

Community Conversations



On the Future of Public Education

A step-by-step guide to bringing the discussion to your community and sparking meaningful conversations on the most pressing issues facing students and educators in Texas.

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Texas Tribune Community Conversations: On public education

What are the most pressing issues facing students and educators across Texas, and what can lawmakers do to address these concerns and help set the next generation of Texans up for success? This Spring, The Texas Tribune will bring together lawmakers, educators, advocates and top thought leaders in front of a live audience to answer questions about the future of public education in the Lone Star State. **But we also want to hear from you.**

The public event, [The Future of Public Education](#), will take place April 1-2 in Austin. Event panels and interviews will be accessible through livestreamed and recorded videos. We know that many who are interested in these issues may not be able to travel to the event or possibly view the livestream, so the Tribune is encouraging community watch parties to view the event, along with discussion questions to spark conversation among attendees and dive deeper into issues affecting your community.

If you want to host a watch party, fill out [this brief form](#) to let us know. And if your event is open to the public, we'll share the details with our audience. More details on hosting a party are included below. Watch parties open to the public will be listed [here](#).

Thanks for your interest in facilitating an important conversation on the future of public education in Texas.

Want to have civil conversation with fellow Texans? Join our Facebook group [This is your Texas](#) to keep the conversation going.

To view the full list of foundations and corporate sponsors for this event, [visit the event website](#). Tribune events are also supported through contributions from our founding investors and members. Though donors and corporate sponsors underwrite Texas Tribune events, they play no role in determining the content, panelists or line of questioning.



About The Texas Tribune

The Texas Tribune is the only member-supported, digital-first, nonpartisan media organization that informs Texans — and engages with them — about public policy, politics, government and statewide issues.



Community Conversation Guidelines

A few important guidelines to note before you host a [community conversation](#):

- **Impartiality**
The Texas Tribune is an independent, nonpartisan media organization. While we support civic engagement, **we do not endorse any candidates, advocacy groups or positions on any issue**, nor will we endorse any advocacy that results from your event. If your event involves advocacy, or support for a political/legislative agenda, you must distinguish our reporting as being independent from this activity.
- **Branding & Positioning**
We encourage you to use this toolkit as a framework for your community conversation, but please note that any **event that you convene is not an official Texas Tribune event**. All event-related print materials, invitations and web listings must include this phrase: “This is an independently organized event inspired by reporting from The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan media organization that informs Texans — and engages with them — about public policy, politics, government and statewide issues.”
- **Registration**
If you are planning to host a watch party for the event, please fill out [this brief form](#). If it is open to the public, we’ll share the details with our audience.



Hosting a Watch Party

We hope this toolkit will serve as a guide to sparking meaningful conversation on the future of public education in Texas and the most pressing issues your community faces. To begin the discussion, the Tribune is convening lawmakers, educators and experts on education issues from across Texas for a live event in Austin on April 1-2, 2019. Issues to be discussed include the future of school finance, the importance of early childhood education, accountability, teacher preparation, social and emotional learning, demographic inevitability, the high school-to-college pipeline and the demand for a workforce that can meet the challenges of our booming economy.

We encourage you to host an event watch party, either while the event is taking place or by watching videos of the event afterward. The next few pages outline two watch party event models you could emulate.



Live watch party

The Tribune's event, which will take place April 1-2, will touch on the most pressing issues facing parents, educators and students across the state, and the legislative agenda posed to address them. It will also feature a keynote conversation with state legislators from across Texas on the education agenda of the 86th legislative session.

All panels will be [livestreamed on the Tribune's website](#). By tuning into the event in real time, you can follow along with the discussions as they unfold and virtually submit questions to event organizers in Austin that may be asked to the panelists onstage. This model works well for groups of any size, and it may be of most interest to those in communities with limited broadband access or that are unable to travel to Austin for the event.

You can view the full event schedule [here](#) and find more information on the technical requirements of hosting a watch party and accessing the event livestream on page 9 of this toolkit.



Post-event watch party

If you are unable to tune in to the event in real time, or if you want to tune in for only a portion of the event's panels, you could choose to host a post-event watch party using videos of specific panel discussions.

