

Schools—Public Education

School districts in the Dallas–Fort Worth region are locally administered and independent of one another and the cities and towns they serve. For example, the Richardson Independent School District (RISD) includes students in Richardson, as well as parts of Dallas and Garland.

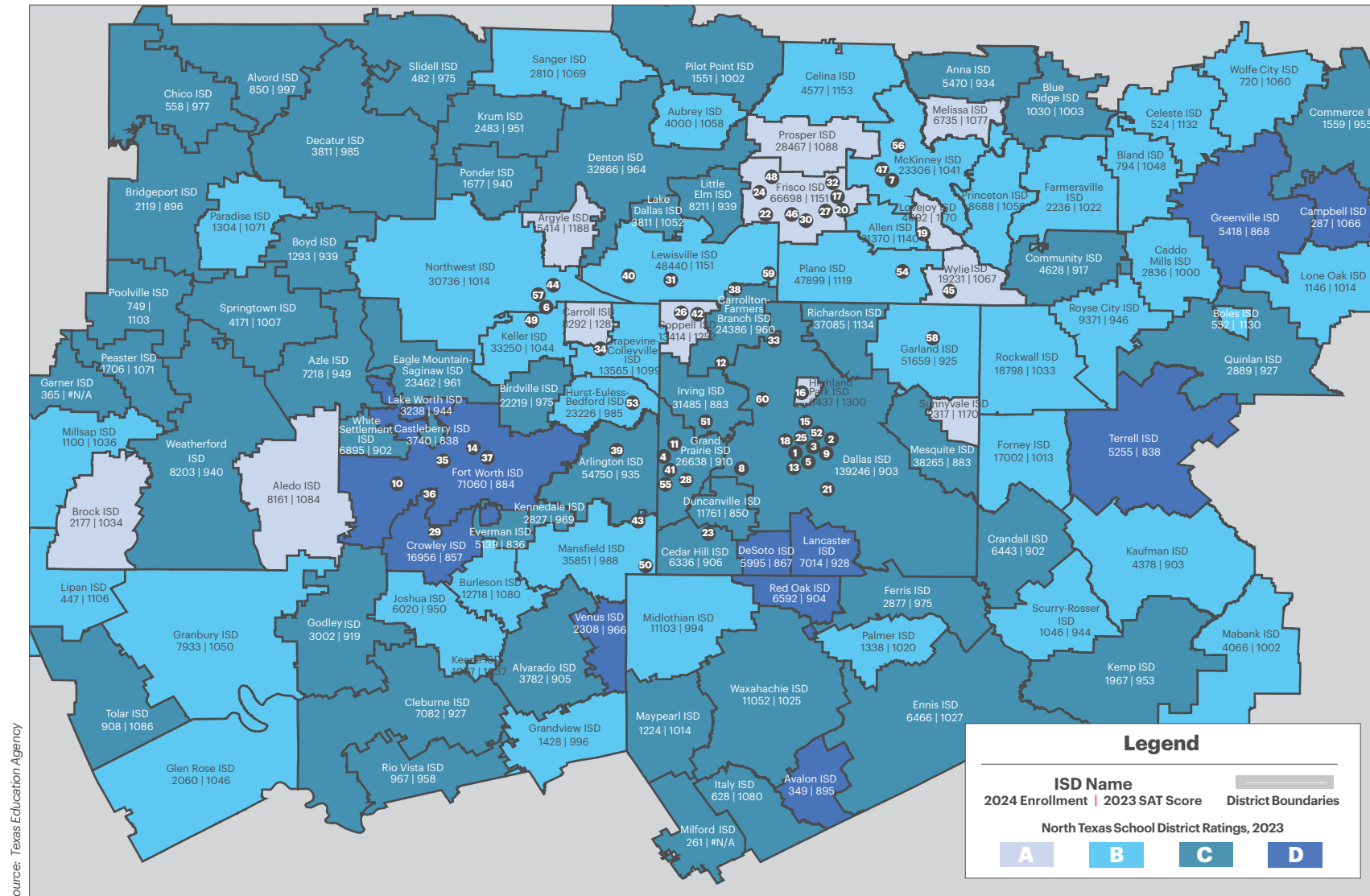
The Dallas Independent School District—or Dallas ISD—is the region’s largest school district with approximately 139,000 students. Students attending Dallas ISD schools reside in Addison, Balch Springs, Carrollton, Cockrell Hill, Dallas, Farmers Branch, Garland, Highland Park, Hutchins, Mesquite, Seagoville, University Park, and Wilmer.

Dallas ISD hosts 29 magnet schools and academies, including several that have been nationally recognized. Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts is in the heart of the Dallas Arts District and includes several internationally known artists among its alumni. The arts magnet, along with the School for the Talented and Gifted and the School of Science and Engineering at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center in Dallas, are consistently recognized as being among the best high schools in the nation by U.S. News and World Report.

Other area schools recognized by U.S. News include Westlake Academy (Westlake), Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute (Grand Prairie), Highland Park High School (Highland Park), Uplift Academy (across DFW), and Young Women’s Leadership Academy (Fort Worth).

In 2024, four area schools were recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools, increasing the total number of awards to 64 since 2014. The Blue Ribbon designation is a national honor awarded to those schools that have achieved academic excellence or made significant progress in closing the achievement gap.

