

89th Legislative Session Debrief: Education & Mental Health

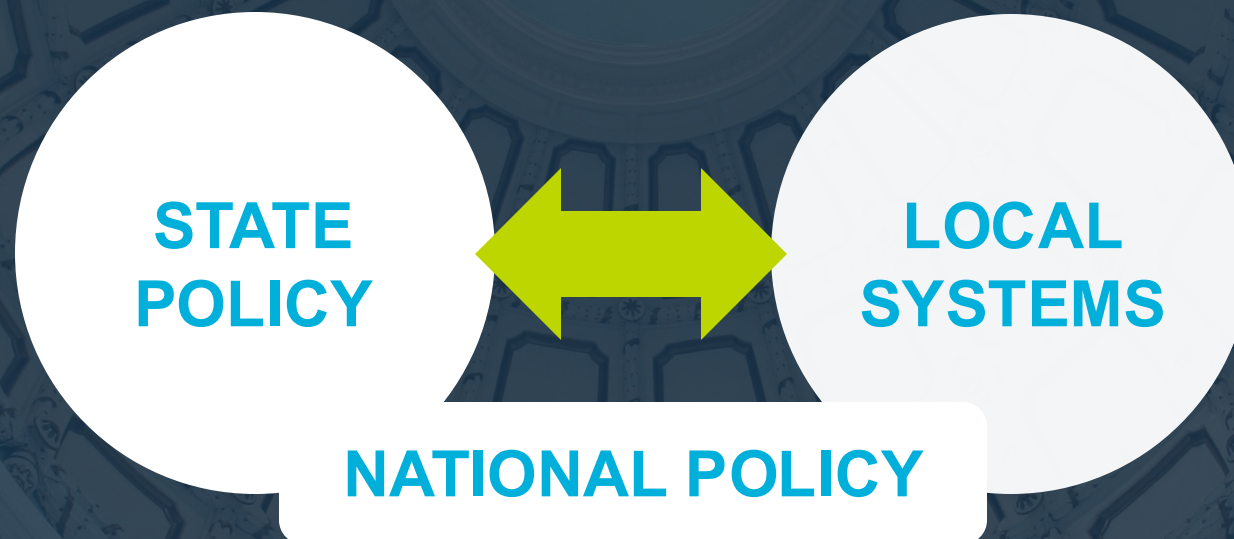
August 28, 2025

Vision, Mission, Core Change Strategy

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Vision: We envision Texas to be the national leader in treating people with mental health needs.

Mission Statement: Independent and nonpartisan, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute works at the intersection of policy and programs to create equitable systemic changes so all people in Texas, the nation, and the world can obtain the health care they need.



Your Presenters



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Education Update

89th Session – 140 Days

89th Legislature Convened:

January 14, 2025

Sine Die:

June 2, 2025

Last Day the Governor Signed or Vetoed Bills:

June 22, 2025

Special Sessions Start:

July 21, 2025 & August 15, 2025

Effective Date for Bills Without Specific Dates:

September 1, 2025



New Faces

Senate – 3 New Faces

Senate D-15 – Molly Cook (D)

