_accessible_final