

WINTER 2025

# CHARTING SUCCESS

Supporting the Whole Child for  
Academic Excellence



children  
atRisk

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## Authors & Acknowledgement

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Authors:

**Linda Corchado**, Esq., Senior Director of Immigration

**Nadia Salibi**, Chief Impact Officer

**Becky Quintanilla**, Senior Project Coordinator & Lead Report Field Researcher

**Christine Thomas**, Director, Center for Social Measurement & Evaluation

**Erika Alcalá**, Center for Social Measurement & Evaluation

**Jacob Westjohn**, Associate Director, Center for Social Measurement & Evaluation

Design by

**Briauna Derry**, Director of Media Activism

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Celebrating Solutions as Supports are Dismantled: A Texas Perspective

Emergent Bilingual English Learners (EBEL) —who make up nearly one in five Texas public school students—demonstrate strong engagement and resilience. They show lower rates of chronic absenteeism and disciplinary actions than their peers, yet systemic inequities continue to hinder their academic outcomes. Persistent shortages of bilingual-certified teachers, high student-teacher ratios, and uneven resource distribution across districts create structural barriers that limit these students’ success ([CHILDREN AT RISK, 2025](#)).

Findings from *Charting Success: Evaluating the Classroom Experiences of Children of Immigrants in Texas* demonstrate that targeted investment in bilingual education and federal Title III funding can substantially improve EBELs’ performance on state assessments. These results underscore the value of sustained, equitable funding and the potential of community-school partnerships to address disparities in opportunity and outcomes. Building on that analysis, this paper explores how wraparound services—comprehensive, family-driven interventions that address the social, emotional, and non-academic needs of students—contribute to the well-being and educational success of EB and immigrant youth in Texas.

Both national and statewide research finds that wraparound models support student growth by connecting schools with networks of community partners offering mental health care, food and housing support, academic tutoring, and enrichment programs ([Houston ISD, 2020](#); [Yu, Haddock, & Womack, 2022](#)). When implemented with fidelity, these programs help close opportunity gaps by addressing both academic and

socio-economic barriers. Students who benefit from such supports demonstrate measurable gains in literacy, attendance, and graduation rates ([Ammar et al., 2021](#); [Hiett, 2019](#); [Meloche et al., 2020](#)).

Ultimately, education functions as both a learning pathway and a public health determinant. By linking academic achievement to health, stability, and family engagement, wraparound services not only improve classroom outcomes but also foster healthier, more resilient communities. Children At Risk (C@R) aims to build off this research and examine the intersection between educational and well-being outcomes among EBELs, identifying how wraparound approaches can strengthen equity across Texas districts, through this *Charting Success: Supporting the Whole Child for Academic Excellence* report.



# METHODOLOGY

## The Data Roadmap

Children At Risk employed a mixed-methods study design combining (1) quantitative analysis of secondary data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Texas State agencies noted below and (2) qualitative, semi-structured interviews with four key stakeholders working with school districts across three different regions in Texas. The integration of these two approaches allows for both population-level estimation of demographic, socioeconomic, and educational conditions and the exploration of lived experiences and perceptions that cannot be captured through survey data alone.

Secondary level data came from four sources:

### **American Community Survey (ACS):**

ZIP-level measures of children under 18 (Medicaid coverage, uninsurance, family structure, SNAP enrollment, immigrant families) were aggregated to school districts using the HUD-USPS ZCTA-district crosswalk.

### **Texas Health & Human Services (HHS):**

County-level health metrics including pediatrician-to-child ratio, infant mortality rate, and kindergarten immunization coverage.

### **Texas Education Agency (TEA):**

District-level indicators of enrollment, emergent bilingual English learners (EBEL), economic disadvantage, counselor-student ratio, and chronic absenteeism.

### **Texas Education Agency (TEA):**

Federal grant awards and expenditures by grantee for school years 2020–2021 through 2025–2026, including Title I, Title III, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (Lowey) funding. Data were aggregated from the district level to counties and custom regions.



To understand what drives educational success for EBELs, Children At Risk analyzed four key outcomes from the 2024 Charting Success report- student achievement, teacher outcomes, student engagement, and overall performance- using linear mixed-effect models. These models accounted for the differences between districts nested within counties, capturing both local and regional variation. In total, 13 predictors, covering sociodemographic factors, family structure, health access, and district-level conditions are included to identify which factors most strongly influence outcomes.

## MAKING IT COUNT

# Key Components of Wraparound Services



## Why Wraparound Services Matter

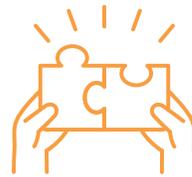
The evidence is clear: student achievement is inseparable from social and emotional well-being. For Emergent Bilingual English Learners (EBEL), who may encounter additional hardships such as interrupted schooling, trauma, or the stress of acculturation, the need for integrated support is even greater. Wraparound services offer a systemic solution—one that positions schools as community anchors capable of connecting students and families to the resources they need to thrive. In collaboration with families and community services, wraparound brings in supports (e.g., mental health, social services, basic needs, etc.) that a teacher is typically not trained or equipped to handle, allowing for a team based approach where educators can focus on the academic experience.

By coordinating across multiple domains—academic instruction, health access, mental wellness, and family stability—wraparound initiatives transform schools into equitable environments where all students have the opportunity to succeed. These supports not only close opportunity gaps but also strengthen the social fabric of communities, illustrating that educational equity and community well-being are deeply interconnected goals.



## The Need for Wraparound Services

EBELs in Texas face overlapping challenges that extend beyond the classroom. Many navigate poverty, food insecurity, housing instability, and limited access to healthcare—factors that deeply affect attendance, learning, and academic progress. Addressing these conditions requires a holistic approach that integrates academic, social & family supports into the school environment. Wraparound services have emerged as one of the most effective frameworks for doing so, linking schools to a coordinated network of community and government-based supports that address the whole child.



## Key Components of Wraparound Services Across Texas

Wraparound services are most effective when designed as comprehensive, student-centered systems that address both academic and non-academic barriers. In Texas, districts and community partners increasingly recognize that supporting EBELs requires attention to the whole child—integrating instruction, mental and physical health, and family engagement within a coordinated framework.

This following sections of this report outlines the four major pillars of wraparound services:

- Academic Support
- Social and Emotional Well-Being
- Health and Wellness
- Family and Community Engagement

# MAKING IT COUNT

## Academic Support Services



EBELs often encounter multiple, intersecting challenges: limited English proficiency, economic hardship, and, for some, disrupted schooling due to migration or trauma. Because these barriers directly affect academic engagement and learning, robust academic support services are a foundational component of any wraparound model. These include bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, targeted tutoring and mentoring, and college and career readiness initiatives that ensure students remain on track to graduate and pursue postsecondary goals.

Research consistently shows that sustained, high-quality academic support closes opportunity gaps for EBELs. For example, supplemental literacy instruction within community school models—schools that integrate academics with health, social, and family supports—significantly improves language acquisition and academic outcomes (Crain, 2023; Ammar et al., 2021). Likewise, tutoring and mentoring programs have been shown to double graduation likelihood for Hispanic students nationwide (Evans et al., 2025).