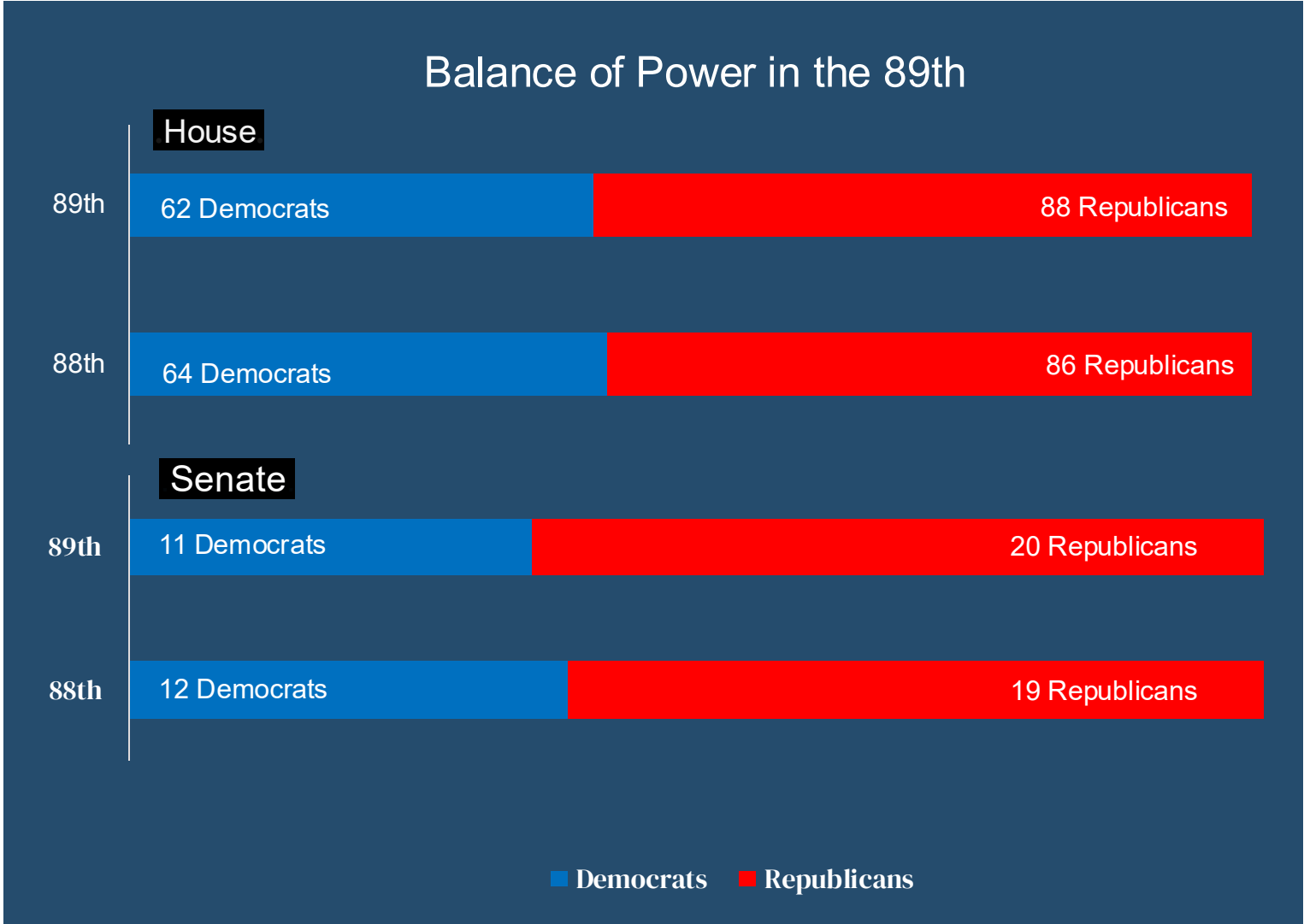
Senate D-27 – Adam Hinojosa (R)

Senate D-30 – Brent Hagenbuch (R)

House – 32 New Faces

(R) 26 Freshmen

(D) 6 Freshmen



Governor Abbott

Emergency Items

- Property Tax Relief
- Generational Investment in Water
- Raise Teacher Pay
- Expand Career Training
- School Choice
- Bail Reform
- Creation of the Texas Cyber Command



Dan Patrick

Lieutenant Governor of Texas

40 Priorities

SB 1 – Senate’s Budget for Texas

SB 2 – Providing School Choice

SB 10 – Placing the Ten Commandments in School

SB 11 – Protecting the Freedom to Pray in School

SB 12 – Establishing a Parental Bill of Rights in Public Education

SB 24 – Educating Texas Students on the Horrors of Communism

SB 26 – Increasing Teacher Pay

SB 27 – Establishing a Teacher Bill of Rights



Dustin Burrows

Speaker of the House

- 12/6: House Speaker Dade Phelan withdraws from race
- 1/14: 3 Candidates emerge, 2 reached second round
- 1/14: Rep. Dustin Burrows is elected Speaker of the House

