

State could change public college funding

BY MARYAM AHMED
The Dallas Morning News

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board recommended this past week that the Texas Legislature consider funding public, four-year universities based on what fields students study and how long students stay enrolled. At the board's quarterly meeting in Austin, a committee of university representatives from across the state presented its report on how Texas could use a

performance-based funding model for four-year universities. The Texas Legislature commissioned the report last year. The board unanimously approved the report's findings, and the Legislature will have the report in hand as it works on the state's 2028-29 budget next year. "This is a major policy opportunity for the state of Texas," said Wynn Rosser, commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. A performance-based

funding model allocates money to schools based on degree completion and progress. The proposal comes as state lawmakers have increasingly scrutinized whether Texas' schools are sufficiently preparing students for the workforce. Texas implemented performance-based funding for community colleges in 2023, allocating funds based on how many students earned credentials or transferred to universities in an effort to incentivize schools to better prepare

students for the workforce. However, the board advised a more modest approach for four-year institutions. The report recommended that performance-based funding should complement, rather than replace, existing funding formulas based on enrollment, citing that the current structures account for the higher cost of teaching certain programs, like engineering or nursing. Under the board's proposed funding model, at See FUNDING, Page 2A



A Texas A&M University tower is seen in College Station. Texas could implement performance-based funding for four-year universities. (Texas Tribune File Photo)

READY FOR CLASS

Back-to-school events in Marshall area to provide free backpacks, supplies and more



School supplies will be given away at numerous back-to-school events scheduled in the Marshall area. (Marshall News Messenger File Photo)

News Messenger Staff

Nonprofit organizations and businesses in the Longview and Marshall area are holding back-to-school events that offer free school supplies and more:

Back to School Bash & Scavenger Hunt (The Platform), 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 1, 1017 McCann Road, Longview: The Platform is hosting a Back to School Scavenger Hunt featuring over 30 local small businesses. Attendees can shop, search for hidden items throughout the store, and enter to win door prizes, coupons, and gift certificates.

Back to School Bash (Port Caddo Baptist Church), 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 1, 3712 Karnack Hwy., Marshall: Port Caddo Baptist Church is holding its annual Back to School Bash featuring free food, fun activities, and school supply giveaways.

Back to School Backpack & Supply Giveaway (Total



Some planned back-to-school events also will give away backpacks. (Marshall News Messenger File Photo)

Wireless), noon Aug. 1, 2167 Gilmer Road, Longview: Total Wireless is partnering with local businesses and supporters to give away free backpacks and school supplies to families in need.

Back to School Bash (Grand Boutique Tan), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 5, 1100 E. Grand Ave., Marshall:

Grand Boutique Tan is hosting a celebration before the school year starts, featuring local vendors, VitaShots, Kim's Sweet Treats, a Dirty Soda Bar, and the Lovely Links Permanent Jewelry Bar.

Back to School Event for Teachers (GypsyRose), 3 to 7 p.m. Aug. 6, 112 W. Methvin St., Longview: GypsyRose is

hosting a teacher appreciation event to celebrate educators heading into the new school year. Teachers can stop by to enjoy shopping, special treats, and extra perks before school starts.

Back to School Bash (Christus Good Shepherd Hospital – NorthPark), 9 to 11 a.m. Aug. 8, 3133 Good Shepherd Way, Longview: Christus Good Shepherd Health System is hosting a family event featuring interactive exhibits, educational experiences, and hands-on activities led by hospital teams. Attendees can enjoy free food trucks, family-friendly games, and entertainment while exploring local wellness resources.

Back to School Bash (Colonial Village Senior Living), 10 a.m. to noon Aug. 8, 2910 N. Eastman Road, Longview: Colonial Village Senior Living is hosting a back-to-school bash featuring a school supply drive and backpack giveaway (avail-

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Texas GOP cuts price of premium convention packages

BY JOSEPH MORTON
The Dallas Morning News

WASHINGTON — The cost of getting close to President Donald Trump is falling. Texas Republicans have slashed the price of their premium convention packages, cutting thousands of dollars off the price of a coveted spot at the Trump-led September gathering in Dallas.

D'rinda Randall, chair of the Republican Party of Texas, said in a July 14 video on X that the party had fielded "questions about the cost and the access" to its top-tier offerings for the Sept. 9-10 event at the American Airlines Center.

The discounts offer one of the first public glimpses into how Republicans are building the gathering, and how state parties are taking markedly different approaches to deciding who gets in.

When Trump announced the event, it carried the trappings of a national political convention. Weeks later, it increasingly resembles a hybrid rally and GOP fundraiser with convention-style branding.

State parties are selling or distributing access through five-figure honorary delegate packages, premium tickets, raffles and applications, even though there will be no presidential nomination, delegate votes or official party business.

At the same time, Republicans have not disclosed overall attendance projections, state-by-state participation estimates or the expected public cost to Dallas taxpayers.

Randall, the Texas GOP chief, has said fundraising has been part of the concept from the outset.

After initially rolling out convention packages costing up to \$20,000, the party chopped the price of its two premium credential options. It cut the top tier to \$10,000 from \$20,000 and the other to \$7,500 from \$15,000.

The more expensive package

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TODAY'S WEATHER

Sunny.
A high of 98,
and a low
around 76.



For a seven-day forecast, see page 5A.

INSIDE

ETBU named
AVCA Division
III Beach Team
Academic
Champion.
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Trump-Thune tensions boil, but GOP leader seen as safe – for now. Page 2A

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