

Choices and Classrooms

Compare viewpoints on a Texas school funding issue.

7.16.A “identify different points of view of political parties and interest groups on important Texas issues, past and present; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each political party or interest group named in the passage. In the margin, write a plus sign beside a viewpoint that supports education savings accounts and a minus sign beside a viewpoint that opposes them.

Who Should Decide?

- ① In the early 1990s, Texas argued over school funding. Many districts with valuable property could raise more money for classrooms than districts with less valuable property. In 1993, Governor Ann Richards signed Senate Bill 7, often called the school-finance reform law. It used “recapture” to move some local property-tax revenue from property-wealthy districts into a state system that helps fund other districts. Supporters stressed fairer opportunities for students. Critics worried that local taxpayers would lose control of money raised in their communities.
- ② Texas enacted an education savings account program in 2025 for the 2026-27 school year. The Texas Republican Party has supported education savings accounts, sometimes called vouchers, which let eligible families use public money toward approved private-school costs. Its supporters say parents need more choices. The Texas Democratic Party has opposed diverting public funds to private schools and has called for stronger investment in neighborhood public schools. Democrats argue that vouchers can reduce resources for public schools. These positions show disagreement about how Texas should use education money, even when both sides say they want students to succeed.
- ③ Interest groups also try to influence this debate. The Texas Public Policy Foundation supports education savings accounts and says families should have options beyond their assigned public school. The Texas State Teachers Association opposes using public money for private-school tuition. It argues that Texas should first meet the needs of public schools, where most Texas students learn. These groups are not political parties. Each speaks for people who share a goal or concern, then seeks to shape laws through research, public messages, and meetings with lawmakers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What was the main reason supporters favored recapture in the 1993 school-finance reform law?

2 How do the Texas Republican Party and the Texas Democratic Party differ on education savings accounts?

3 Which interest group supports education savings accounts, and what reason does it give?

4 What does the Texas State Teachers Association want Texas to do first, and why?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly four sentences to a Texas lawmaker about education savings accounts. Describe the viewpoint of one political party and one interest group from the passage, then state your own recommendation and support it with one passage-based reason.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each political party or interest group named in the passage. In the margin, write a plus sign beside a viewpoint that supports education savings accounts and a minus sign beside a viewpoint that opposes them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What was the main reason supporters favored recapture in the 1993 school-finance reform law?	They believed it would provide fairer opportunities for students by helping fund districts with less valuable property.
2	How do the Texas Republican Party and the Texas Democratic Party differ on education savings accounts?	The Texas Republican Party supports education savings accounts and parent choice. The Texas Democratic Party opposes diverting public funds to private schools and supports stronger investment in public schools.
3	Which interest group supports education savings accounts, and what reason does it give?	The Texas Public Policy Foundation supports them because it says families should have options beyond their assigned public school.
4	What does the Texas State Teachers Association want Texas to do first, and why?	It wants Texas to meet the needs of public schools first because most Texas students learn in public schools.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Texas Republican Party supports education savings accounts because it says parents need more choices. The Texas State Teachers Association opposes using public money for private-school tuition. I recommend investing first in neighborhood public schools. Most Texas students learn in public schools, so meeting their needs should come first.

Accept accurate descriptions of any one political party and any one interest group named in the passage. The recommendation may differ, but it must include a reason supported by information from the passage.