Priority Bills

HB 1 – State Budget

HB 2 – Public School Finance

HB 3 – Educations Savings Accounts

HB 4 – Assessment and Accountability Reform

HB 6 – School Discipline

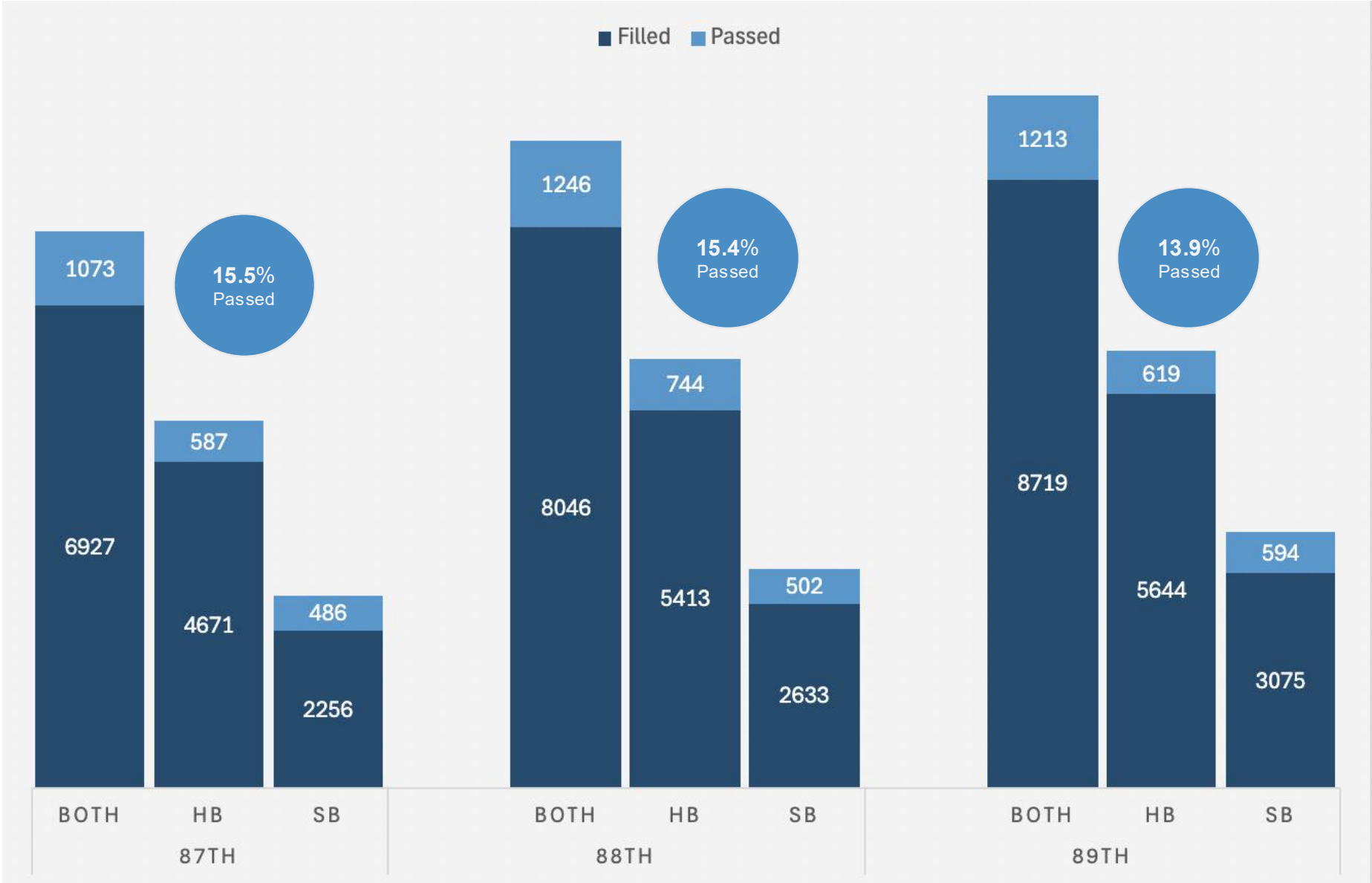
HB 7 – Parental Rights

HB 20 – Workforce Education

HB 27 – Personal Financial Literacy



Bills Filed vs. Bills Passed



Key Metrics

- Record number of bills filed this session: **8,719**
- Record low pass rate: **13.9%** in contrast to the typical **15%**
- The Legislature passed **1,200** bills, while over **7,000** others didn't make it out of committee
- **76%** of the bills were passed in the last two weeks of session
- **56%** of the bills were passed in the final week of session

These metrics underscore the significant amount of work done to pass a bill.



Big Ticket Items



Property Tax Relief:

- \$51 billion cumulatively appropriated for Tax Relief



Education:

- \$8.5 billion in General Revenue Funds for increased public education funding
- \$39.8 billion total for Foundation School Program (FSP)



Healthcare:

- \$32.0 billion (increase of \$2.7 billion) in General Revenue Funds for the Texas Medicaid program



Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS):

- \$1.4 billion General Revenue Funds

Water:



- \$13.0 million in General Revenue Funds for the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)
- \$13.0 million in General Revenue Funds for Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)



Appropriations Bill - \$149.2 billion* in GR

*3.9 billion less than the pay-as-you-go limit

*10.3 billion less than the General Revenue Funds capacity in accordance with the tax spending limit

HB 2: School Finance Bill

- \$8.5B investment
- \$1.3B for Allotment for Basic Costs (BA)
- \$4.2B for teacher and non-admin staff pay
- Ties BA to property value growth
- \$430M for school safety
- \$830M for special education
- \$187M to accelerate certification
- \$318M for small- & mid-size school funding
- \$648M for early mathematics and literacy reforms
- \$153M for CTE
- \$55/student increase to BA through golden penny yields



Article 1

Teacher Compensation



Article 2

Educator Training & Certification



Article 3

Rights of Public-School Educators



Article 4

Special Education



Article 5

Early Childhood Education



Article 6