In Texas, districts that provide wraparound supports alongside bilingual education report measurable improvements in student outcomes. Emergent bilingual students with access to comprehensive academic and socio-emotional services are more likely to meet grade-level expectations, demonstrate growth in English proficiency, and maintain higher attendance rates. When schools align academic interventions with community assets—such as local nonprofits offering bilingual advising, financial literacy workshops, and college counseling—they create sustainable pathways toward academic and economic mobility.



**Effective academic supports are not limited to the classroom—they depend on schools' ability to connect instruction with real-world supports that reflect the lived experiences of Emergent Bilingual students and their families.**

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

# Learning All Day: The Power of Integrated Academic & Afterschool Supports

United to Learn and Dallas Afterschool (DAS) demonstrate how integrated academic supports can measurably improve student outcomes across Dallas. United to Learn’s model includes targeted literacy coaching, individualized campus supports, bilingual-friendly instructional resources, and strong family partnerships that help emergent bilingual students access reading instruction aligned to their linguistic needs. Its Aspiring Teachers program expands tutoring capacity in early grades while preparing future educators to support multilingual learners. These strategies contributed to a 9.5-point increase in third-grade literacy, 17 percent growth for the same cohort into fourth grade, and 94 percent of partner campuses earning an A, B, or C rating. These gains reflect improved performance for students who might otherwise struggle to reach grade level, including those at risk of falling behind in reading.

DAS reinforces learning beyond the school day by improving program quality, strengthening the out-of-school time workforce, and expanding access to enrichment activities that keeps students academically engaged. Their latest study showed higher STAAR passing rates for participants, with 75 percent passing math and 70 percent passing reading compared to 65 percent for non-participants. DAS students were also less likely to be chronically absent and 91 percent demonstrated improved social skills, both essential factors for preventing dropout. Programs use curriculum that blends STEM learning with real-world problem solving and career awareness, which helps students build confidence, leadership, and future readiness.

**“We’re making learning fun and hitting issues and activities that can’t always be done during the school day.”**  
-Dallas Afterschool

Through bilingual family trainings, SEL supports, and activities that mirror school-day learning in more accessible formats, DAS helps emergent bilingual students and struggling learners practice academic skills in a supportive environment that encourages persistence and curiosity. Together, these approaches show clear evidence that consistent wraparound support improves academic performance, engagement, and long-term educational stability.

Together, these two organizations highlight the power of a full-day support ecosystem. United to Learn accelerates early literacy and strengthens campus environments, while DAS builds a bridge between school, community, and home through engaging, high-quality afterschool experiences. Their combined impact underscores a simple truth: when students feel supported academically, socially, and emotionally throughout the entire day, their outcomes improve—and the benefits stretch far beyond the classroom.

## LEARNING ALL DAY

# Social & Emotional Support

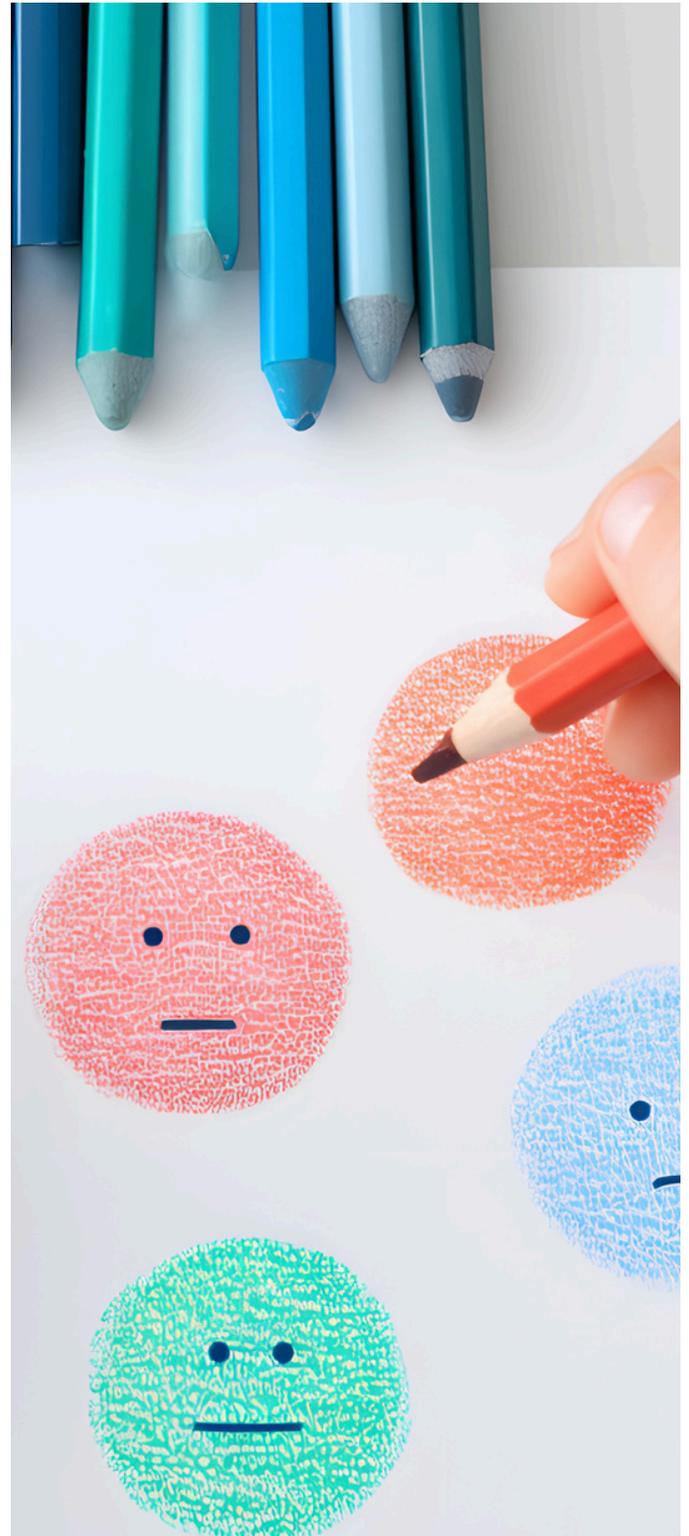
Academic achievement cannot be separated from emotional well-being. For many EBEL and newcomer students, the process of acclimation involves cultural transition, possible trauma recovery, or economic instability. Social and emotional support helps students develop resilience, regulate stress, and engage meaningfully in their learning environments.

School-based counseling, restorative practices, and trauma-informed instruction are critical components of these supports. At Houston ISD one in five students report that stress and anxiety directly impede their learning ([Stroub et al., 2021](#); [Houston ISD, 2020](#)). Districts that have expanded access to counseling services and peer mentorship programs report on reduced disciplinary incidents and improved attendance.

