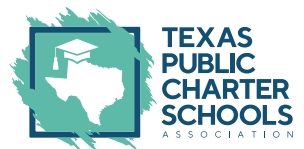




PAINTING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Annual Report 2022-23





The TPCSA team in 2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Christopher Mayes
Beatrice Mayes Institute

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North Texas Collegiate Academy

Cynthia Trigg
Evolution Academy

Dr. Brent Wilson
Life School

Julia Wright
MeyerPark Charter School

OUR TEAM

Starlee Coleman
Chief Executive Officer

Jennifer Acevedo
Data & Research Analyst

Bryce Adams
VP of Government Affairs

Renelle Bedell
Director of Operations

Monica Bustillos
Controller

Mallory Chesser
Development Writer

Katrina Corte
Special Events Manager

Missy Couch
Executive Assistant to the CEO

Brandon Garcia
Director of Legislative Affairs

Laurel Garcia
Director of Continuing Education

Christine Gendron
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Rebecca Gieskes
VP of Advocacy

Elizabeth Gunter
Development Project Manager

Ryan Hecker
Managing Director, Charter Schools Now

Natalie Kaharick
Chief Operating Officer

Arielle Kinney
Director of Regional Advocacy, North Texas

London Lawrence
Director of Regional Advocacy, Central Texas

Nadia Luna
VP of Member Engagement

Ila Mar
Digital Director

Amy Miller
Director of Grassroots Engagement

Chelbi Mims
Senior Director of Regional Advocacy

Roneshia Ray
Director of Regional Advocacy, Southeast Texas

Shree' Recasner
VP of Advocate Engagement

Crystal Rios
Director of Regional Advocacy, South Texas

Angel Salazar
CRM Administrator

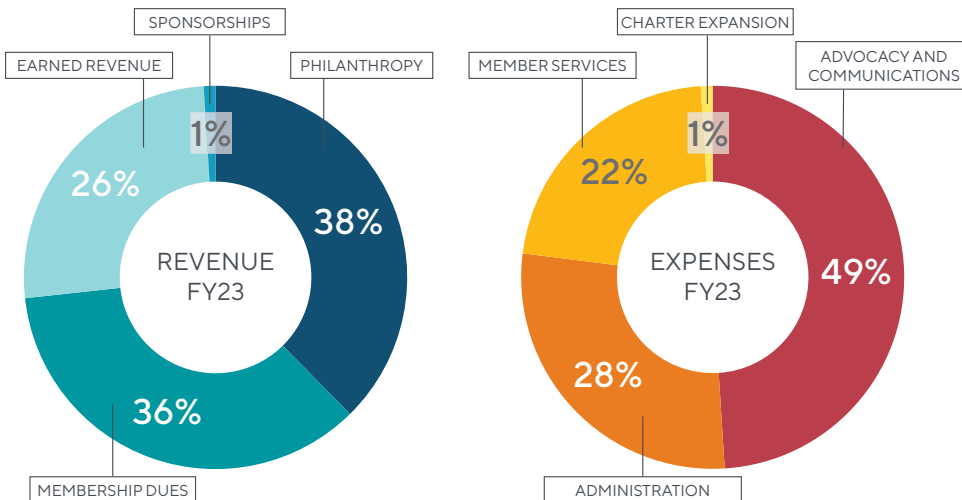
Jessica Shopoff
Senior Director of Policy

Tara Speagle
Director of Regional Advocacy, West Texas

Julia Takada Mitchell
Senior Director of Donor Relations

Brian Whitley
VP of Communications

FINANCES



Friends,

On a wall of the University of Texas medical center, just a few blocks from the Capitol, there's a striking piece of art. It's an image of a mighty oak tree – deep roots glowing, limbs reaching into a radiant yellow sky.

That image is formed by hundreds of tiles, each a gleaming bit of color, that are joined together just so. And it's the perfect encapsulation of what we just accomplished together.

We joined together to paint a brighter future.

At TPCSA, our job is to win in Austin – to achieve lasting policy change that helps the public education system deliver for more children. I'm incredibly proud to share that we succeeded during the 88th Legislative Session in 2023.

I should start here: Texas public charter schools achieved a landmark legislative victory when the governor signed House Bill 1707 in June. The new law, passed overwhelmingly, ends years of discrimination against our schools by city governments. No longer will unfair treatment during the zoning and permitting process drain millions of dollars from thriving classrooms.

The story of that success (and others) is the story of educators, families, and supporters showing up to advocate like never before. Our team was honored to lead the charge under the Pink Dome and across the state.

We've invested for years in building a foundation for statewide advocacy. It paid off in 2023. Working with TPCSA's five regional directors, public charter schools held more than 600 engagements with lawmakers – triple the number from 2022. Advocates built authentic relationships through campus tours, letter writing campaigns, community events, and Capitol visits. Teachers and parents trained at our Advocacy Leadership Institute set an example for others to follow.

To reinforce those voices, TPCSA executed a sophisticated communications strategy. Our "surround sound" approach delivered key messages to lawmakers and their staff many times on many platforms – including geotargeted digital ads whose videos were viewed 86,000 times. Lawmakers couldn't avoid running into our community on social media, where the Association showcased educators' and families' stories, provided live coverage of legislative hearings, and fortified our messaging with powerful data.