College, Career, and Military Readiness



Article 7

School Finance & Other Reforms

SB 2: Education Savings Accounts

Total funding appropriated: **\$1 billion**

- **General Students:** 85% of the estimated statewide average per-student funding based on average daily attendance
- **Homeschooled Children:** Maximum annual amount: \$2,000/year
- **Students with Disabilities:** Maximum annual amount: \$30,000/year

Private Schools: will be approved if they are recognized by the Texas Private School Accreditation or the Agency

Tutors/Therapists: will be approved if they are providing educational services to a participating child, must be licensed

Higher Education Providers: Nationally recognized as a postsecondary accreditation

Vendors must provide educational services and operate in TX

Expect a three-year roll-out

- **'25-25: Rules and Structures:** Education Assistance Organizations; Rules and Procedures for Applicants
- **'26-27: Initial Implementation:** Appropriations Not to Exceed \$1 Billion; 90th Texas Legislature and Biennial Appropriations
- **'27-28: Extend Implementation**



HB 1481: Personal Communication Device

Prohibits student use on school property during school day

The school **policy**:

- Must involve disciplinary measures for violations
- May provide for confiscation
- May prohibit devices on school property or define how a device must be stored while on property
- Must allow use when necessary, under IEPs, as directed by a physician, or when needed to comply with a school's safety protocols

Definition: telephone, cell phone such as a smartphone or flip phone, tablet, smartwatch, radio device, paging device, or any other electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication that was not provided to a student by a school.

Texas Education Agency must establish a model policy.



HB 6: Student Discipline

In-School Suspension: not subject to a time limit but must be reviewed by admin every 10 school days.

Out-of-School Suspension: may not exceed three school days

E-Cigarettes: student may be placed in DAEP for possession or use, except that the first offense must be placed in ISS for at least 10 school days

Virtual Expulsion Program Option: The commissioner will write rules to implement this section, including rules for attendance and teacher training.