Culturally responsive mental health programs also foster belonging and agency. Peer leadership initiatives and bilingual mentorship programs allow students to share experiences, build confidence, and strengthen community ties. By embedding these programs into the school day, districts ensure that emotional well-being is treated not as an afterthought but as a core driver of learning.



**Social and emotional supports cultivate safe, inclusive learning environments that empower Emergent Bilingual students to thrive academically while maintaining their cultural identity and mental wellness.**



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

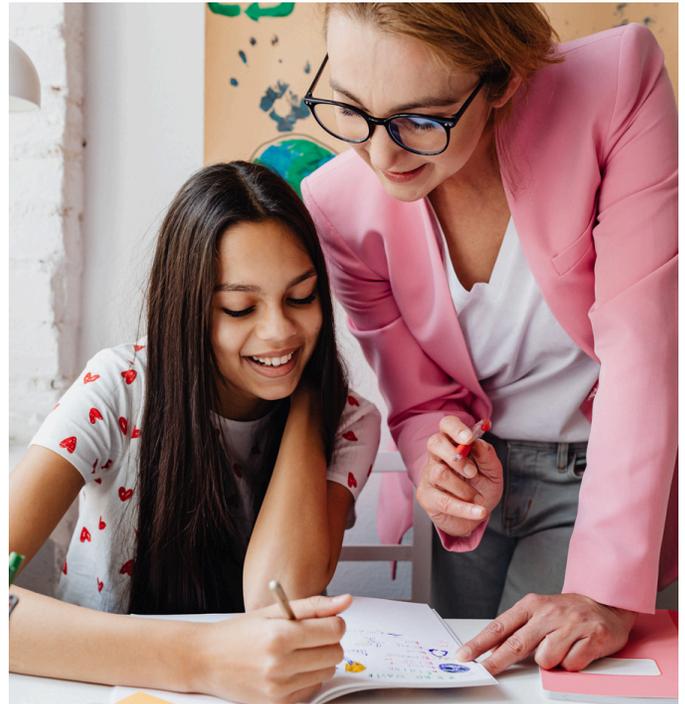
# Building Belonging and Supporting Social & Emotional Growth

Proyecto Juan Diego places belonging at the center of its work by supporting the full family unit and creating spaces where children, parents, and elders feel seen, safe, and valued. Serving the Cameron Park community in Brownsville for more than 22 years, the organization operates as a one-stop center that integrates education, health, immigration, and social services. Trust is built through long-term relationships, with many families participating in multiple programs at the same time. Bilingual and literacy-accessible services, GED and ESL classes in Spanish, individualized tutoring, and two-generation programming help families navigate school systems, reduce language barriers, and engage more confidently in their children's education.

Proyecto Juan Diego also uses intentional tools and observation to understand whether participants feel connected and supported. Through its family and adult programs, staff administer validated assessments such as the PHQ-9 for depression, GAD-7 for anxiety, resilience scales, self-esteem measures, and social isolation screenings. These tools are paired with weekly check-ins, long-term group participation, and close coordination across program staff to track growth over time. Equally important, belonging is observed through behavior and engagement, including families returning year after year, former students coming back as volunteers, and parents seeking support beyond formal programming.

**You cannot ask someone to change anything physically if their mental health is not at a good stage.**

**-Proyecto Juan Diego**



Across its work, Proyecto Juan Diego does not assume belonging. It builds it through relationships, measures it through structured assessments, and sustains it by creating a trusted community space where families know they are not alone.

Afterschool and wellness programs strengthen these outcomes by supporting students' emotional and social well-being beyond the regular school day. Organizations such as Dallas Afterschool integrate social-emotional learning, enrichment activities like STEM exploration, and structures that build confidence and belonging. These supports are linked to lower chronic absenteeism and higher engagement, as students feel connected to caring adults and meaningful opportunities to grow. Together, health services and afterschool wellness supports create environments in which students are healthier, more present, and better prepared to succeed academically and socially.

# FOUNDATIONS FOR LEARNING

## Health and Wellness Services



Health and wellness are central to the wraparound model and directly influence academic outcomes. Students struggling with unmet physical or mental health needs often face chronic absenteeism, learning challenges, and lower academic performance. Integrating health services into schools creates equitable access points for care, especially for low-income and immigrant families who may face barriers to healthcare.

Statewide data show persistent disparities in child health access across Texas, including low pediatrician-to-child ratios and gaps in immunization coverage in economically disadvantaged counties. In Houston ISD, thousands of students lack consistent access to basic healthcare, vision, and nutrition, with hunger and untreated illness undermining learning ([Stroub et al., 2021](#)).

School-based health clinics, nutrition programs, and partnerships with community health centers have proven effective in reducing absenteeism and improving GPA ([Houston ISD, 2020](#); [Meloche et al., 2020](#)).

Similarly, afterschool wellness programs that incorporate fitness, mindfulness, and enrichment activities support both physical health and student engagement ([Afterschool Alliance, 2024](#)).

By coordinating healthcare access with academic and social supports, wraparound initiatives mitigate the inequities that disproportionately affect EBEL and immigrant students—transforming schools into health-promoting, learning-centered community hubs.



**When students' basic health needs are met, they are better able to focus, learn, and participate fully in school life. This demonstrates the essential connection between health equity and educational equity.**

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

# Health, Wellness, & Enrichment: Drivers of Student Engagement

Proyecto Juan Diego (PJD) highlights how access to health, nutrition, and wellness supports helps reduce barriers that often contribute to absenteeism among immigrant and low-income students, even though the organization's primary focus is serving adults rather than students directly. Staff described how unmet health needs, chronic illness, mental health stress, and food insecurity within households frequently disrupt family routines and, in turn, students' ability to attend school consistently. By centering services on parents and caregivers through health education, diabetes prevention and management programs, vision exams and eyeglasses, mental health screenings, counseling referrals, and nutrition-related supports,

Proyecto Juan Diego seeks to stabilize families and reduce crises that can interfere with children's school participation. While the organization does not track school-based attendance or GPA data, staff observed that when adult needs are addressed, families are better positioned to support consistent school engagement for their children.

PJD also emphasizes that afterschool and wellness programming complements this adult-centered approach by addressing multi-generational needs. Tutoring, summer learning experiences, low-impact fitness activities, and stress management supports are offered alongside family programs and are designed to promote emotional regulation, confidence, and a sense of safety for children and youth. Staff emphasized that these supports are most effective when they are culturally responsive and relationship-driven rather than narrowly academic.

Together, adult services and youth-focused enrichment create trusted spaces that strengthen family connections, reduce isolation, and support sustained engagement over time, even when formal academic outcome data are beyond the organization's scope.



# CENTERING FAMILIES AS PARTNERS

## Family and Community Engagement

Family and community engagement lies at the heart of effective wraparound implementation. Strong partnerships between schools, families, and local organizations ensure that services are culturally responsive and reflect the unique strengths of each community. Parent education programs empower caregivers to navigate school systems, advocate for their children, and take on leadership roles that enrich school culture ([Latunde, 2017](#); [Villarreal, 2018](#)).