Through it all, we continued to raise the bar for supporting our member schools. On Charter CEntral, our one-stop shop for training resources and live webinars, we awarded 19,000 training hours – a new record. And the Texas Public Charter Schools Conference set a record of its own when 1,700 educators and supporters joined us in San Antonio for wildly successful reflection, strategy-setting, and collaboration.

None of this to say that our work is done. We're already thinking ahead to the upcoming special session – and the *next* regular session in 2025.

But it's worth taking a moment to appreciate what powerful advocacy meant for kids this year. Tens of thousands of Texans just paved the way to success in college, career, and life for students who deserve nothing less. As both a mom and an advocate, that fills me with joy.

Thank you for your support – and for painting a brighter future with us.

Sincerely,



Starlee Coleman
CEO



From left to right: House Public Education Committee Chairman Brad Buckley, his wife Susan, Starlee Coleman, and Rex Gore, the board chair of Charter Schools Now



POWERFUL ADVOCACY

For five frenetic months in 2023, lawmakers buzzed through the halls of the nation's largest state capitol. The House of Representatives voted 2,300 times. Committee hearings and floor debates lasted until the small hours of the morning – with big implications for the future.

When the dust settled, the outcome was clear. Students and families won in Austin.

TPCSA organized campaigns that delivered huge policy wins by rallying the entire public charter school community. School leaders, parents, teachers, and board members spoke with one booming voice that sustained lawmakers' attention.

This wouldn't have been possible without comprehensive relationship building in the months – and years – leading up to the legislative session. We empowered our members in every corner of the state to engage with lawmakers, raising the bar for both the breadth and sophistication of our advocacy.

The Association also continued to partner with our sister 501c4 organization, Charter Schools Now (CSN), to support Texas public charter schools by informing voters and educating lawmakers and candidates. CSN works to ensure that all of our supporters are empowered at the ballot box and connected with opportunities to take action on behalf of educational opportunity in Texas.

Together, we've fundamentally shifted the political climate in Texas – and the future is bright.



Rep. Mark Dorazio meets with Great Hearts students at his Capitol office

THE 88TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION: HUGE WINS FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND EDUCATORS

Our preparation for the 2023 legislative session began the moment the previous session gaveled to a close in 2021.

We knew the stakes would be high. Many of our strong allies in the House and Senate were set to retire and the redistricting process would soon redraw — literally — the political map.

But we were ready. TPCSA ramped up our engagement at the Capitol, helped our member schools develop personalized engagements with lawmakers, trained new advocacy leaders, and mobilized thousands of grassroots supporters from El Paso to Dallas.

The result? We passed **landmark legislation** that will prevent millions of dollars from being taken from classrooms, **defeated every harmful bill** designed to hamstring our schools, and **protected the freedom and flexibility** that help our educators excel.

Policy Wins During the 2023 Legislative Session

- **PASSED HB 1707:** Cities are no longer allowed to discriminate against public charter schools in zoning and permitting — which drained millions of dollars from classrooms. Our top policy priority passed by such large margins (101-45 in the House and 26-5 in the Senate) that it took effect immediately.
- **PASSED HB 2102:** Public charter schools may now apply to open a new campus up to 36 months in advance, instead of 18. That's a win-win for charter schools and ISDs, which will both have more time to plan.
- **Stopped Bad Laws:** Working with key lawmakers and staff, we ensured that *none* of the 19 anti-charter bills filed by opponents received a committee hearing — much less passed.
- **Protected Freedom and Flexibility:** We helped amend bills that ultimately passed in order to protect flexibility at charters. Our schools will be allowed to use contract security guards instead of their own employees (HB 3); will retain autonomy over hiring decisions at dropout recovery schools (SB 1647); and may now open adult education programs just like ISDs (SB 2032).
- **Made Progress on Fair Funding:** We advanced HB 1572, a solution to severely unequal facilities funding, out of committee. The issue is on lawmakers' minds heading into a likely special session on education funding.

Changing Minds for Kids

TPCSA dramatically improved the political climate for public charter schools this legislative session. That turned out to be decisive in passing House Bill 1707, our top policy priority.

Of the 69 returning House members who voted "no" on an equivalent bill last legislative session, **31 of them voted "yes"** in 2023. That includes:

24 of 29 Republicans, including 22 from rural or exurban regions

7 of 40 Democrats

We also achieved high levels of support among freshmen in both chambers:

22 of 28 new representatives voted "yes"

So did all **6** new senators

COMING TOGETHER WITH LAWMAKERS

TPCSA revved up our regional advocacy engine over the past year — including in West Texas, where we had a dedicated director for the first time. We're connecting public charter schools with their lawmakers on a larger scale than ever before:

- Public charter schools held **more than 600 engagements** with lawmakers, from campus visits to Capitol meetings, which is **more than three times as many** as in 2022
- **84% of our member schools** had at least one engagement with lawmakers
- **63% of our member schools** had multiple engagements, compared to 40% in 2022

A Dynamic Approach

To show lawmakers the positive impact of public charter schools, it's critical for them to get to know our community in meaningful, personal ways. We used a dynamic engagement strategy that adapted to the rhythms of legislative session:

- When new state lawmakers were elected in November, TPCSA worked with school leaders and staff to make powerful first impressions by hosting them on campuses. We also organized letter-writing campaigns to new members of education committees.
- After the legislative session began, we shifted to events in Austin where lawmakers were hunkering down — including Capitol visits where advocates cemented relationships and explained the community's policy priorities.
- TPCSA also helped lawmakers organize special events in their districts that connected them with even more public charter school families and educators. In March, for example, Rep. Stephanie Klick headlined a panel about preventing fentanyl use that was hosted at ILTexas.