Threat Assessment Teams: changes the composition for assessment of students in a special education programs

Texas Child Health Access through Telemedicine: adds provisions pertaining to mental health services provided



89th Ongoing Special Sessions

Special Sessions

Two Called to Date

1st Called Special Session: July 21st

- 18 agenda items
- Quorum break August 3rd
- No legislation passed
- Sine Die: August 15th

2nd Called Special Session: August 15th

- 19 initial agenda items + 5 added
- Added item: youth camp safety
- Items can still be added
- 30 days

Big Items

- Congressional redistricting
- Youth camp safety
- Flood preparedness
- THC & hemp
- STAAR test
- Property taxes

Mental Health Update

A Decade of Commitment at the Texas Capitol

Session	Medicaid Behavioral Health Budget	Behavioral Health Budget (GAA)	Supplemental Budget Funding	Combined Behavioral Health Budget
84th (2015)	\$3.00B	\$6.59B	\$1.3M	\$6.59B
85th (2017)	\$3.52B	\$7.60B	\$15.1M	\$7.62B
86th (2019)	\$3.31B	\$7.78B	\$445.4M	\$8.23B
87th (2021)	\$3.68B	\$8.12B	\$321.3M \$405.9M (ARPA)	\$8.85B
88th (2023)	\$3.48B	\$9.41B	\$2.26B	\$11.67B
89th (2025)	\$3.88B	\$10.41B \$600M (DPRIT)	\$214.9M	\$11.23B
% Increase Since 2015	29%	67%	-	70%

Mental Health Impacts in K-12

- The **Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHATT)** program is funded at **\$170.2 million** to ensure services are available to any willing school district in the state.
 - *TCHATT provides telemedicine or telehealth programs to school districts to help identify and assess the behavioral health needs of students and provide access to services.*
- SB 260 (Huffman) doubles the **School Safety Allotment (SSA)** to \$20 per student in average daily attendance and increases the campus floor from \$15,000 to \$33,540 (**\$430 million increase**).
 - *The SSA provides school districts with flexible funding for school safety priorities, ranging from school hardening to student mental health supports.*
- SB 12 (Creighton) expands **parental consent requirements** for psychological and psychiatric examination, testing, and treatment through school district employees and contractors.

TCHATT Coverage

- As of June 30, 2025, **105,885 students** had been referred to TCHATT since inception.

