

## Texas Education Timeline

- 1836 The Texas Declaration of Independence recorded the failure of the Mexican government to provide a public school system among the reasons for establishing sovereignty from Mexico.
- 1838 President Mirabeau Lamar advocated to the Republic of Texas Congress to set aside land for public schools. His activism earned him the title of “Father of Education in Texas.”
- 1840 Congress passed legislation establishing a school system for all levels of education, from elementary to the university. The legislation delegated control to counties and set aside 17,712 acres to each county for the support of schools.
- 1845 The United State annexed Texas, and the state’s new constitution established free schools, as well as at least 1/10 of all state taxes to fund specifically public schools.
- 1845 Baylor University founded in Waco and chartered by the final Congress of the Republic of Texas.
- 1854 Governor Elisha Pease signed the Common School Law of 1854 that officially launched the Texas public school system.
- To fund public education, the Texas Legislature created the Special School Fund (later the Permanent School Fund). The fund was endowed from the \$2 million Texas received for relinquishing land claims west and north of its current boundaries to the U.S.
- 1854 Education funding began to be based on an annual census. Railroads receiving grants were required to survey additional land for public school use.
- 1861 The financial stresses at the beginning of the Civil War caused the depletion of the Permanent School Fund because of loan defaults. Public and private schools were closed as resources were directed to the war effort.
- 1866 The post-Civil War Constitution of 1866 made educational provisions for African Americans through property taxes. The Constitution also required public school teachers to obtain certificates in order to teach.
- 1867 George Peabody, considered the first great American educational philanthropist, created the Peabody Education Fund to support post-Civil War education endeavors in Southern states.
- 1868 Citizens of New Braunfels were the first to vote and approve a tax to support a “free” school in their town.
- 1869 The Reconstruction Constitution furnished the framework for a centralized school system. A state superintendent position was established as well as a State Board of Education. Also required were local taxes to maintain the schools and compulsory student attendance.
- 1871 The Texas Legislature founded the Texas A&M University System.
- 1875 The Legislature created the independent school district, giving any incorporated city the authorization to provide education for its schoolchildren.
- 1876 A new state Constitution replaced the Reconstruction Constitution. The new Constitution set aside 45 million acres of public land for school funding, placed the Permanent School Fund income into bonds, and abolished compulsory school attendance laws and the office of state superintendent.
- 1876 Texas A&M University opened for classes in College Station.

- 1883 O. M. Roberts, considered the Thomas Jefferson of Texas education, helped pass a constitutional amendment that began the school district system for Texas schools. He was also influential in establishing the University of Texas.
- 1883 The Texas Legislature created the University of Texas System headquartered in Austin.
- 1884 The office of state superintendent was reinstated.
- 1885 The University of Texas began an admissions program for high school students.
- 1890 The University of North Texas was founded in Denton as a private teachers college.
- 1893 The El Paso Board of Education was the first to open a public kindergarten.
- 1890s Laws granted cities and municipalities more administrative freedom. By 1900, 526 independent school districts existed in Texas.
- 1903 The Texas Legislature created a textbook selection board to increase uniformity across school districts because students simply went to school with books from their homes.
- 1909 The Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers (Texas PTA) was formed in Dallas.
- 1911 Legislation established county boards of education, thereby promoting the creation of rural high schools and giving them the funding of urban area schools.
- 1911 The Legislature established the Texas State University System to administer the state's public teachers colleges. Founded in 1899, Texas State University in San Marcos is the largest institution in the system today.
- 1911 Legislation initiated county boards of education and rural high schools to serve the 600,000 rural students across the state.
- 1915 The state enacted a compulsory school attendance law. Texas was one of five states that did not have a compulsory attendance law enacted prior to 1915. Students were required to attend school for 60 days in 1916-1917, 80 days in 1917-1918, and 100 days from 1918-1919.
- 1918 Schools began to provide textbooks for students.
- 1920 The Better Schools Amendment passed that allowed increases in local taxes for public schools. Although the law helped ease the state's burden of school financing, it also contributed to inadequate funds for some sparsely populated and poorer areas.
- 1923 The Texas Legislature established Texas Tech University in Lubbock originally as the Texas Technological College.
- 1923 The Legislature authorized the state's first school survey that brought educational experts from out-of-state to examine the Texas public school system.
- 1927 The University of Houston was founded.
- 1928 The State Board of Education began as the overall policymaking institution for public schools. The Board was also responsible for operating budgets, establishing regulations, managing the Permanent School Fund, and executing textbook contracts.
- 1929 The Texas Legislature authorized funding for kindergartens in all public schools.
- 1935 The number of school districts totaled 6,953, including 5,938 common/ rural districts with an average of only 65 students and 1,015 independent districts with an average enrollment of more than 800 students.
- 1936 The Works Progress Administration helped finance a thorough study of the public education system in Texas to assess conditions in schools and consolidate school districts.