Capitol Connections Week

In December, TPCSA organized Capitol Connections Week — a mobilization of **nearly 400 advocates from across Texas** that would propel us into a successful legislative session.

We hosted eight live training sessions for these passionate parents, students, and educators. Then, we facilitated **74 meetings** (both virtually and in-person) that kickstarted lasting relationships.



During freshman Rep. Nate Schatzline's meeting, a high school student from ILTexas in Keller shared that he wanted to attend medical school and become a pediatric endocrinologist — inspired by both his own doctor and his public charter school's emphasis on servant leadership.

Rep. Schatzline lit up and told the student: **"You're going to flipping change the world."**

Engagements Across the State

Second graders at Meridian School in Round Rock presented Rep. John Bucy, an advocate for fine arts, with their painting called "Bluebonnet Interpretations."



As part of a day of engagement in Corpus Christi, new SBOE Member L.J. Francis toured Dr. M.L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School, Corpus Christi Montessori School (pictured with Superintendent Cerise Weeks), Richard Milburn Academy, and School of Science & Technology Corpus Christi.



Yellowstone Schools in Houston hosted Rep. Ron Reynolds, chair of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus, during Black History Month.

... And at the Capitol

Rep. Josey Garcia hosted families from Harmony Public Schools in her district on Opening Day of the 88th Legislative Session. At Rep. Garcia's swearing in celebration, she told them: "This is your office. You belong here."



Lisa Stanley, superintendent of North Texas Collegiate Academy, joined TPCSA and House members for a policy breakfast in the early days of the legislative session. She met key legislative leaders, including Rep. Jared Patterson (pictured).

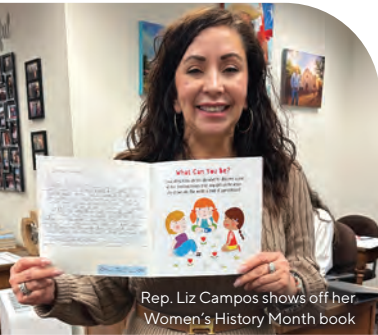


Ashley Miller, superintendent of the Rhodes School for the Performing Arts, traveled to Austin for a meeting with Rep. Charles Cunningham, a freshman and member of the House Public Education Committee. On the wall of his Capitol office, she found student artwork from Rhodes she had previously presented to him.



Here's what one student shared about her goals in a letter to her lawmaker during Women's History Month:

"I am interested in becoming a pediatrician so I can cure sick kids. Raul Yzaguirre School for Success is helping me achieve that dream because it daily prepares me with the tools I need to go to college. My school also teaches me to always be kind and respectful to others, which inspired me to want to become a pediatrician."



Rep. Liz Campos shows off her Women's History Month book

FORGING PERSONAL CONNECTIONS THROUGH APPRECIATION

To help build deep and mature relationships with lawmakers, TPCSA found new ways this year to show our community's appreciation for their public service. These projects resulted in some of our warmest and most enduring personal connections.

- Eight superintendents and advocacy leaders joined TPCSA for a January dinner with the Texas Legislative Black Caucus.
- During Women's History Month, 50 girls from public charter schools statewide each wrote a letter to a woman in the legislature. We compiled these letters in a book, *ABC What Can She Be?: Girls Can Be Anything They Want to Be*, and hand-delivered them to the lawmakers' Capitol offices.
- During Teacher Appreciation Week, public charter school educators wrote letters to 14 lawmakers who work or formerly worked in the classroom. The theme: "Once a teacher, always a teacher."
- During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, public charter school students and administrators wrote letters to lawmakers who have an AAPI identity in common with them.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: Public Comments on Key Bills

"There is a reason that parents choose charter schools, and they should receive equitable funding. YOU can help make it right!"

STAFF MEMBER
Beta Academy in Houston

"I encourage you to support HB 1707 so that all public schools are treated fairly. All families deserve a public school that meets their needs. For some, that's a traditional ISD campus or a magnet school. For others, it's a public charter school. We need to create an education system that can deliver for everyone."

BOARD MEMBER
Granbury ISD

MOBILIZING SUPPORTERS ACROSS THE STATE

Our community deserves to be heard. This legislative session, we equipped public charter school educators, parents, students, board members, and supporters statewide to raise their voices.

Before committee hearings and floor votes, TPCSA made it easy for our advocates to contact their lawmakers. At every key moment, they showed up with strength in numbers.

Public charter school supporters **sent 6,900 emails** explaining the urgency and importance of legislative priorities to the lawmakers who represent them. For the first time, **all 181 members** of the state legislature were contacted by advocates from our community. What's more:

- **105 Texas House members** received at least 10 emails
- **27 Texas Senators** received at least 50 emails

We also rallied supporters — including, for the first time, ISD board members — to leave public comments on House bills. These comments are published in the official record and shown to the committee members who vote on each bill.