**Family and community engagement transforms wraparound services from a checklist of interventions into a shared, culturally grounded strategy for community empowerment and student success.**

Moreover, afterschool and summer programs that intentionally engage families and local partners have been shown to increase attendance, reduce disciplinary incidents, and strengthen academic performance among underserved students ([Afterschool Alliance, 2024](#)). These programs not only reinforce academic learning but also provide safe, nurturing spaces that promote belonging and resilience—particularly vital for EBEL and immigrant students adapting to new cultural and linguistic environments.

Culturally responsive outreach—particularly when led by trusted community members—helps overcome language and acculturation barriers faced by immigrant families ([Schulz, 2025](#); [Crain, 2023](#)). Partnerships with local nonprofits expand school capacity to meet needs related to housing, mental health, & social services, creating inclusive hubs of support ([Ammar et al., 2021](#); [Afterschool Alliance, 2024](#)).

One notable example, the Family-School-Community Partnership model in San Antonio, demonstrates how parent-led engagement can drive measurable academic and behavioral improvements. Schools that hired parents from within the community as engagement coaches reported reductions in suspensions and increased passing rates on state exams, particularly among students with prior disciplinary risk. These initiatives redefine families not as service recipients but as co-leaders in shaping educational environments.



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

# Building Trust and Expanding Support Through Family Partnerships

Family Service builds trust with Emergent Bilingual and immigrant families by prioritizing face-to-face engagement, cultural responsiveness, and long-term relationships. Through programs like FAST, staff engage families directly in schools and community settings, adapting outreach based on language, culture, and neighborhood context. Families are welcomed in their home language and supported through bilingual services, home visits, and parent-led activities that position caregivers as leaders rather than recipients of services. Trust is strengthened by meeting families' immediate needs first, including housing stability, food access, and mental health support, before introducing additional programming. This approach helps families who may have had negative experiences with institutions feel safe, respected, and willing to engage over time.



Family Service also expands schools' capacity by serving as a connector between families and a broad network of community partners. Working across multiple school districts, the organization integrates education, counseling, financial coaching, and health services, while referring families to trusted partners when needs fall outside its scope. Through participation in collective impact efforts such as United Way and close collaboration with school districts, Family Service helps schools function as inclusive hubs of support without requiring educators to meet every non-academic need alone. By coordinating services across developmental stages and leveraging community partnerships, Family Service reduces barriers for families and creates more stable conditions that support student engagement, attendance, and long-term success.



**“ We are not trying to do everything. We are trying to address multi-generational family issues... It’s the gift that keeps on giving. -Family Service**

# FEDERAL FUNDING Driver for Educational Equity

## WHAT ARE REGIONAL TITLE III FUNDS?

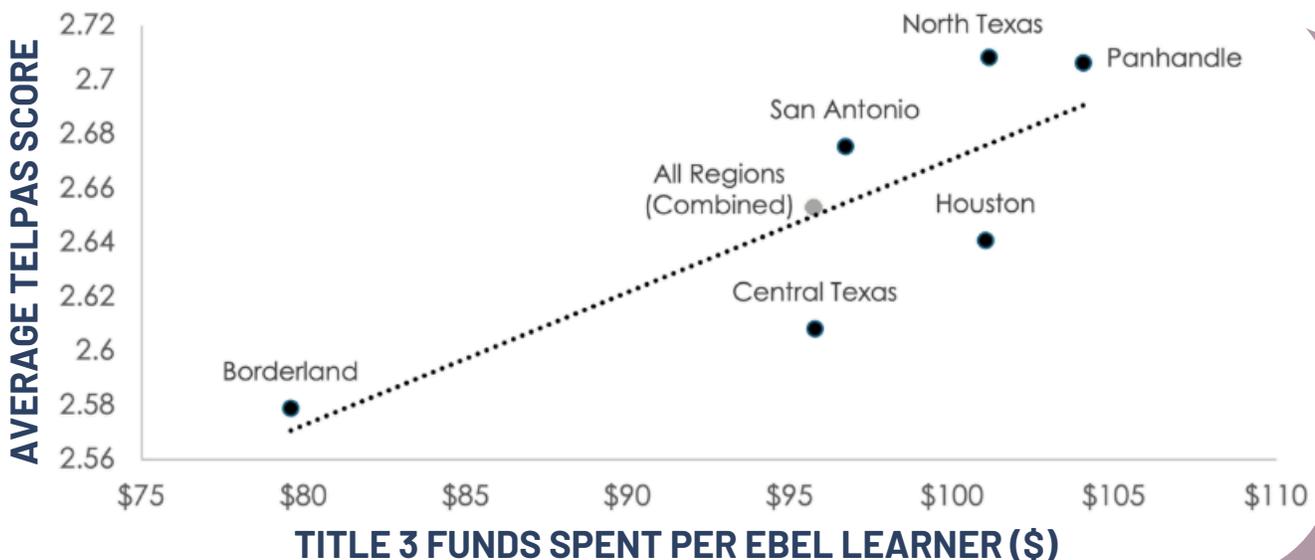
Regional Title III funding, part of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), provides supplemental money to states and school districts to help English learners and immigrant students become proficient in English and meet challenging academic standards, funding services like teacher training, materials, and family engagement programs. It's distributed to regions or districts based on the number of eligible students, aiming to close achievement gaps and ensure equitable support beyond regular programs.

Regional Title III spending shows a clear pattern that reinforces the importance of maintaining these funds for English learners in Texas. Regions that invested more per English learner tended to report stronger TELPAS performance, highlighting how Title III supports districts in providing high-quality language instruction and resources for multilingual students. Given the large and growing number of English learners in Texas, continued federal investment remains essential for meeting their academic and language development needs.

Although Title III allocations are formula-driven, the data reviewed here reflect actual dollars spent, which can vary across regions due to drawdown timing, administrative capacity, and local implementation decisions. These differences help explain why spending levels may not perfectly match performance outcomes. Even so, Title III continues to provide critical instructional materials, classroom supports, and educator training that help multilingual students build strong language skills and stay on track academically.

These findings point to an important overall message. Federal education investments provide essential resources that help schools expand opportunities, strengthen engagement, and support students who face some of the greatest barriers to success. While funding is only one piece of the puzzle, sustained and strengthened federal support remains central to improving outcomes & promoting educational equity across Texas.

## TITLE 3 FUNDING SPENT VS TELPAS SCORE



**BRIGHT SPOTS**

# Challenging the Status Quo

Students' ability to learn is shaped by far more than what happens during a single class period. Academic success is closely tied to students' **emotional health**, **physical well-being**, and the stability of their home and community **environments**.

In schools serving students with diverse needs, wraparound services provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the barriers that can hinder learning. As demonstrated through the research highlighted in this report, embedding these four pillars within schools not only strengthen educational outcomes but also affirm students' identities, stabilize families, and build trusting partnerships that allow EBELs to thrive academically and socially.

