LOCALPROGRESS TEXAS

February 21, 2025

The Honorable Dustin Burrows
Texas State Speaker of the House
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

The Honorable Brad Buckley
Texas State Chairman of House Education Committee
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Speaker Dustin Burrows, Chairman Brad Buckley, and members of the Texas State Legislature,

We can all agree that every single Texan child – whether they're growing up in our state's largest city or our smallest town – deserves a good quality education. **As local elected officials serving in towns, cities, counties and school districts across the great state of Texas, we strongly urge you to oppose a statewide school voucher program, as created in Senate Bill (SB) 2 and House Bill (HB) 3.**

Local Progress Texas is a network of 100 local elected officials across the state – from school board members and city council members to mayors and county commissioners – representing nearly 50 jurisdictions all the way from Kaufman County to Maverick County. As local leaders, we are those closest to the communities we serve, and one thing we have heard loud and clear is that **a statewide school voucher program would be detrimental to our state's public schools and to our school-aged children**.

As you well know, Texas is one of the last remaining conservative states that doesn't have a statewide voucher program. For the past 30-plus years, state legislators across the political spectrum have continually voted against vouchers for two key reasons:

1. **Texas schools are already among the most chronically underfunded in the country.** In fact, a whopping 91 percent of Texas public school students attend inadequately funded schools everyday. Passing a school voucher program would siphon even more funding away from our public schools, leaving Texas schools – and students – in a state of total disarray.

2. **A statewide school voucher program would be detrimental to our state's rural public schools**, and our state leadership cares deeply about our rural communities. Our rural schools would be forced to strip their budgets down to just the necessities – that means teacher shortages, no football teams, no career or technical programs, no bands, no special education, no after-school programs – the list goes on.

What changed? Why are some of our state representatives suddenly supporting vouchers? Out-of-state billionaires recently started aggressively lobbying for a statewide voucher program in Texas because it would benefit them, NOT Texas children.

We cannot stand by while ultra-wealthy out-of-staters try to tell us what Texans need, dismantle our public education system, and strip even more power away from our local communities across the state. Instead, we must stand with our rural communities and unequivocally oppose a statewide voucher program.

Sincerely,

Board President Armando Rodriguez, Canutillo Independent School District, El Paso
Board President Ana Cortez, Manor Independent School District, Manor
Board Member Juan Miguel Arredondo, San Marcos Consolidated ISD, San Marcos
Board Trustee Ed Turner, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas
Board Trustee Danielle Martinez, United Independent School District, Laredo
Board Trustee Chuy Zarate, Round Rock Independent School District, Round Rock
Board Trustee Crystal Davila, Pasadena Independent School District, Pasadena
Board Trustee Jack Loveridge, El Paso Independent School District, El Paso
Board Trustee Andrew Gonzales, Austin Independent School District, Austin
Board Trustee Stephanie Gharakhanian, Austin Community College, Austin
Board Trustee Julie Ann Nitsch, Austin Community College, Austin
Board Trustee Sarah Sorensen, San Antonio Independent School District, San Antonio
Board Trustee Michael Valdez, Edgewood Independent School District, San Antonio
Board Trustee Leah Hanany, El Paso Independent School District, El Paso
Board Trustee Alfredo Perez, Laredo Independent School District, Laredo
Board Trustee Fernando de Urioste, Austin Independent School District, Austin
Board Trustee Susanna Ledesma-Woody, Del Valle Independent School District, Austin
Board Trustee Samuel Franco, Del Valle Independent School District, Austin
Board Trustee Arati Singh, Austin Independent School District, Austin
Board Trustee Damian Pantoja, Del Valle Independent School District, Austin
Mayor Pro Tem Vanessa Fuentes, Austin
Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Adam Bazaldua, Dallas
Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Junior Ezeonu, Grand Prairie
Council Member Tartisha Hill, Balch Springs
Council Member Amanda Rodriguez, San Marcos
Council Member Josh Acevedo, El Paso
Council Member Alyssa Cigarroa, Laredo
Council Member Zo Qadri, Austin
Council Member Alyssa Garza, San Marcos
Council Member Jaime Resendez, Dallas
Council Member Teri Castillo, San Antonio
Council Member Jaynie Schultz, Dallas
Council Member Crystal Chism, DeSoto
Council Member Dan Barrios, Richardson
Council Member Zarin Gracey, Dallas
Council Member Bear Heiser, Kyle
Council Member Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, San Antonio
Council Member Sylvia Campos, Corpus Christi
Council Member Elida Castillo, Taft
Council Member Brian Beck, Denton

Council Member Chad West, Dallas
Council Member Omar Narvaez, Dallas,
Council Member Brandon Chase McGee, Denton
Council Member Vicki Byrd, Denton
Council Member Ivan Niño, El Paso
Council Member Chris Canales, El Paso
Council Member Melissa Cigarroa, Laredo
Commissioner Dexter McCoy, Fort Bend County
Commissioner David Stout, El Paso County
Commissioner Dr. Michelle Cohen, Hays County

About Local Progress Texas (LPTX)
LPTX organizes local elected officials across the state to share best practices and policy solutions across our counties, cities, towns, and school boards. LPTX currently has 100 members, representing nearly 50 jurisdictions across the state.