Public charter school advocates submitted **more than 150 comments**, which outnumbered negative comments **more than 2-to-1**.

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ADVOCACY LEADERS

In 2022-23, TPCSA continued to refine and expand our Advocacy Leadership Institute (ALI) programs that recruit, train, and mobilize voices from our community. ALI intensively develops the skills of teacher and parent advocates who build deep relationships with lawmakers and publicly speak out for our schools.

During its fifth year, the ALI teacher program empowered **25 charter school educators** from diverse backgrounds to make a difference. Among other skills, teacher fellows learned how to write op-eds, testify about their experiences, and wield the power of social media.

After its launch last year, the ALI parent program took huge steps forward in 2022-23. **More than 140 Texas parents** received sustained, in-depth training.

IT'S A FACT

To date, **109** Texas public charter school **teachers** have completed our advocacy fellowship program.



Latoya Jackson, ALI fellow and Rise Academy (Lubbock) Operations Director, testified at the Capitol in support of fair facilities funding for public charter schools. Here's an excerpt from her remarks:

"So the question is, why should some public school students be 'worth' more than others based on whether they attend a charter or an ISD?"

We serve all our students and are held accountable for their academic achievement, personal safety, and mental well-being. Additional facilities funding would give us more capacity to invest in better infrastructure to help protect our students, serve their academic and personal needs, and keep planning for success.

All of our public school students deserve the best, whether they attend a public charter school like Rise Academy or a traditional ISD campus. Please help make facilities funding fair for ALL public schools. This is about making sure every child has the chance to thrive – personally, academically, and onward into college and career."



Susie Spencer, part of TPCSA's Parent Advocacy Leadership program, testified before the House Public Education Committee in March 2023. She shared her story in order to illustrate why the Texas Legislature should allow public charter schools to grow in communities where families need them. Here's an excerpt from her testimony:

"I am an adoptive mom of two amazing children. They attend School of Science and Technology (SST) in Corpus Christi and I wanted to share our experience with a public charter school.

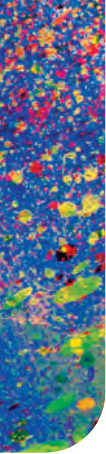
Five years ago, we adopted our kids and my husband and I promised ourselves, the state of Texas, and especially these two sweet kids that we would provide them a safe and loving home – a forever family. We set about providing them the best opportunities to be themselves.

SST is open to anyone, regardless of where you live in town. My son got in right away in kindergarten, but there was a waitlist for pre-K. So my daughter stayed home a year until she, too, could go to kindergarten at SST.

They've been there for over four years now, and SST has become an important partner in our children's care. They've provided all the resources they need in a school environment to help them feel safe enough to learn.

SST has helped our kids to thrive, not just survive. Having more than one public school we could attend helped us find this right fit, and we want the same for other families, too."





SURROUND SOUND COMMUNICATIONS

A well-executed communications strategy isn't just a powerful tool for achieving policy change. In a world saturated with media – and a Capitol bustling with demands on lawmakers' attention – it's an absolute requirement.

That's why TPCSA takes a "surround sound" approach to communications. We build our program so that lawmakers hear key messages many times, on many platforms, from many messengers.

We were incredibly successful during the 2023 legislative session at getting those messages to resonate. House members, senators, and legislative staff heard from us directly; received emails and phone calls from our advocates; watched compelling digital ads; and followed along on our website.

In the end, the need for fairness and opportunity in public education rose above the background noise. Those messages became a bold, rich sound that informed and inspired.

It was a key to getting results our students deserve.



OUR SURROUND SOUND SYSTEM FOR COMMUNICATIONS

In 2023, TPCSA expanded its comprehensive communications strategy to include full digital campaigns that support individual legislative priorities.

We took our “surround sound” approach to the next level – ensuring lawmakers repeatedly heard our messages through sophisticated audience targeting, new platforms, and the rapid mobilization of advocates when it counted most.

Expanding Our Reach

We continued to expand our grassroots audience this year in order to tap into the passion of even more families, educators, and supporters statewide.

TPCSA collaborated with member schools to add parents and teachers to our email database – allowing us to reach 164,000 more school-connected supporters this session, compared to 2021.

We also used new techniques to grow our digital community:

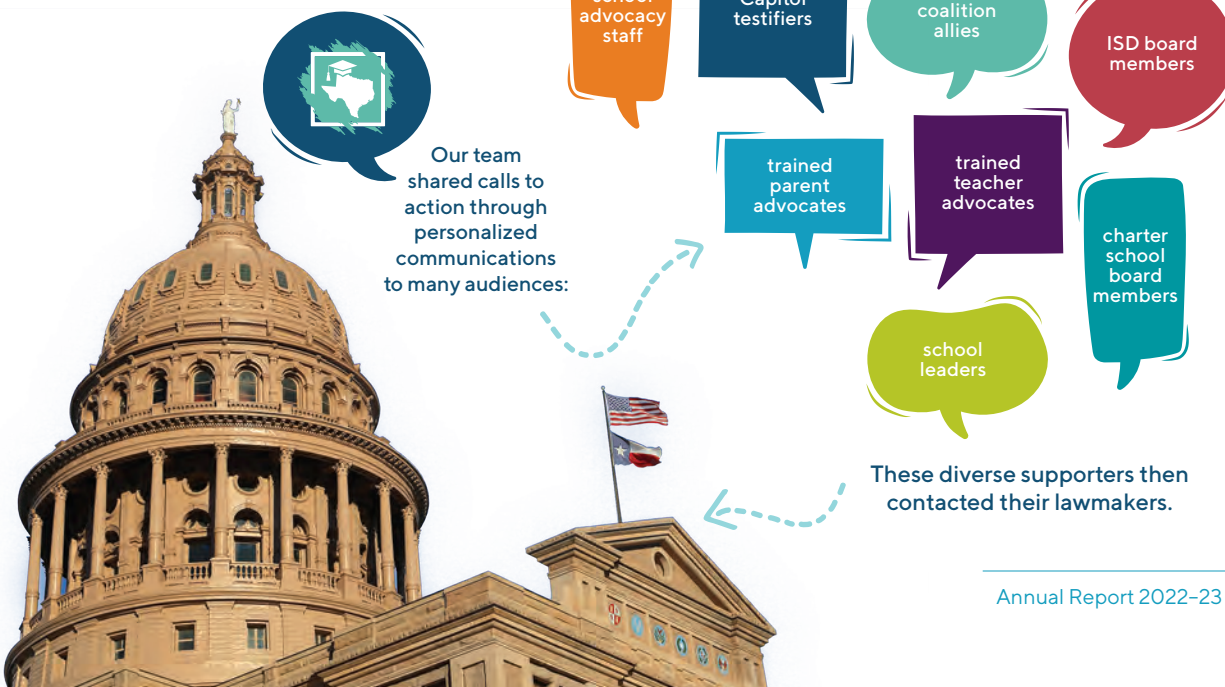
- Targeted ads in key legislative districts, as well as online surveys where users can self-identify as charter supporters, led to 2,500 more advocates opting into our emails.
- Working with vendors and allied organizations, TPCSA identified **272,000 Texas voters** who are likely to support public charter schools. They delivered by taking more than **1,540 advocacy actions**, such as contacting lawmakers, during the legislative session.

A KEY MOMENT

In late April, with our top legislative priority (HB 1707) set to go before the full Texas House for a vote, TPCSA issued a statewide Action Alert calling on all of our supporters to contact their House members.

It reverberated far and wide: **1,432 advocates**, from 106 different Texas counties, sent **2,222 emails** to the lawmakers who represent them in a span of just 36 hours.

One House member who voted “no” on a bill similar to HB 1707 in 2021, but “yes” in 2023, told us it was striking that his constituents – not people from distant parts of the state – were contacting him.





Geotargeted Digital Ads

In the days preceding an important hearing or vote, we ran **digital ads with compelling videos** that targeted multiple audiences and locations:

- Lawmakers and legislative staff at the Capitol
- The neighborhoods where key lawmakers live
- Charter school campuses in committee districts

These digital ads start with a **powerful 30 or 60-second story** – such as a public charter school mom shocked to learn her child is “worth” less funding than another public school student.

Then they end with a simple call to action. For lawmakers, that’s to vote “yes” on a priority bill. For advocates, it’s to contact lawmakers.

This session, we ran these ads on more platforms than ever before – including streaming services such as Hulu, websites that users visited, and Facebook. The ads proved to be a crucial extension of our surround sound, generating **more than 200,000 impressions** and **86,000 video views**.

Strategic Social Media

Lawmakers and other Texas influencers increasingly turn to social media to gauge public sentiment and decide what issues to prioritize. We make sure that when they do, the voices of our community register loud and clear.

Public charter school supporters took **more than 700 organic actions** during the legislative session and **1,876 total** during the past year. They increased the visibility of key messages by sharing TPCSA posts, commenting, and tagging their lawmakers.

We’ll Do It Live

TPCSA tweeted about committee hearings at the Capitol as they unfolded, allowing supporters to follow along and giving another megaphone to educators and parents who testified before lawmakers. These were some of our most popular and widely shared posts.

Winning Rapid Response

The action on social media can be fast and furious. Our team monitors the dialogue about public charter schools so that we can jump in and rally our community to respond when it counts – both to correct misinformation and to reinforce positive messages.

Our digital ads featured members of the public charter school community, such as (from top to bottom) Randy Shaffer, superintendent of Trinity Basin Preparatory; Montrae Jemison, parent at the School of Science and Technology; and Sarah Landsman, Managing Director of Advocacy at YES Prep Public Schools.

For example:

- When a group opposed to public charter schools misrepresented our top legislative priority, HB 1707, we didn't let it stand — and reiterated our call for increased fairness in public education.
- After a lawmaker who has long been skeptical of public charter schools posted a photo from his Capitol Connections Week meeting with our parents and teachers, we made sure our community showed appreciation for his willingness to listen.