The Fort Worth ISD dominates Tarrant County, serving approximately 71,000 students. The district serves most of the city of Fort Worth, as well as those of Benbrook, Westover Hills, and Westworth Village. Students from parts of Forest Hill, Haltom City, and Kennedale also attend FWISD schools. Both FWISD and DISD are home to Early College, P-Tech, and T-STEM programs that offer students the opportunity to graduate with transferable college credit or even dual high school and tuition-free Associate’s degrees.



Source: Texas Education Agency

Choosing a District

Choices abound for schooling in the Dallas-Fort Worth area: public, public charter, private or parochial, and homeschooling. Should you want to send your kids to public school, rest assured that the Dallas-Fort Worth area has many fine choices.

In Texas, public school districts operate independently and are governed by locally elected school boards that implement state guidelines through a selection of instructional programs, curriculum, and local expectations that often exceed state minimums.

Local districts are governed by an independently elected school board of trustees, which hires a superintendent as CEO; sets a district philosophy (vision and mission) and local policies; selects a curriculum within the state guidelines; and sets the local ISD tax rate, budget, and district boundaries.

Here’s what you need to consider in finding the right school district for you:

1 The district and school’s philosophy vs. your family’s interests and needs

- Vision, mission, goals
- Size of school and class size
- Grade level alignment (K-4, K-5, K-6, etc.)
- Curriculum variations
- Parent engagement

2 Student achievement and performance (including staff and teacher performance)

The Dallas County area education coalition, COMMIT! and its partners offer a way of best assessing student achievement within schools and districts. Find it online at commitpartnership.org.

3 Program offerings and compatibility with your child’s interests and needs

- Athletics
- Career and technology
- Dual credit
- Extracurricular activities
- Fine arts
- Gifted and talented
- Performing arts
- Special education

4 Charter Schools

In 1995, the 74th Texas Legislature passed legislation giving the state the authority to create open-enrollment charter schools. These schools are subject to fewer state laws than other public schools and support the idea of ensuring fiscal and academic accountability without undue regulation of instructional methods or pedagogical innovation. Like school districts, charter schools are monitored and accredited under the statewide testing and accountability system.

5 District Characteristics

Each district has a unique profile. Visiting district websites will reveal their distinct features and offerings.

U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools (2024)

Rank	School	City
1	6 School For The Talented And Gifted (TAG)	Dallas
2	23 Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School	Dallas
3	29 School of Science and Engineering Magnet (SEM)	Dallas
4	30 Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute	Grand Prairie
5	85 Judge Barefoot Sanders Law Magnet	Dallas
6	127 Westlake Academy	Westlake
7	129 Imagine International Academy of North Texas	McKinney
8	138 Trinidad Garza Early College At Mountain View	Dallas
9	166 School of Health Professions	Dallas
10	170 World Languages Institute	Fort Worth
11	185 Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy	Grand Prairie
12	188 Uplift Education - North Hills Prep HS	Irving
13	248 School of Business and Management	Dallas
14	277 Young Women's Leadership Academy	Fort Worth
15	296 Booker T. Washington SPVA	Dallas
16	357 Highland Park HS	Highland Park
17	373 Independence HS	Frisco
18	378 Rosie Sorrells School of Education and Social Services	Dallas
19	422 Lovejoy HS	Lucas
20	434 Liberty HS	Frisco
21	435 Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy	Dallas
22	442 Reedy HS	Frisco
23	455 Cedar Hill Collegiate HS	Cedar Hill
24	509 Wakeland HS	Frisco
25	550 Dr. Wright L Lassiter Jr Early College HS	Dallas
26	571 Coppell HS	Coppell
27	625 Centennial HS	Frisco
28	667 Young Women's Leadership Academy at Arnold	Grand Prairie
29	815 Harmony School of Innovation - Fort Worth	Fort Worth
30	887 Lebanon Trail HS	Frisco
31	888 Founders Classical Academy	Lewisville
32	920 Heritage HS	Frisco
33	925 Early College HS	Dallas
34	998 iUniversity Prep	Grapevine
35	1018 Texas Academy of Biomedical	Fort Worth
36	1064 Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts	Fort Worth
37	1092 IM Terrell Academy for STEM and VPA	Fort Worth
38	1113 Harmony Science Academy - Carrollton	Carrollton
39	1143 Uplift Summit International HS	Arlington
40	1146 Flower Mound HS	Flower Mound
41	1190 Uplift Grand HS	Grand Prairie
42	1260 New Tech HS at Coppell	Coppell
43	1316 Arlington Collegiate HS	Arlington
44	1347 Byron Nelson HS	Trophy Club
45	1409 Wylie HS	Wylie
46	1421 Frisco HS	Frisco
47	1607 McKinney Boyd HS	McKinney
48	1622 Memorial HS	Frisco
49	1641 Keller HS	Keller
50	1651 Mansfield Lake Ridge HS	Mansfield
51	1659 Uplift Infinity HS	Irving
52	1670 Uplift Luna Preparatory HS	Dallas
53	1688 Harmony Science Academy - Euless	Euless
54	1712 Plano East Sr HS	Plano
55	1810 John Dubiski Career HS	Grand Prairie
56	1850 McKinney North HS	McKinney
57	1914 James M Steele Accelerated HS	Roanoke
58	1948 Harmony School of Innovation - Garland	Garland
59	1961 Hebron HS	Carrollton
60	1975 Uplift Williams Preparatory HS	Dallas