

## **For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:** Brian Whitley

(510) 495-5542

## **Texas Public Charter Schools Announce Advocates of the Year**

*TPCSA Honors a Parent, Teacher, and School Leader for Contributions to a Better Public Education System for All Students*

**Austin, TX** — The Texas Public Charter Schools Association, which represents 180 charter districts and more than 700 campuses, today announced the organization’s Education Advocates of the Year.

The awards honor parents, teachers, and school leaders who are leading the charge toward a stronger public education system for all Texas students.

TPCSA unveiled the winners as part of National Charter Schools Week, a celebration of the high-performing, tuition-free public schools that have changed the landscape of public education across the nation. In Texas, public charter schools educate approximately 337,000 students -- a majority of whom have been traditionally underserved -- and employ 20,000 educators.

Governor Greg Abbott [recently proclaimed](#) the week of May 9 to May 15 as National Charter Schools Week in Texas. He wrote: “Texans know that every child has unique gifts and talents, and that they should each have access to the education of the highest quality.”

TPCSA honors three advocates who are working to make that vision a reality:

- Gregory Harrington, a Central Texas parent and leader in STEM
- Judy Moore, an Austin teacher who gives educators a stronger voice in education policy
- Dr. Narciso Garcia, a superintendent helping Rio Grande Valley students excel in college and career

Please find descriptions of the winners below. For more information or to interview one of these education advocates, please contact Brian Whitley at (510) 495-5542 or [bwhitley@txcharterschools.org](mailto:bwhitley@txcharterschools.org).

### **Parent Advocate of the Year: Gregory Harrington**

Gregory Harrington is a champion for the diverse needs of schools and families in Central Texas. He serves on the advisory board for Harmony Science Academy, a public charter school district, as well as the Strategic Planning Committee of Pflugerville ISD.

Harrington founded the Back to School Parade, a celebration and fundraiser that has supplied thousands of students with backpacks full of school supplies since 2008. He is also a leader and

past president of the Austin Alumni Chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers, a role Harrington has used to broaden awareness of STEM fields for local students.

He regularly meets with lawmakers on behalf of Central Texas parents and recently testified before the House Public Education Committee.

### **Teacher Advocate of the Year: Judy Moore**

Judy Moore, a middle school teacher at Austin Achieve Public Schools, isn't just helping the students in her classroom excel. She's also helping other educators get involved in Texas education policy and speak out for *their* students.

Moore serves as a coach and mentor to Central Texas fellows in the Teacher Advocacy Leadership Institute. She helps them share their experiences and priorities with local and state lawmakers. Earlier this year, Ms. Moore helped organize a virtual Teacher Rally, helping to facilitate dialogue among hundreds of educators statewide.

As a first-generation college graduate, Ms. Moore understands the power of public education in unlocking students' potential -- and the power of teacher voices in leading communities forward. After the pandemic began, Ms. Moore and her students met virtually with a state lawmaker. She has also been featured in media outlets such as *Reform Austin*, where she explained how she and her colleagues were adapting to virtual instruction.

### **School Leader Advocate of the Year: Dr. Narciso Garcia**

Dr. Narciso Garcia is the superintendent of Vanguard Academy Charter Schools, a district whose seven campuses near the US-Mexico border are among the highest-performing in all of Texas.

Dr. Garcia is a champion for creativity and excellence in education -- the kind that helps traditionally underserved students thrive in college and access skilled, high-paying jobs. Vanguard's blended learning approach to math has been so successful that the Texas Education Agency awarded the district a Math Innovation Zone grant.

This legislative session, Garcia spearheaded a bill -- passed recently by both chambers of the Texas Legislature -- that would broaden access to the Jobs & Education for Texans (JET) grant program, which supports equipment for career and technical education courses.

Vanguard also serves its community. The schools have distributed hundreds of thousands of meals since the pandemic began in March 2020 to local families, forming partnerships with the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley and H-E-B. The City of Pharr recently honored Dr. Garcia as "Citizen of the Year."

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*About the Texas Public Charter Schools Association*

The Texas Public Charter Schools Association is committed to making sure every child in Texas has access to a high-quality public school that will set them on the path to future success. Public charter schools enroll 337,000 students across Texas. Working as complements to ISDs, public charters are preparing the workforce of the future by sending more students to and through colleges, universities, and technical training programs. Public charter schools are accountable to taxpayers and are doing their part to help all Texas children can thrive.