

Public school advocate pleased about Texas House elections

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While much of the nation focused on the outcome of a still-to-be-determined presidential election, the executive director of Pastors for Texas Children closely watched contested races for the Texas House of Representatives—and he liked what he saw.



Charles Foster
Johnson

“We note with profound gratification the emphasis on public education in this electoral cycle. Virtually every incumbent and challenger ran on a strong public education platform,” Charles Foster Johnson said.

“It is clear that the people of Texas want their House of Representatives to be fully affirming of great public schools for all 5.4 million Texas children, promote policies that protect and provide for them, and oppose policies that harm them.”

All 150 seats in the Texas House of Representatives and 16 out of 31 seats in the Texas Senate were up for election. Republicans continue to control

both chambers of the state legislature.

"The Texas House has been good for the public schools. The Senate needs to improve, but we hope and pray it will," Johnson said. Reflecting on the last legislative session, he noted the pressure many Senate Republicans feel from national advocates for the privatization of schools.

Johnson expressed appreciation to all who sought public office in the Texas Legislature.

"Both incumbents and challengers fought hard and often confrontational, contentious campaigns that produced untold stress on them and their families. This is the messy price we pay for open and free elections, and we honor all candidates for serving the public in this important and sacrificial way," he said. "We have held every candidate in our prayers, and will continue to do so."

Key issues for the next session

Looking ahead to the 87th Texas Legislature, Johnson outlined priority concerns in several areas:

- **Funding.** During the previous legislative session, state lawmakers approved HB 3, filed by Rep. Dan Huberty, R-Houston, that provided [\\$6 billion in new state funding](#) for public education. Johnson hopes the next state legislature will continue to build on that progress. "It is crystal clear that public education support means support for budget plans that adequately fund our children's public education, for a comprehensive study that determines what education actually costs in current dollars, and for new sources of state revenue to sustain HB 3," he said. "We can't afford to step back." Texas lawmakers should support "teacher authority and compensation," he added, noting the tremendous pressures and

challenges teachers face in the COVID-19 era.

- **Vouchers.** Support for public education means “opposition to any voucher proposal, regardless of its name, that diverts funding away from our neighborhood public schools to underwrite private and home schools,” Johnson said. He particularly expressed concern about proposed “virtual voucher” programs to transfer funds from public schools to private vendors of online education options.
- **Charter schools.** Johnson voiced support for measures to enhance charter school transparency and accountability, and he opposed “charter school expansion that drains money away from public schools.”
- **Tests.** Lawmakers should oppose “burdensome standardized testing that teachers and parents clearly abhor,” he said.

Johnson pledged to work with all 150 members of the Texas House and 31 members of the Texas Senate to advance those priorities for the sake of the state’s students.

“Universal education, provided and protected by the public, is an expression of God’s common good, as well as a Texas constitutional mandate. Our children are counting on us all to advocate for it,” he said.