



## Lone Star Project Fact Sheet

# Abbott Education Plan: Insider Deals & Donor Favors

As Greg Abbott continues to spend taxpayer money defending an [unconstitutional school funding system](#) affecting [more than 600 school districts comprising three-quarters of Texas public school students](#), his [education plan](#) is rife with special interest influence.

- Abbott gets an “A+” in using his campaign as a cash register to sell out to big donors. One such donor, Academic Partnerships, Inc. and its CEO, [Randy Best](#), have pumped thousands of dollars into Abbott’s campaign, according to the Texas Ethics Commission. The company has [already received over \\$7.5 million from the state for distance-education services](#). Not surprisingly, Abbott’s current [digital education plan](#) apes [Academic Partnerships sales pitch](#).
- Randy Best is also a major donor to another group with ties to Abbott: Texans for Lawsuit Reform. In fact, in recent years, TLR has departed from its traditional focus on tort reform and begun [dabbling in education policy](#). Other big Abbott/ TLR donors with education interests include David Booth of Dimensional Fund Advisors – [one of the largest shareholders of Pearson](#) -- and school voucher advocate James Leininger.
- According to records obtained by the Lone Star Project, on April 1, 2013, Abbott’s Chief of Staff Daniel Hodge participated in an “Education Reform Meeting,” which included Dick Trabulsi and Dick Weekley of Texans for Lawsuit Reform, as well as mega-GOP donor and TLR supporter, the late-Bob Perry.
- On May 8, 2014, [Abbott announced the rollout of his digital learning plan](#). Five days later, his campaign received a \$100,000 check from Texans for Lawsuit Reform; the first TLR contribution to Abbott in over a decade, according to Texas Ethics Commission records.
- Another such Abbott donor is Dell Computers. Since 2010, Dell has received nearly one million dollars in contracts with the Office of Attorney General, according to the Legislative Budget Board. Dell executives have shown their gratitude by plowing over \$50,000 into Abbott’s campaigns over the years, according to Texas Ethics Commission records.
- But the Abbott-Dell partnership is poised to make far more significant gains if Greg Abbott has his way. Abbott’s Digital Learning Plan [proposes \\$100 million for technology grants](#). Indeed, Abbott’s plan even refers to Dell as a model for his vision for the future of education, stating that, “Dell’s portfolio of computing solutions provides our students and teachers with tools they need.” Dell’s website echoes Abbott’s plan, proposing education reforms that replace the [“one-size-fits-all classroom approach”](#) through the use of “digital technologies.”
- Yet another Abbott donor, Istation, appears to have a central role in the Abbott digital learning plan. Just as Abbott’s plan boasts that “digital learning will propel a transition toward an education system based on personalized education plans,” Istation advertises that its [“assessment does it all, automatically placing students into individualized paths.”](#) Abbott has over 200,000 reasons to support the Istation education model of “game like interactions;” \$207,000-worth of reasons, to be precise. That’s the amount Istation Chairman [Richard Collins](#) has shoveled into Greg Abbott’s campaign accounts thus far, according to the Texas Ethics Commission.

To see cites supporting this report go to [lonestarproject.net/abbott-files](http://lonestarproject.net/abbott-files) or contact 972-885-9440.

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