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New book explores school choice

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Authors on both sides of issue offer facts and ideas

A new book, co-published by the Texas Public Policy Foundation and the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation, explores the often contentious issue of school choice, and the role it might play in Texas' upcoming debate on school finance reform.

Nine authors from both sides of the issue present their ideas in this 100-page volume, "Putting the Sides Together: School Choice In Texas?" The book was edited and introduced by the

Foundation's director of research, Chris Patterson; it is available for free online at www.TexasPolicy.com.

"Whether you agree with it or not, school choice is an important concept that, if implemented, will change the way we view 'public' education," said Patterson. "The school choice debate is fueled by intense emotions, strong values and powerful assumptions."

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Objectivity seldom rules in this debate and facts are frequently mixed with fiction."

This new book was designed to "cut through the clutter," Patterson said, giving lawmakers and interested citizens a clear understanding of the pros and cons of school choice.

"This collection of research highlights both sides of the school choice debate, and as such it is a critical element of moving toward a reasoned discussion about the relative merits of school choice and away from the often rancorous rhetoric that accompanies any conversation about parental choice in education," said Robert Enlow, executive director of the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation.

The authors contributing to this book include: Jay P. Greene, Ph.D., of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research; Catherine Clark, Ph.D., of the Texas Association of School Boards; Richard Kouri, of the Texas State Teachers Association; John Merrifield, Ph.D., of the University of Texas at San Antonio; Allan E. Parker, Jr., J.D., of The Justice Foundation; Juan Lara, J.D., of Hispanic CREO, & Matthew Ladner, Ph.D., a senior fellow at the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation; Lori Bricker of the Houston ISD Board of Education & Gayle Fallon of the Houston Federation of Teachers.