of Campuses

7,184

Student Population in Schools

4,434,038

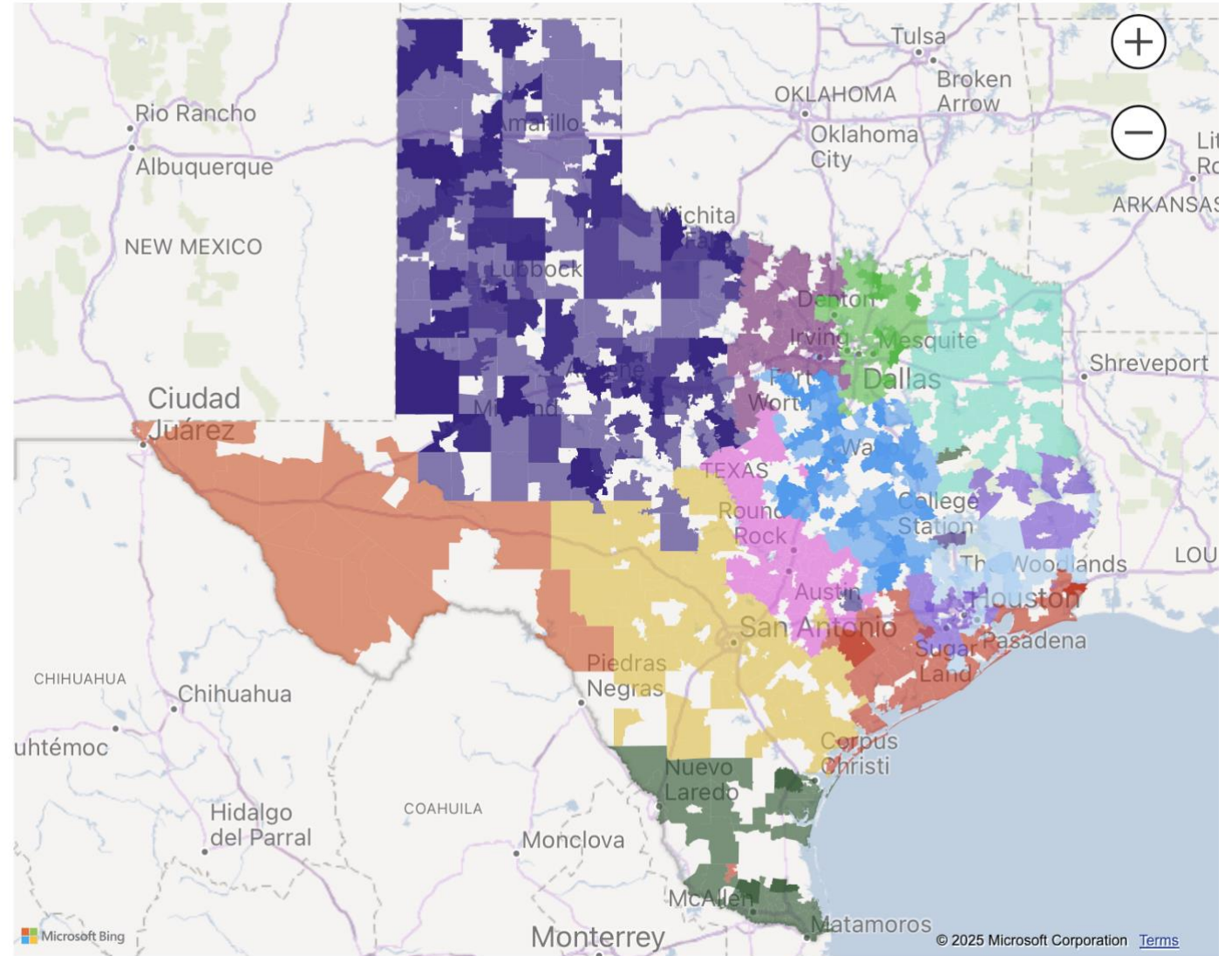
of School Districts

942



tcmhcc

TCHATT Funded Services by Health-Related Institution (HRI)