It is especially important to highlight districts that are succeeding despite systemic inequities—those that achieve strong outcomes even in the face of

adversity. These 'bright spots' illuminate what is possible when schools implement wraparound systems with fidelity and purpose.

Analysis of High Adversity-High Performance districts illuminates a powerful truth: excellence is achievable even amid concentrated need. These "bright spots" demonstrate how coordinated wraparound systems—linking schools, families, and community partners—can produce strong results across academic and socio-emotional indicators. The following regional highlights demonstrate just that.



## BRIGHT SPOTS

# Challenging the Status Quo

### AUSTIN REGION – EANES ISD

Eanes ISD exemplifies the potential of holistic supports. Despite serving large proportions of immigrant, refugee, and migrant students, the district ranks in the top quartile statewide for TELPAS and EBEL Meets or Above. It also performs among the top quartile on every “challenge” measure—chronic absenteeism, discipline, student-to-mental-health ratio, bilingual student-teacher ratio, and teacher turnover. Eanes ISD demonstrates that rigor and compassion can coexist when schools invest in the whole child through a comprehensive, data-driven approach.

### NORTH TEXAS REGION – EIGHT DISTRICTS IDENTIFIED

Eight North Texas districts—Rockwall ISD, Leadership Prep, Sunnyvale ISD, Melissa ISD, Coppell ISD, Argyle ISD, Universal Academy, and Carroll ISD—emerged as both high adversity and high performance systems. Elevated immigrant and refugee populations, along with higher uninsured rates, place these districts in the top quartile of need-based indicators. Yet each scored in the top quartile for TELPAS and EBEL Meets or Above, with strong graduation outcomes and favorable results across “challenge” measures such as absenteeism, discipline, and teacher retention. Collectively, these districts demonstrate that intentional investment in bilingual education, mental health infrastructure, and family partnerships can yield equitable excellence even under substantial demographic pressures.

### BORDERLAND REGION – VALLEY VIEW ISD

In the Borderland region, Valley View ISD represents a model of resilience and innovation. Despite ranking among the top quartile for economic disadvantage and immigrant enrollment, Valley View achieves exceptional performance on EBEL Meets or Above and TELPAS. The district also excels in student-to-mental health ratios and teacher stability, showing that consistency and care are central to sustained student success. Its outcomes highlight the transformative potential of wraparound systems that emphasize both academic and emotional continuity for high-need populations.



## BRIGHT SPOTS

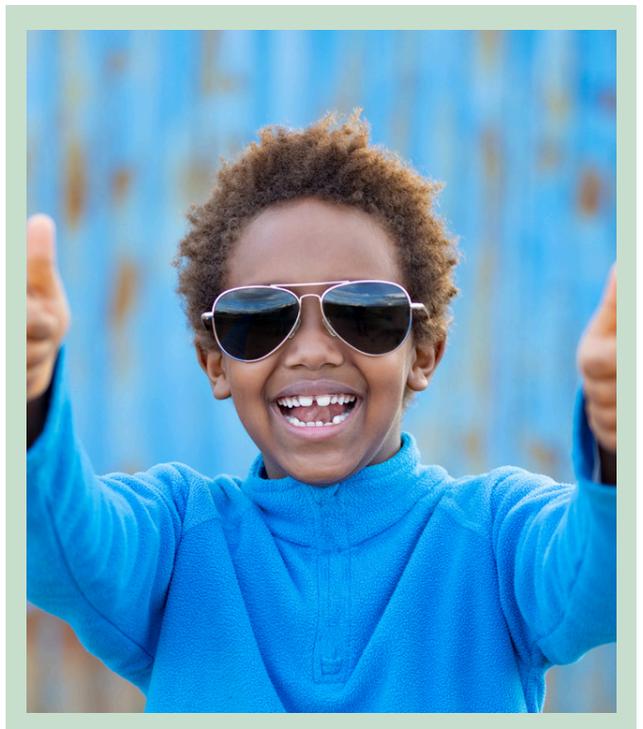
# Challenging the Status Quo

### SAN ANTONIO REGION – GREAT HEARTS TEXAS

Great Hearts Texas illustrates the success possible when schools integrate holistic supports within high-need environments. Despite elevated rates of uninsured, immigrant, refugee, and migrant students, the district performs in the top quartile for both academic and challenge measures, including EBEL Meets or Above, TELPAS, chronic absenteeism, and discipline. This balance of high expectations and comprehensive care positions Great Hearts as a model for culturally responsive, health-centered education in urban regions.



These Texas features mirror the most successful wraparound ecosystems nationally—those that embed educational improvement within the broader context of community health and economic stability.



## REGIONAL SUMMARY

# Greater Houston Profile

The Greater Houston region analyzed 98 school districts serving over 1.3 million students, with 28% identified as English learners (381,932 students). The region's chronic absenteeism rate is 19.7, slightly below the statewide average.

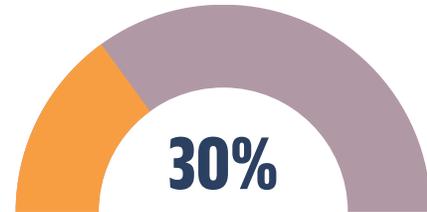
### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS	98
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	1,348,912
EB ENGLISH LEARNERS	28% / 381,932



1 in 4 students are EBEL in Houston Region

### WELLNESS INDICATORS



### Houston Region Shows Strong SNAP Participation

With 30% of families receiving SNAP benefits, the Houston region ranks among the higher participation areas across Texas.

### STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



#### Percentage Chronically Absent vs Overall Score

Higher percentages of chronic absenteeism in a district showed that EBELs are more likely to perform worse than their peers when it came to overall performance.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

Chronic absenteeism is the most significant finding, each percentage increase raises the odds of higher EBEL score disparities among students, making improved attendance essential for closing educational gaps.

## REGIONAL SUMMARY

# What We Learned About the Greater Houston Region

The most notable finding is chronic absenteeism. For every percentage increase in chronic absenteeism, the odds of greater EBEL score disparity nearly triple. This means that when students miss school frequently, they are much more likely to fall behind compared to their peers. Addressing absenteeism should be a top priority for reducing educational gaps.

When we looked at total score differences for Houston students, some patterns stood out. These patterns still matter because they show where families may need more support. Our analysis looked at factors that might influence disparities in EBEL score outcomes for students in Houston. In this context, lower total means less disparity compared to peers, which is what we want to achieve.

**Financial Wellness, family stability, health access, and language support are all critical for educational equity.**

### FAMILY STRUCTURE

Areas with more single-parent households often also have higher SNAP and Medicaid use.

Families with fewer resources can face extra challenges that affect children's learning.

Supporting parents with child care, transportation, and flexible school programs can make a big difference.

### MENTAL HEALTH

Stress and mental health needs are linked to school attendance. When families struggle with mental health, kids may miss school or have trouble focusing. Community programs that provide counseling and family support can help reduce these barriers.

### IMMIGRATION & LANGUAGE

Families who recently immigrated may face language barriers and fewer resources. This can make it harder for children to succeed in school.