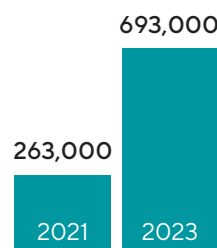
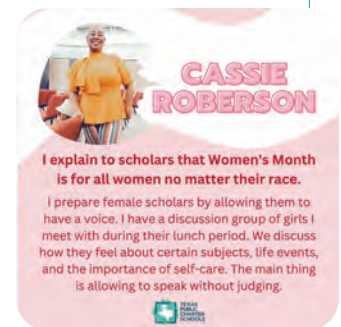
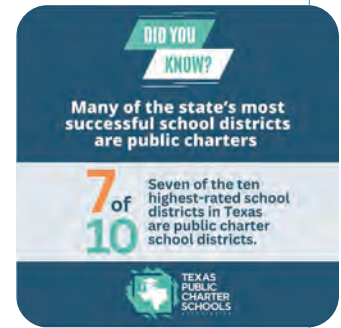
Campaigns That Drive Strong Messages

In addition to our digital ads, TPCSA led **19 strategic campaigns on social media** to marshal our supporters, promote new research, and tell lively success stories — especially short video interviews with students, educators, and families. We coordinated with our members to create a sustained and unified drumbeat of content.

During the legislative session, these campaigns increased the volume of our surround sound and focused the attention of lawmakers, legislative staff, and advocates on our priority bills.

In addition, our campaigns in 2022-23:

- Fired up our community about **Back to School** by highlighting why educators were excited to return to campus — in their own words
- Celebrated the **diversity of our educators and families** during Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, AAPI Heritage Month, and Women's History Month
- Unveiled new TPCSA research about public charter schools boosting college and career readiness during **National Charter Schools Week**
- Showcased the successes and future goals of incredible students during **graduation season**



We expanded our grassroots audience by nearly **430,000** people.

This includes all the educators, parents, supporters, and voters who receive emails from TPCSA.

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

We know our member schools are exceptionally busy. So the Association provides the tools they need to quickly and easily publish great content that connects their own stories to the broader success of the public charter school community.

This year, TPCSA created communications resources such as:

- *How to Talk About Charters*, a guide to using research-based key messages that we know move the needle with lawmakers and the public
- Comprehensive toolkits for talking about the latest research, including plug-and-play social media posts and newsletter content
- Two animated explainer videos, *Texas Public Charter Schools 101* and *Public Charter School Advocacy for Teachers*



EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

Polling consistently finds the public doesn't fully understand what public charter schools are or why they exist. So while we're focused on making sure our advocates are well-informed, we also take advantage of opportunities to apply communications tools to this challenge.

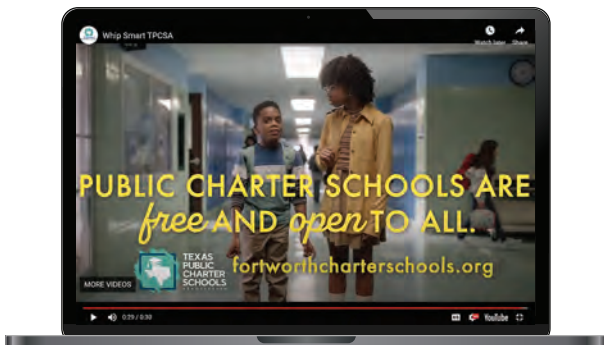
This year, working with partners such as the Fort Worth Education Partnership, we launched a new public awareness campaign in diverse and fast-growing Tarrant County. The playful ads on TV, radio, and social media use humor to drive home the most important point: Public charter schools are tuition-free and open to all. They also invite viewers to learn more on the TPCSA website.

DATA-DRIVEN STORYTELLING

Texas public charter schools are achieving extraordinary outcomes for students – and we have the receipts. Our team unearths, analyzes, and breathes life into the data behind our community's success.

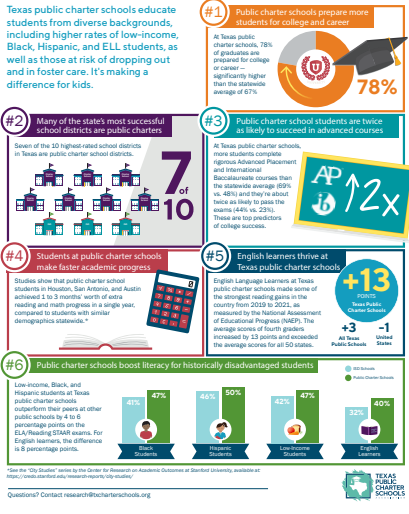
Collaborating with our schools, we use our surround sound approach to tell data-driven stories in a way that repeatedly and strategically reaches all of our audiences. The research is emailed to lawmakers and our supporters, featured in digital ads, shared with journalists, and more.

This year, we focused on **four powerful pieces of original research** that tell the story of Texas public charter school success.



Top 6 Ways Texas Charter Schools Help Students Succeed: THE RESULTS ARE IN.

Texas public charter schools educate students from diverse backgrounds, including higher rates of low-income, Black, Hispanic, and ELL students, as well as those at risk of dropping out and in foster care. It's making a difference for kids.

