



## WHAT ARE THE FACTS ABOUT EDGEWOOD ISD AND VOUCHERS?

Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio is one of the state's most economically disadvantaged school districts. Even so, the district's schools have made important **progress since the state moved to improve funding for property-poor school districts in 1993.**

### **EDGEWOOD'S SCHOOLS BEGAN IMPROVING YEARS BEFORE THE PRIVATELY FUNDED CEO HORIZON VOUCHER PROGRAM WAS LAUNCHED IN 1998.**

- Edgewood had nine "low-performing" schools and none rated as "recognized" or "exemplary" in 1993. By 1997, Edgewood had no "low-performing" schools and two "recognized" schools.<sup>i</sup>
- In 1992-93, the drop-out rate among Edgewood public school students was 7.8 percent. That level had fallen to 3 percent in 1997-98.<sup>ii</sup>

The CEO Horizon Scholarship Program, announced in the spring of 1998, was the largest privately funded voucher program in the country. The program was funded by a \$50 million contribution (\$5 million annually for 10 years) from San Antonio businessman Dr. James Leininger.

### **VOUCHERS TAKE MILLIONS OF TAX DOLLARS FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

- The CEO voucher program enrolled 1,935 students for the 2003-2004 school year. Between 1995 and 2005, enrollment in Edgewood's public schools declined from about 14,500 to 12,600, costing the school district thousands of dollars per student not enrolled.<sup>iii</sup>

### **PRIVATE SCHOOLS USE VOUCHERS TO "CHERRY PICK" THE HIGHEST ACHIEVING STUDENTS FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

- Students who received vouchers in the program's first year had, on average, higher test scores than the district average.<sup>iv</sup>
- CEO officials confirmed that children who were accepted by private schools under the voucher program were "B" students who performed above average on standardized tests.<sup>v</sup>

### **VOUCHERS DO NOT PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A BETTER EDUCATION.**

- CEO Foundation's 2001 study of its own Horizon program reported declines in math and reading scores for students who had been in the program for two years.<sup>vi</sup>

### **VOUCHERS FAILED TO MEET NEEDS OF EDGEWOOD FAMILIES.**

- Edgewood parents found private schools that accepted vouchers were inferior to public schools. "After three months in the (private) school, I noticed my daughter was regressing," said a San Antonio mother who returned her children to public schools. "The bottom line here is that public schools work."<sup>vii</sup>
- Private schools are neither required to accept nor set up to accommodate the special needs of children with learning or physical disabilities. A student with cerebral palsy was unable to use her CEO voucher after being rejected by the private schools.<sup>viii</sup>

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i Texas Education Agency

ii Texas Education Agency

iii *San Antonio Express-News*, 1-13-03; *San Antonio Express-News*, 2-27-05

iv An Evaluation of the Horizon Scholarship Program in the Edgewood ISD, San Antonio, Texas: First Year, Mathematica Policy Research and Harvard University's Program on Education Policy and Governance, September 1999.

v *San Antonio Express-News*, 2-9-99

vi *San Antonio Express-News*, 1-13-03.

vii *San Antonio Express-News*, 2-22-01

viii *Austin American-Statesman*, 2-4-99