Language support and culturally responsive programs are key to helping these students thrive.

### HEALTH COVERAGE

When families don't have health insurance, it's harder to keep kids healthy and in school. Missed school days can lead to learning gaps. Expanding access to affordable health care helps children stay on track.

# REGIONAL SUMMARY

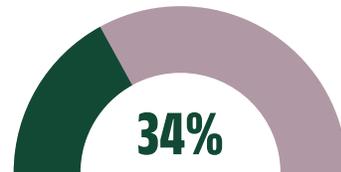
## Greater San Antonio Profile

The Greater San Antonio region includes 60 school districts serving over 440,000 students, with 16% identified as English learners (69,479 students). The region’s chronic absenteeism rate is 27.6, above the statewide average.

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS	60
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	443,900
EB ENGLISH LEARNERS	16% / 69,479

### WELLNESS INDICATORS



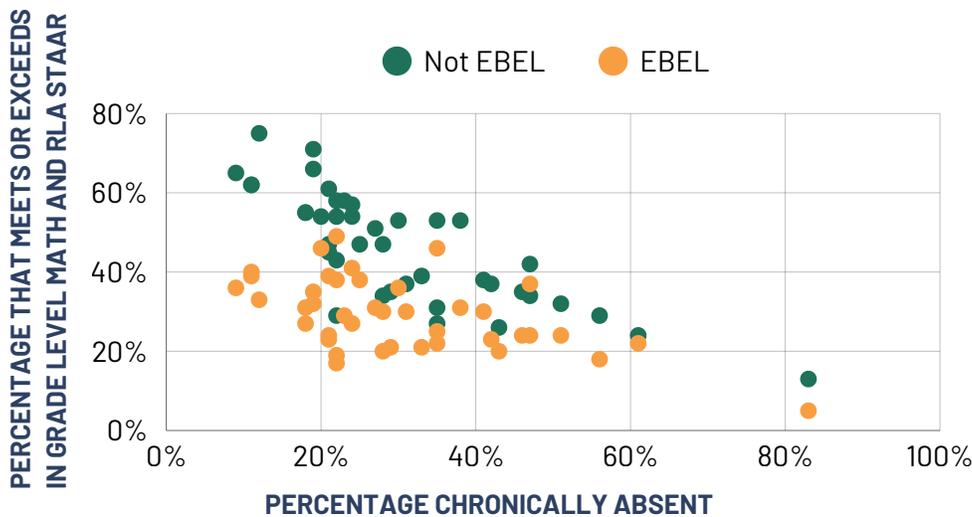
#### San Antonio Region Shows Strong SNAP Participation

With 34% of families receiving SNAP benefits, the San Antonio region ranks among the higher participation areas across Texas.

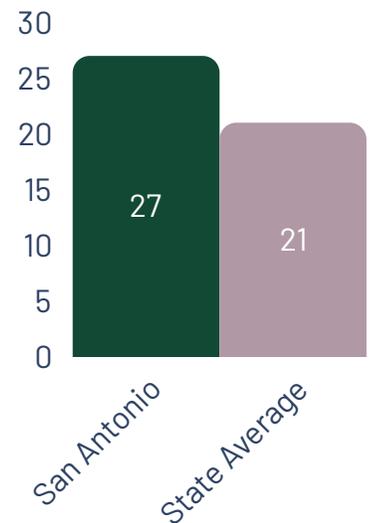
### STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Chronic absenteeism- often driven by unmet mental health needs-significantly undermines students’ ability to meet grade-level standards, reinforcing that consistent attendance remains one of the strongest predictors of academic success in San Antonio region.

#### PERCENTAGE CHRONICALLY ABSENT BY PERCENTAGE WHO MEETS OR ABOVE IN MATH AND RLA STAAR EXAMS BY EBEL STATUS



#### CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RATE



### KEY TAKEAWAY

Chronic absenteeism often driven by unmet mental health needs-significantly undermines students’ ability to meet grade-level standards, reinforcing that consistent attendance remains one of the strongest predictors of academic success in San Antonio region.

## REGIONAL SUMMARY

# What We Learned About the Greater San Antonio Region

In San Antonio, it was important to understand why some districts have bigger gaps in EBEL outcomes than others. These gaps matter because they show whether students are learning at similar levels. Smaller gaps mean more fairness and better opportunities for all kids. When examining the data, we found only 13 usable districts for the analysis. That's not enough to make strong claims, but it's enough to see patterns that tell an important story about what families and schools are facing.

These patterns represent the real-life struggles for families in the San Antonio communities.

Mental health and health coverage are critical for keeping kids in school and learning.



### HEALTH & ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS

Access to healthcare and financial stability go hand in hand when it comes to helping kids succeed in school. Families without health insurance often struggle to get care when they need it. That can lead to more sick days, missed lessons, and added stress at home. On the other hand, families enrolled in Medicaid may have coverage, but this often signals deeper economic hardship. These families may also face challenges like food insecurity or unstable housing, issues that make it harder for children to focus and thrive in the classroom.



### MENTAL HEALTH

One pattern points to mental health. Communities with higher mental health needs often face challenges that spill into the classroom, kids miss school, struggle to focus, and fall behind. This suggests that mental health support isn't just about well-being; it's about learning and equity. Chronic absenteeism, missing school regularly, has long been linked to learning gaps. Every missed day matters, and this data reminds us of that truth. Attendance is still one of the strongest predictors of academic success.

# REGIONAL SUMMARY

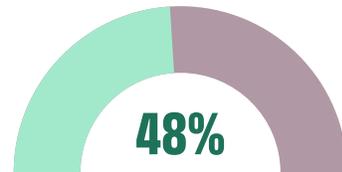
## Texas Borderland Profile

The Borderland region includes 77 school districts serving over 620,000 students, with 40% identified as English learners (252,284 students). The region’s chronic absenteeism rate is 25.4, above the statewide average.

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS	77
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	628,288
EB ENGLISH LEARNERS	40% / 252,284