HRI BCM TAMUHSC TTUHSC TTUHSC EP UNTHSC UT AUS ... UTHSCH UTHSCSA UTMB UTRGV UTSW UTHSC

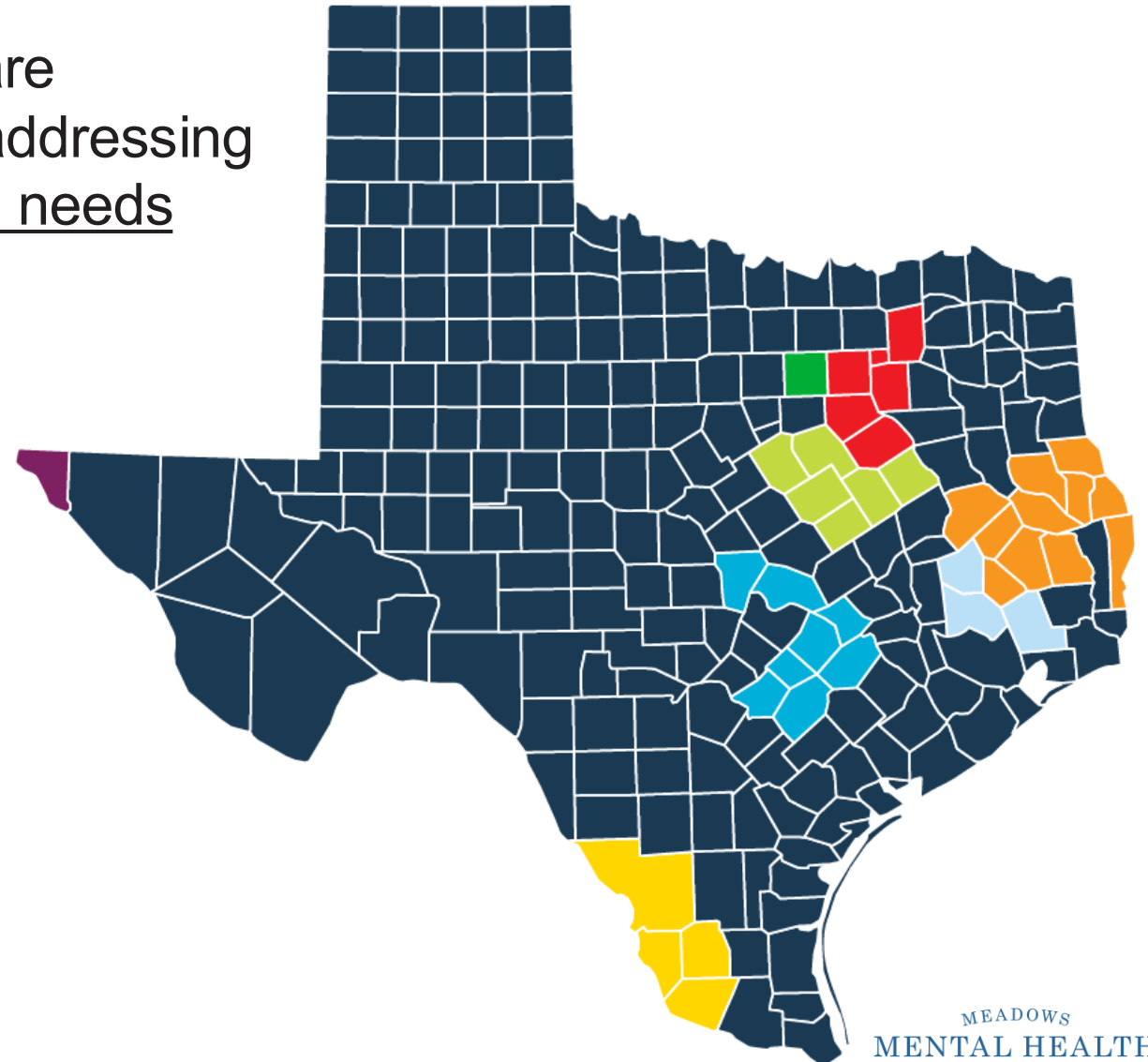
Full Funding for Grant Programs

- **Rider 52 Needs and Capacity Assessment** (July 2023) – Children’s Crisis Respite, Coordinated Specialty Care, Multisystemic Therapy, and Youth Crisis Outreach Teams (YCOTs).
- **Community Mental Health Grant Program** (January 2024) – \$55 million
 - *85(R) HB 13 (Price) established the grant program to provide incentives for state-local collaborations to help Texas communities tailor solutions to fit the mental health challenges they face.*
- **SMART Innovation Grant Program** (January 2024) – \$29.5 million
 - *88(R) SB 26 (Kolkhorst) established the grant program to support community-based initiatives that improve access to treatment for children and families.*

YCOT Expansion

Youth Crisis Outreach Teams (YCOTs) are considered the best-practice model for addressing immediate and crisis-level mental health needs among children, youth, and families.

SB 1 (Huffman) provides a **\$40 million increase** (\$54 million total) to add **at least eight new YCOTs** and fully fund eight existing YCOTs.



