

# Texas Lawsuits Threaten Transparency: More Focus Needed on College and Career Preparation

*Texas accountability ratings delay denies parents and students opportunity to address career gaps.*

AUSTIN, TEXAS, U.S., August 13, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, employers and business organizations voiced their concerns over the impact of a lawsuit (Cause No. D-1-GN-24-005018: Pecos-Barstow-Toyah Independent School District, Crandall Independent School District, Forney Independent School District, Fort

Stockton Independent School District, and Kingsville Independent School District Plaintiffs v. Mike Morath, in his official capacity as Commissioner of Education) filed by Texas school districts in the 201st Judicial District in Travis County, which seeks to delay the release of school district performance scores. This data, which makes up the state's A-F accountability system, is designed to show parents, students, businesses and taxpayers how well schools are preparing students for life after high school, whether that's in a career, college or the military.

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*Mary Lynn Pruneda, senior policy advisor at Texas 2036*

Created in 2017 by the Texas Legislature, the A-F accountability system has only been fully implemented for one year, in the 2018-2019 school year. Since then, parents, students and businesses have been denied access to these school performance measures due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic and school district lawsuits preventing the release of the scores.

Without these performance measures publicly available, Texas families and communities are left in the dark about whether students are being adequately prepared for the future. This lack of transparency prevents the state or community from coming together to work with the school



districts to help improve the educational opportunities of these students.

Currently, only 69 percent of Texas students are graduating career and college ready, a data point which can significantly impact their opportunities as well as the state's economic prosperity.

"Texas is the economic engine of our country. We are attracting business from across the nation, but those businesses are being forced to operate in a vacuum — without the data that they need to make informed operational and strategic decisions," said Taylor Landin, executive vice president and chief policy officer at the Greater Houston Partnership.

In the fall of 2023, nearly half of Texas voters expressed concerns about the prospects for future generations, while strong majorities supported elevated standards to prepare more students for college or career, according to the [Texas Voter Poll](#). In the poll, 80% of Texas voters expressed support for the Texas Education Agency's proposed initiative to elevate the standards for school ratings. Under this new framework, the benchmark to attain an "A" rating would rise substantially, requiring 88% of students to graduate prepared for either college or a career. The 2017 threshold was set at 60% of students graduating ready for college or a career would receive an A.

"This legislative session, the Legislature is considering investing billions more in public education," said Mary Lynn Pruneda, senior policy advisor at Texas 2036. "Due to the ongoing lawsuits, legislators have to make this critical decision without needed data on school district performance. It is hard to both ask for an increased investment in public schools while simultaneously keeping legislators in the dark on school performance."

In blocking the release of these scores, this latest lawsuit denies parents, students and community leaders critical information relating to the quality of the public education system and jeopardizes the state's future workforce and economic success. It's time to prioritize transparency and accountability in our public education system to ensure that every student in Texas is equipped for success beyond high school.

To learn more about our efforts to hold schools accountable for readying Texas students for college, career or military service, visit <https://texas2036.org/student-readiness/>.

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About Texas 2036: Texas 2036 is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank dedicated to ensuring Texas remains the best place to live, work, and raise a family through its bicentennial in 2036 and beyond. Using data to inform public policy, Texas 2036 focuses on education, health, and economic mobility to create a sustainable and prosperous future for all Texans.

Press Inquiries:

For more information, please email [media@texas2036.org](mailto:media@texas2036.org).

Merrill Davis

Texas 2036

+1 713-213-7297

[email us here](#)

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