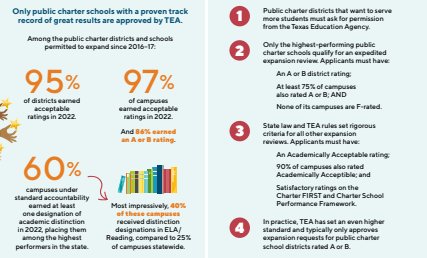


The bottom line: Texas public charter schools are boosting college and career readiness, accelerating academic progress, and improving literacy across the board.

One fast fact: Seven of the 10 highest-rated school districts in Texas are public charter school districts.

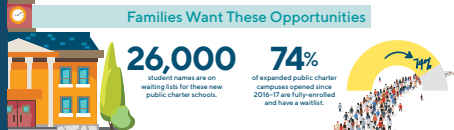
Protect the Process: Let Great New Public Schools Grow

The Current Process is **WORKING** because the Current Process is **RIGOROUS**



The bottom line: In order to grow, public charter schools must follow a rigorous approval process. TEA only approves schools with a track record of results – and their performance proves it.

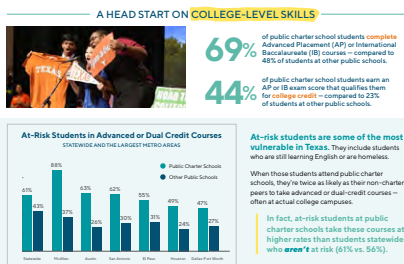
One fast fact: Of the public charter schools that have grown since 2016, 97% received an A, B, or C grade in 2022 and 86% received an A or B.



Public Charter Schools Turbocharge Students' Futures

At Texas public charter schools, students are racing to success in college and 21st-century careers.

With the right support, all children can unlock their full potential. Public charter schools enroll more traditionally underserved students – such as children of color, low-income students, and those at risk of dropping out – than other public schools. They're helping everyone build high-level skills, access rigorous courses, and launch great careers.



The bottom line: Texas public charter schools are increasing college and career readiness for students from all backgrounds.

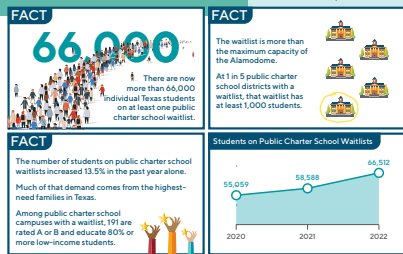
One fast fact: At public charter schools, 61% of at-risk students take advanced or dual-credit courses in high school. That's twice the rate of their peers at other public schools and higher than the rate for students statewide who aren't at-risk.

This year, we focused on four powerful pieces of original research.

Texas Families Need More Access to Public Charter Schools

From Odessa to Houston, Texas families are asking for more high-quality public school opportunities, including more public charter schools.

Unfortunately, Texas isn't keeping up with demand. The number of students on public charter school waitlists reached an all-time high this school year. We need to deliver for these children and parents.



Public charter school waitlists go longer in metro areas across the state. That includes:

- Large cities such as Houston and Dallas, where tens of thousands of students remain on waitlists without a seat.
- Odessa, where the number of student names on waitlists more than doubled as public charter schools have proven they meet families' needs.
- Corpus Christi, where the number of student names on waitlists more than tripled.

The bottom line: The growth of public charter schools has failed to keep pace with community demand, which continues to increase each year.

One fast fact: More than 66,000 Texas students are on at least one public charter school waitlist – an increase of 13.5% in the last year alone.

Data Source: 2022 Charter School Waitlist Report published by the Texas Education Agency and associated campus-level data.



COMPREHENSIVE MEMBER SUPPORT

As any leader in education can tell you, running high-quality schools is no small feat. It takes deep dedication, boundless energy, and a relentless focus on the little things.

Our members deserve the same from the TPCSA team – and we continued to deliver this year.

The Association once again raised the bar for the Texas Public Charter Schools Conference. We brought together a record number of creative and passionate professionals to reflect, learn, and strategize together at one of the country's top education events.

We also continued to make our best-in-class training offerings even better, provided real-time guidance on emerging issues, and developed more new resources to fit every need.

There's a reason our membership continues to grow. Whatever challenges Texas public charter schools might face, we're solving them, together, hand in hand.



From left to right, Reps. Craig Goldman, Lacey Hull, and Joe Moody joined former Texas House Speaker Dennis Bonnen for a panel discussion about building lawmaker relationships at the 2022 Texas Public Charter Schools Conference.

**2022 Texas Public Charter Schools Conference:
Rising to the Challenge**

Every year, TPCSA convenes the largest gathering in Texas for charter school leaders, educators, and supporters.

We set a record this year with **attendance of more than 1,700**. Guests came to San Antonio for valuable space to step back, reflect, and share ideas — as well as prepare for the 88th Legislative Session. Focused and practical sessions ran the gamut from guided advocacy planning, to working with special populations, to using digital media to increase enrollment.

Here were some of the top highlights:

- **Keynote speaker Shannon Sedgwick Davis**, CEO of the Bridgeway Foundation and a public charter school board chair at Great Hearts Texas, shared her incredible story of working to stem the violence of an infamous warlord in Central Africa. She drew parallels between the everyday heroes she met there and the educators who refuse to settle for an education system that doesn't work for every child.
- **Texas Education Agency staff** led more than 20 sessions that made sure our educators have the latest resources and insight from the officials who oversee public education across the state.
- **A bipartisan panel discussion** with Texas Reps. Craig Goldman, Lacey Hull, and Joe Moody — moderated by former Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen — opened a unique window into building relationships with lawmakers.
- **Special workshops** included rigorous training for public charter school board members and covered everything educators needed to know about the newly redesigned STAAR exams.

