

# The Empowering Parents and Teachers Education Act

## Bill Summary

### Parental Empowerment Program Summary

**Purpose:** to <sup>1</sup>increase the efficiency of education by empowering parents to make the best decisions for their children's education and to <sup>2</sup>enshrine parents as the primary decision makers in all matters involving their children.

#### **Who is Eligible?**

Any Texas Child, grades K-12, whether enrolled or entering public or private school at this time.

#### **Reimbursement Amount:**

80 percent of the state average maintenance and operations expenditures per student **which is about \$8000.00 per student**

#### **Built in Protections against New Regulation:**

- No federal funds are to be used
- Private Schools will not be required to comply with any state law or regulation governing its educational program that was not in effect on January 1, 2023.

#### **Built in Protection includes who's in charge of disbursing funding:**

- Reimbursement of Funds will be the responsibility of the **State Comptroller, not the education commissioner**, thereby removing potential education policy influence.

**A BILL TO BE ENTITLED**

**AN ACT**

relating to improved educational efficiency by empowering parents and teachers through a program administered by the comptroller.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter \_\_\_\_, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter \_\_\_ to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER [ ] . PARENTAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Sec. . PARENTAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM. (a) PURPOSE: To increase efficiency by empowering parents to make the best decisions for their children's education. To enshrine parents as the primary decision makers in all matters involving their children. To fully fund schools while giving parents a choice about which school is right for their child.

(b) In this section:

(1) "Eligible student" means a school-age child who resides in the state.

(c) A parent or legal guardian of an eligible student who agrees to accept reimbursement in an amount that is less than the state average maintenance and operations expenditures per student may receive reimbursement from the state for the tuition paid for

the enrollment of the eligible student at a private school in an amount that is the lesser of:

(1) the tuition paid; or

(2) 80 percent of the state average maintenance and operations expenditures per student.

(d) Money from the available school fund and federal funds may not be used for reimbursement under this section.

(e) Private schools that parents voluntarily choose to send their children, with or without governmental assistance, will not be required to comply with any state law or regulation governing its educational program that was not in effect on January 1, 2023.

(f) The comptroller of public accounts shall make reimbursements to a parent or legal guardian, or their assigns, as authorized under this section.

(g) By October 1 of each year, the comptroller of public accounts shall provide notification to the commissioner of education and the Legislative Budget Board of the numbers of eligible students likely to participate by each independent school district or open enrollment charter they would have otherwise attended. By March 1 of each year, the comptroller of public accounts shall provide final numbers of the same information to the commissioner and the Legislative Budget Board.

(h) The Comptroller of Public Accounts, Legislative Budget Board, and Texas Education Agency shall use the calculations submitted in accordance with subsection(g) for purposes of modifying the estimates of student enrollment under Section 42.253(b), Education Code, that are used to calculate Foundation School Program entitlements.

(i) Savings to the Foundation School Program, after funding the Parental Empowerment Program shall be distributed to public schools on a per capita basis in the subsequent school year upon approval by the governor and Legislative Budget Board.

(j) Administrative Costs: The comptroller may deduct from the distribution of funds to participants of the program an amount sufficient to cover state administrative costs of the program. Any such administrative cost deduction shall be the lesser of, two percent of the scheduled distribution to the participant, or the actual pro rata cost to the state. This subsection expires on September 1, 2033.