### WELLNESS INDICATORS



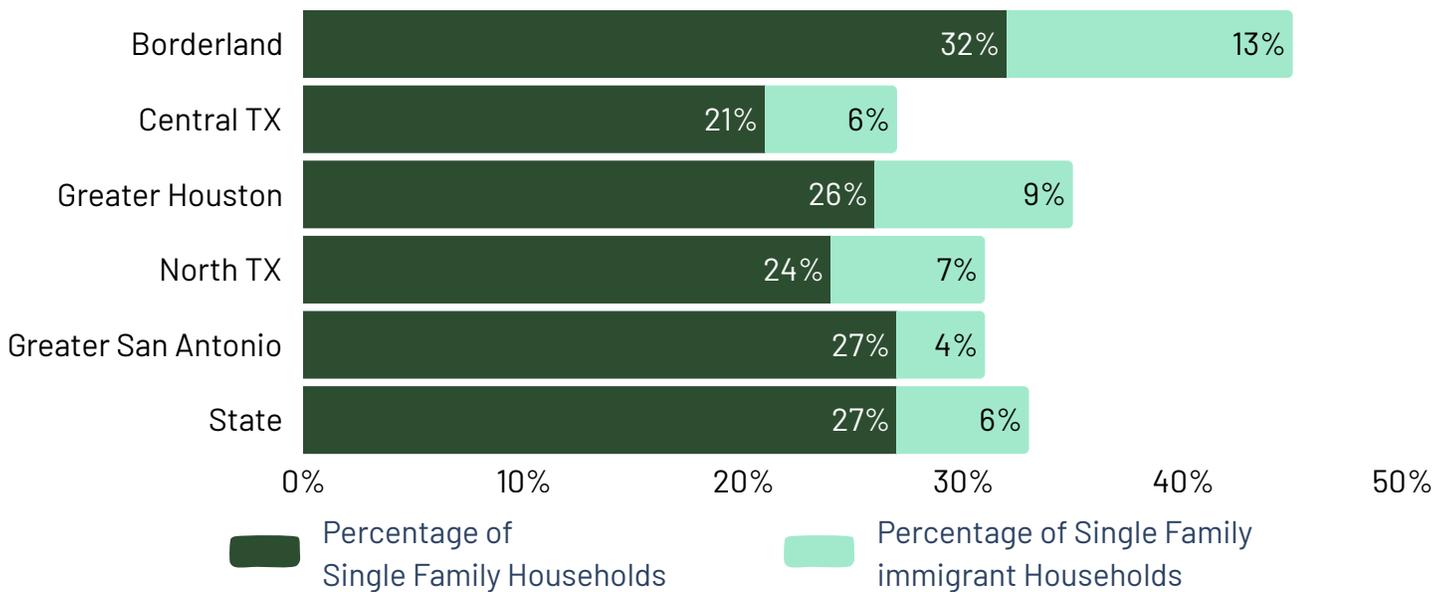
#### Borderland Region Shows Strong SNAP Participation

With 48% of families receiving SNAP benefits, the borderland region ranks the highest in participation across Texas.

### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Single-parent households can present challenges to student achievement, and the Borderland’s high rates of single-parent families highlight the need for schools and wraparound services that provide targeted support to ensure equitable outcomes.

#### PERCENTAGE OF SINGLE FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS BY REGION



### KEY TAKEAWAY

Single-parent households can present challenges to student achievement, and the Borderland’s high rates of single-parent families highlight the need for schools and wraparound services that provide targeted support to ensure equitable outcomes.

## REGIONAL SUMMARY

# What We Learned About the Borderland Region

Several community factors were analyzed to see how they might relate to overall outcomes in the Borderland region. These factors include mental health provider availability, insurance coverage, Medicaid enrollment, single-parent households, immigration rates, chronic absenteeism in schools, and participation in food assistance programs.

For the Borderland region, strengthening family support, mental health access, and basic needs programs could have the greatest impact on community well-being.

### SNAP PARTICIPATION

Higher SNAP participation was linked to better outcomes, possibly because it helps families meet basic needs

### SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS & IMMIGRATION RATES

These two factors showed some of the strongest relationships with outcomes, even though they were not statistically significant in this small sample.

Communities with more single-parent households and higher immigration rates tended to have slightly lower overall outcomes. This suggests that family support and integration services could make a difference.

### MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER AVAILABILITY

Areas with more mental health resources tended to have better outcomes.

### HEALTH & BASIC NEEDS

Programs that support families and children—particularly those serving single-parent households and immigrant families—can play a vital role in improving overall well-being. At the same time, expanding access to mental health services remains a critical need, as many families continue to face unmet behavioral and emotional health challenges. Continuing and strengthening food assistance programs is also essential, as these supports help stabilize outcomes for vulnerable families and reduce the stressors that can undermine children's development and family stability.

# REGIONAL SUMMARY

## Central Texas Profile

The Central Texas region includes 55 school districts serving over 400,000 students, with 26% identified as English learners (104,846 students). The region’s chronic absenteeism rate is 21.3, above the statewide average.

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS	55
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	407,592
EB ENGLISH LEARNERS	26% / 104,846

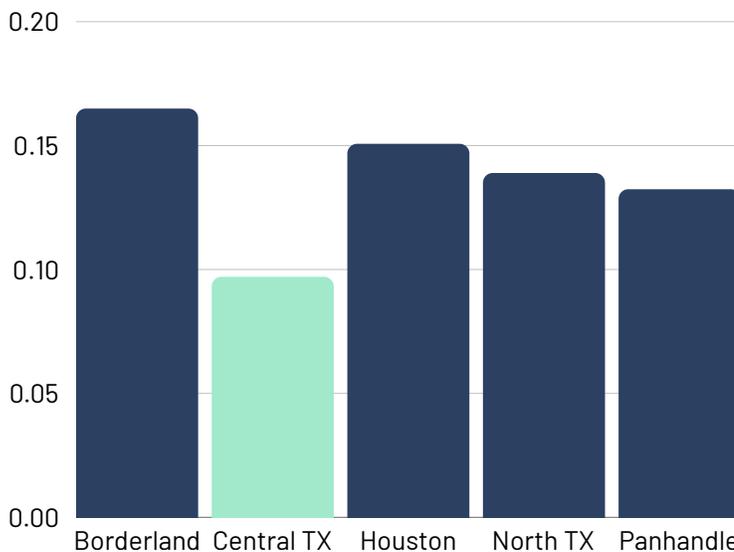


1 in 4 students are EBEL in Central Texas Region

### WELLNESS INDICATORS

#### PERCENTAGE OF UNINSURED CHILDREN

Central Texas has the lowest rate of uninsured families in the state—just 9.7%, reflecting stronger access to health coverage compared to other Texas regions.



#### STUDENT SCHOOL-COUNSELOR RATIO

444:1  
Central Texas

389:1  
Texas Statewide

250:1  
National Recommendation

On average, one full-time school counselor supports 444 students—far exceeding recommended ratio of 250:1 and the statewide average of 389:1, highlighting the urgent need for increased counseling resources.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

In Central Texas, there is a critical link between limited counseling resources and the mental health challenges driving learning gaps.

## REGIONAL SUMMARY

# What We Learned About Central Texas

The most notable finding for Central Texas was found to be uninsured children. Families without health insurance often face serious challenges that can affect children’s ability to attend school regularly and learn effectively. Our analysis shows that communities with more uninsured families tend to have much larger gaps in EBEL scores compared to their peers, which measure educational progress. The lack of insurance is a major barrier for families in Central Texas to educational equity.



### MEDICAID ENROLLMENT

Analysis indicates that communities with higher Medicaid enrollment often face bigger challenges that can lead to educational gaps.

This signals that families may be dealing with economic and health-related stress that makes it harder for children to thrive in school.

Supporting these families with additional resources could help reduce disparities.



### MENTAL HEALTH & STUDENT SUCCESS

Mental health needs are closely tied to school attendance and family well-being. In Central Texas, there was a strong connection between mental health challenges and learning gaps. Families struggling with mental health often face stress that affects children’s ability to attend school regularly and focus on learning. Expanding access to mental health services could make a big difference for students and families.