And of course, no Texas Public Charter Schools Conference would be complete without a trademark party — our educators gave James Bond a run for his money at Casino Royale night.

From top to bottom: The Casino Royale party; Julia Wright, superintendent of MeyerPark Charter School; The Lighthouse Public Schools team, including Superintendent Donald Mills (center); Members of the Bob Hope School community at the conference



What Participants Said About Training Courses in Charter CEntral

Managing Student Behavior in the COVID World

"I love that the information was relevant to what's happening in schools today and that a space was created to acknowledge and discuss the real issues in schools."

School administrator at IDEA Public Schools

Monitoring the Health of Your Students' Growth

"I loved that we were able to see exactly what the teachers would see in their NWEA accounts and how they could use the data."

School administrator at Harmony Public Schools

A-F Accountability Updates for 2023 from TEA

"The information about how TEA sets and uses accountability to rate schools, and seeing the amount of work they put in to truly think about how to be equitable for our schools and students, is amazing."

School administrator at KIPP Texas Public Schools

High-Performing Board Strategies

"This is the best training of all the sessions. Thank you Vanguard Academy for setting an example."

Board member at Wilco Montessori Partners

A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR TRAINING

In 2021, TPCSA expanded its training opportunities for members with the launch of **Charter CEntral** – an easy-to-use online platform that connects leaders, board members, and school staff to continuing education training webinars and automatically tracks participation.

We've continued to build out our training library and refine the platform. For example: One of our favorite new features allows school leaders to assign training sessions to their staff and board, then seamlessly track all of their progress toward completion.

This year, we awarded a combined total of **more than 19,000 training hours** in Charter CEntral – an all-time high.

New and Engaging Learning Opportunities

TPCSA offered **34 new webinars** this year to help member schools not only meet the state's training requirements, but also empower their communities with new skills and insights. They were overwhelmingly rated "effective" or "highly effective" by participants.

The Association makes it easy for Texas public charter school educators to attend high-quality online coursework – live with some of the best trainers in the field. Here are examples of offerings from our catalog:

Entering the Public Competitive Grant Space

Audience: Charter School Leaders, Business Managers, Financial Officers

Description: Public grants can be a helpful resource to pilot, test and expand programs through additional investment and intentional evaluation. Join experienced fundraisers and evaluators to learn how to assess your organization's ability and preparedness to seek, secure, and invest public grant funds.

Charter Funding 101

Audience: Charter School Leaders, new CFOs or business managers

Description: Charter school funding in Texas can be complicated and confusing! But it doesn't have to stay that way. Join this webinar and let us help you understand the basics, including how charter school funding sources differ from those of ISDs and which allotments charter schools receive.

SB 1063: Personal Financial Literacy & Economics

Audience: Charter School Leaders, Academic Officers

Description: This webinar educates school leaders and administrators on the purpose and implementation of Senate Bill 1063, which created a personal financial literacy & economics course for Texas high school students. Hear from bill author Senator Carol Alvarado's office and learn about the requirements for Texas public charter high schools.

Seeing a 2021 Win Through

The Tangible Impact of Great Advocacy

During the 2021 legislative session, TPCSA made it a priority to change a state law that unfairly excluded charter schools from the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant program. The program is designed to fund modern equipment at public schools that successfully prepare students for high-demand careers.

Working with advocates like Dr. Narciso Garcia, superintendent of Vanguard Academy, we mobilized support for a bill that would fix the problem. It passed 123-20 in the Texas House and 27-3 in the Texas Senate on its way to becoming law.

This year, that advocacy paid off for kids. The governor announced that six public charter schools won a total of \$3.1 million in JET grants in 2023.


Those dollars immediately went to work on behalf of 880 students who are on the road to becoming nurses, computer support specialists, paramedics, and EMTs. They'll now be even better-prepared to earn industry certifications and launch successful careers.


This is a milestone on the way to greater fairness for Texas public charter schools. Career training programs like the ones at Vanguard Academy — where 100% of 2021 graduates met college, career, and military readiness standards — are changing students' lives.



Dr. Narciso Garcia, superintendent of Vanguard Academy

6 public charter schools won a total of \$3.1 MILLION in JET grants in 2023





“Beatrice Mayes Institute means so much to the community and to me. It’s the school I attended and the school that I now lead. Many of our teachers are alumni and all the work we do is out of love.

I’m excited to serve on the TPCSA board of directors because we’re bringing educators and advocates together to expand opportunity across the state. All children deserve to realize their full potential – and our public charter schools play an important role in making that happen.”

CHRISTOPHER MAYES

*CEO & Superintendent, Beatrice Mayes Institute
TPCSA Board Member*

3005 S. Lamar Blvd • Suite D-447 • Austin, TX 78704
communications@txcharterschools.org • ph. 512-584-8272

TXCHARTERSCHOOLS.ORG