- 1938 The results of the three-year comprehensive school district study were published. The resulting reform plan was the most radical in the state's history, and some conservatives resisted the changes, thus causing uneven implementation across the state.
- 1949 The Gilmer-Aikin Laws reorganized the public school system to make schools more efficient and better funded. The legislation consolidated the 4,500 school districts into 2,900 more efficient units, and state funding became dependent on attendance, thus providing an incentive to increase attendance. The Texas Education Agency replaced the State Board of Education for statewide supervision of the public school system.
- 1950 *Sweatt v. Painter* challenged segregation in public schools and laid the groundwork for integration in schools.
- 1954 The U.S. Supreme Court banned racial segregation in public schools in *Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas*. San Antonio was one of the first districts to comply.
- 1963 The U.S. Supreme Court banned public school prayer in *Abington v. Schempp*.
- 1964 The Laredo United Consolidated School District offered Texas' first bilingual education program.
- 1965 98 percent of public school teachers had college degrees, and 40 percent had graduate degrees.
- 1970 The Texas Education Agency mandated a minimum of 180 days of classroom instruction for schoolchildren.
- 1970 A district court in East Texas ordered the Texas Education Agency to take responsibility for desegregating schools. Assigning students to schools based on race, and segregated bus routes were illegal. *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi ISD* also extended the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to Mexican Americans.
- 1973 Senate Bill 121 required implementation of bilingual programs to all schools with 20 or more limited English-speaking students in the same grade. The law officially abolished Texas' English-only teaching requirements that often subjected Spanish speakers to fines and punishments for not speaking English.
- 1975 House Bill 1126 provided the first state compensatory funds and state equalization aid to poor districts.
- 1979 The Texas Legislature implemented standardized tests to ensure students were learning the curriculum and prepared for the workplace. The Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) was the first statewide mandatory test, and was administered to grades 3, 5, and 9. Three subjects were tested—reading, writing, and mathematics. The standardized test marked the start of the era of accountability in Texas education.
- 1981 House Bill 246 mandated the creation of a state curriculum.
- 1984 The Texas Legislature mandated a 22:1 student-teacher ratio for classes from kindergarten through fourth grade and tied student performance to teacher salaries. The legislation also required students to pass an exit exam to graduate from high school. As a result of this law, the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) began. Schools gave the standardized test to students in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. Passing the exam was required for high school graduation.
- 1987 The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) initiated the collection of education data for the state.
- 1989 In *Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby*, The Texas Supreme Court determined that the state's school finance system was unconstitutional and rejected proposed solutions until a new financial plan was approved in 1995.

- 1990 The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) became the third standardized test used in Texas. Schools administered the test to students in grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 for math, reading, and writing. Passing the more rigorous grade 11 test was required to graduate from high school.
- 1991 Governor Ann Richards appointed the first commissioner of education in Texas, who she charged with managing the state education agency as well as communicating with the U.S. Department of Education.
- 1993 Senate Bill 7 encouraged spending equity across Texas school districts and declared that no school district could have more than a set amount of spending. School districts that exceeded the limit had to reallocate some of their money to poorer districts. The bill also created the state's educational accountability system that served as a precursor to the federal No Child Left Behind Act.
- 1995 Major reform of the Texas Education System occurred with Senate Bill 1 that returned authority to local school districts, granted open-enrollment charter schools, and gave teachers the authority to remove disruptive students from their classrooms.
- 1996 The State Board of Education approved the creation of Texas' first 20 charter schools.
- 1997 Texas House Bill 588, commonly referred to as the Top 10% Rule, guaranteed Texas students who graduate in the top 10% of their class automatic acceptance to all state funded universities.
- 1997 The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) became the new curriculum standards.
- 1999 The Legislature approved state funding for public education of \$3.89 billion, the largest in state history. This increase in funding included higher salaries for teachers, counselors, librarians, and school nurses.
- 2003 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) replaced the TAAS test to assess students' reading, math, writing, science, and social studies skills, and schools administered the TAKS to grades 3-11. Because the test covered more subjects than previous standardized instruments, the TAKS raised concern that teachers began to teach to the test.
- 2003 As a result of the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act, every school earned an accountability rating based on assessment tests and dropout rates.
- 2009 Senate Bill 175 allowed UT-Austin to reduce the number of students automatically admitted.
- 2011 The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STARR) replaced the TAKS test. The mandatory STARR encompassed the same topics for grades 3-11 but was more rigorous and required a 12- course exit assessment.
- 2013 The Legislature eliminated measures of proficiency in chemistry, physics, geometry, world history, and world geography in standardized tests