Full video of each discussion will be posted to the Tribune's website in the week following the symposium and can be streamed online at any time. This watch party model works well for groups of any size, and it may be of most interest to those who wish to dive deeper into one topic or a few specific education-related issues of most interest to your community.

You can find more information on the technical requirements of hosting a watch party and accessing the event videos on page 9 of this toolkit.

If you plan to host a watch party — either in real time with the Tribune's event or after the fact — let us know by [filling out this brief form](#). If you wish, we will include your event in a public list of watch parties that community members across Texas can attend.

Accessing the event livestream and post-event video:

To access the free, livestreamed video from The Texas Tribune's event, [The Future of Public Education](#), for your watch party, follow the step-by-step guide below. If you have any questions about accessing the livestream of this event or any post-event videos, email us at communityconversations@texastribune.org.

- **Check your internet speed**
To stream the event, you'll need to make sure your internet connection is fast enough. If you already stream videos on Netflix and YouTube without issues, you should be fine. If you are unsure, you can use a free [speed test](#) to test your connection. You'll need 0.5 Mbps at a minimum to reliably stream the program, but 1.5 Mbps will give you better results, especially if playing on a larger screen. Five Mbps will provide the best HD viewing Experience.
- **Tell us about your event**
If you host [a watch party of the Tribune's Future of Public Education event, let us know by completing this online form](#) or emailing us at communityconversations@texastribune.org. We will post all open-to-the-public watch parties on our website for community members across Texas to be able to find a watch party to attend near them.
- **Bookmark the event livestream landing page**
When the Future of Public Education event kicks off on the evening of April 1 and again on the morning of April 2, we'll livestream the entirety of it [here](#). Bookmark this page (trib.it/public-ed-watch) in advance of your watch party to make it easier to find on the day of the event. All videos will begin approximately 10 minutes in advance of the listed panel start time.
- **Identify which event panels you wish to livestream at your watch party**
Identify which event panels you wish to livestream at your watch party. The Tribune's Future of Public Education event will host over eight hours of in-depth and on-the-record discussions with top lawmakers, educators and community leaders on a variety of challenges facing public education in Texas. For your watch party, you may wish to stream the full event or only a select portion highlighting specific topics most important to your community.
- **Make sure you consult the [event schedule](#) in advance of your watch party so you know the appropriate time to convene your event.**

IMPORTANT: The Future of Public Education is being livestreamed April 1-2, 2019, as lawmakers, community leaders, educators and other stakeholders gather in person for the event in Austin. While all panels from the event will be available via video after its conclusion, the event is only **live** and open to virtual audience questions at the time and date listed here.

- **Pull up the video page on the days of the event and press play**
At the times listed on the [event schedule](#), the live video from the event happening in Austin will be available and accessible. All videos will begin approximately 10 minutes in advance of the listed panel start time. If you are tuning in to the event live, you will be able to virtually send questions to event organizers in Austin that may be asked live onstage.
- **Missed the livestream? Don't fret**
After the event, video of each panel from the event will be available [here](#) for you to access and stream at any time.



Discussion Questions

We encourage you to use your event to communicate about the issues that are most important to you and your community. Feel free to use these questions as a starting point to springboard your discussions.

- What would you like to see state leaders and legislators doing to improve the quality of education in your community?
- Do you think schools in your community have the funding they need to provide high-quality public education?
- Is your local school district spending the money it has efficiently?
- Would an across-the-board pay raise for teachers impact the quality of instruction in your local schools?
- Should the state be charged with providing more free public Pre-k? Why or why not?
- How does Texas' focus on testing impact students' and teachers' experiences in the classroom?
- What are the disparities in your community in how students are being prepared for success after high school?
- What could your school district be doing to reduce the prevalence of suspensions and expulsions while also supporting teachers in the classroom?
- What is your school district doing to prepare students not just for college, but for the workforce?

Stay in touch

Thank you for using our toolkit! This toolkit is part of our Community Conversation series, which seeks to catalyze a constructive dialogue on public education in communities across Texas. Learn more about Community Conversations [here](#).

Here are a few additional ways you can stay in touch with The Texas Tribune and our work.



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