This analysis points to real challenges families face in Central Texas.

**Health access matters** - Lack of insurance and reliance on Medicaid are tied to educational gaps.

**Mental health support is critical** - Stress and unmet mental health needs can keep kids out of school

# REGIONAL SUMMARY

## North Texas Profile

The North Texas region includes 140 school districts serving over 1.3 million students, with 40% identified as English learners (381,932 students). The region’s chronic absenteeism rate is 18.7%, below the statewide average.

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS	<b>140</b>
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	<b>1,382,440</b>
EB ENGLISH LEARNERS	<b>40% / 372,644</b>

### WELLNESS INDICATORS



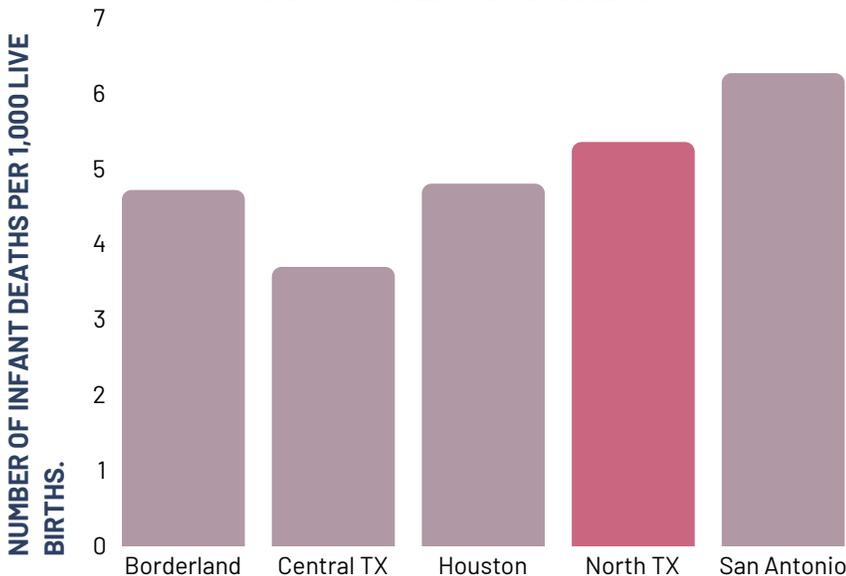
Percentage of Uninsured Families

North Texas has one of the lowest rate of uninsured families in the state—with 14%.

### INFANT MORTALITY

North Texas, with the second-highest infant mortality rate, demonstrates a strong link between health and education—areas with higher infant mortality consistently experience poorer overall student outcomes.

#### INFANT MORTALITY RATES BY REGION



#### IMPROVING MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH OUTCOMES

Improving maternal and infant health is not only vital for family well-being but also has far-reaching effects on community stability and K-12 student success, making it a cornerstone for long-term educational and equity outcomes.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

North Texas, with the second-highest infant mortality rate, demonstrates a strong link between health and education—areas with higher infant mortality consistently experience poorer overall student outcomes.

## REGIONAL SUMMARY

# What We Learned About North Texas

Several community factors were examined to assess how they might relate to overall outcomes in North Texas. These factors include things like mental health provider availability, insurance coverage, Medicaid enrollment, single-parent households, immigration rates, chronic absenteeism in schools, and infant mortality rates.

### Maternal and Infant Health

Infant mortality rate was the only factor that showed a strong and meaningful relationship with outcomes. In simple terms, areas with higher infant mortality tend to have worse overall outcomes. This suggests that improving maternal and infant health could have a big impact on community well-being.

Additionally, several community-level indicators help illustrate the gaps in access to care, stability, and overall well-being for children and families, particularly in communities facing limited resources.

**Mental Health Availability:** Communities with fewer mental health resources often face more stress and related issues.

**Insurance Coverage:** Areas with higher rates of uninsured individuals may struggle with access to care.

**Chronic Absenteeism:** Absenteeism often signals deeper issues like family instability or health problems.

**Single-Parent Households:** Higher rates can indicate economic and social stress that affects outcomes.

North Texas communities should prioritize maternal and infant health, while continuing to invest in mental health services, insurance coverage, and school attendance programs.

### Why This Matters

Maternal and infant health, access to mental health care, and family stability are foundational to long-term child and community well-being. Chronic absenteeism and unmet family support needs often serve as early warning signs of instability, signaling underlying challenges that, if left unaddressed, can negatively affect educational outcomes, health, and economic mobility across the community.

**Focus on maternal and infant health.** Reducing infant mortality could improve overall community outcomes.

### Support mental health and access to care.

When needs go unmet, they can directly interfere with students' ability to learn, regulate emotions, and engage in the classroom—placing additional strain on educators.

### Address absenteeism and family support.

Strengthening family support helps stabilize households, reduce stressors that keep students out of school, and improve consistent attendance.

## CONCLUSION

# From Lessons Learned to Practical Application

Texas must invest not only in classrooms but in the ecosystems that surround them—schools as hubs of **learning, health, and resilience.**

These regional exemplars affirm that adversity does not determine destiny. Districts are not defined solely by their context but by the choices they make within it. Neighboring districts with comparable demographics, challenges, and resources can yield vastly different student outcomes. Districts achieving high performance under challenging conditions share three defining characteristics:

### 1 **Comprehensive Wraparound Systems:**

Integration of academic instruction with social-emotional, health, and family supports ensures that barriers outside the classroom are directly addressed.

### 2 **Stable, Supported Educators:**

Investments in teacher well-being, manageable class sizes, and accessible mental health resources strengthen instructional quality and continuity.

### 3 **Authentic Community Partnerships:**

Collaboration with local nonprofits, healthcare providers, and family liaisons grounds services in cultural relevance and mutual trust.

These Texas features mirror the most successful wraparound ecosystems nationally—those that embed educational improvement within the broader context of community health and economic stability.

Interrelationships among predictors (for example, economic disadvantage often coinciding with high EBEL enrollment and uninsured rates) point to the efficacy of bundled, place-based interventions. The evidence is clear: to advance equity, Texas must invest not only in classrooms but in the ecosystems that surround them—schools as hubs of learning, health, and resilience.



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# children at Risk

**CHILDREN AT RISK's mission is to serve as a catalyst for change to improve the quality of life for children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration, and advocacy.**

CHILDREN AT RISK is a research and advocacy nonprofit leading the way in improving the quality of life for Texas's children. CHILDREN AT RISK considers the whole child by tracking issues in children's health, safety, education, and economic security. Committed to action beyond the data, CHILDREN AT RISK drives evidence-based change by speaking out on behalf of children. For more information, visit [childrenatrisk.org](http://childrenatrisk.org).

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## CONNECT WITH US

email: [info@childrenatrisk.org](mailto:info@childrenatrisk.org)

phone: (713) 869-7740

mail: PO Box 56003, Houston, TX 77256

Follow us on social media @childrenatrisk



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