Mental Health Workforce

- HB 1716 (Darby) / SB 469 (Sparks) – would have authorized Medicaid reimbursement for **LPC Associates**, **LMFT Associates**, and **LMSWs** while completing their clinical supervision hours. *The House passed HB 1716, but the Senate Health & Human Services Committee never heard the bill.*
- SB 646 (West) expands the **Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals** program eligibility to LPC Associates, LMFT Associates, LMSWs, and certain certified school counselors.
- SB 1 (Huffman) provides **\$5 million** for 88(R) HB 400, the **Behavioral Health Innovation Grant Program**, tailored to community colleges.
- In February and July, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) published rules to expand the qualifications to become a **Qualified Mental Health Professional**. *HHSC has not yet adopted final rules.*

Policy Into Practice

Implementing Policy Through TEA Guidance

How do we eat an elephant?



TEA Legislative Guidance:

- [89th Legislature Updates Page](#)
 - Timeline and links as guidance is published
- [Legislative Briefing Books Page](#)
 - Full briefing books after each session
- [Commissioner's Rules Page](#)
 - Current versions of Texas Administrative Code that are in effect

Look for Tier 1 Skill-Building Opportunities: MTSS

The ban on cell phones creates opportunities for students to engage and interact differently while they are on campus.

- School norms and skill-building with *all students* is more important than ever.
- Students and staff need ongoing support for how to interact effectively.
- Opportunity to support with social skills instruction and team-building activities.
- Teaching students *how* to engage and interact is going to be key.



Existing Processes to Support Implementation

Supportive Processes

- Disciplinary Due Process ([37.001](#))
- Supporting Student Needs:
 - Exceptions within policy: IE. Cell phones
 - Special Education and 504 Processes:
 - Manifestation Determination Reviews
 - Functional Behavioral Assessments
 - Behavior Intervention Plans

Changed Policy: DOI Plans

District of Innovation (DOI) plans may no longer opt out of any portion of TEC Chp. 37 (Student Discipline).

- [TEA Guidance on DOIs](#)

How the Meadows Institute Helps Schools

We work with districts individually or in learning cohorts to:

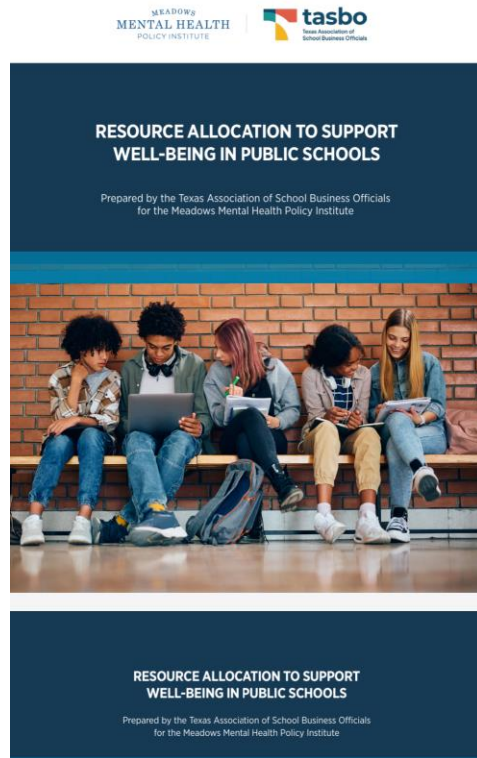
- ✓ Build out tiers of intervention to support mental and behavioral health.
- ✓ Utilize protocols to assess community partnership needs and fill gaps.
- ✓ Analyze discipline data to develop improvement plans.
- ✓ Set metrics to measure short-, mid-, and long-term impacts of programming.
- ✓ Tailor training and professional development for caregivers.
- ✓ Work across child-serving systems (e.g., juvenile justice, education, child welfare, health care, community mental health) to build stronger communities of support.
- ✓ Strategize with districts to improve equitable access to quality mental health support for students and staff members.
- ✓ Develop plans for financially sustaining mental health programming.
- ✓ Provide individualized, data-driven technical assistance support.

Contact: Melissa True, Vice President of Education and Strategy



Free Resources Supporting Mental/Behavioral health

Resource Allocation to Support Well-being in Public Schools



Think Kids: Collaborative Problem-Solving Training



Included under "Resources"



Questions?

Thank You!

For more information, please contact us at:
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MENTAL HEALTH
POLICY INSTITUTE

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