

# Vickrey committed to quality education for all God's children

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SAN ANTONIO—Like any mother, Cameron Mason Vickrey wants the best for her three young children. But when it comes to education, she rejects the idea they should benefit at the expense of others.

“I don't think my kids deserve better than others just because they are my kids,” she said. “Education should benefit all children, not just my own.”

Every child bears the image of God and holds great potential, she noted. And justice demands support for the place where the vast majority of Texas children receive their education—the public schools.

## Co-founder of school advocacy network

That conviction—and sense of divine calling—led Vickrey to become co-founder of [RootEd](#), a parent-led network that promotes San Antonio-area public schools through storytelling, advocacy and education.



Cameron Mason  
Vickrey

“We see value in being rooted in a neighborhood and rooted in community,” she said. “That includes affirming neighborhood schools in the community whenever possible.”

Too many parents look to public schools as the least-preferred option for their children—an unwelcome alternative if they cannot homeschool their kids, cannot afford to send them to a private school or cannot get them into a charter school, she said.

“They see public schools as a last resort. We want to see neighborhood public schools put at the top of people’s lists for their children,” Vickrey said. “We want to tell positive stories about the good things happening in public schools.”

RootEd seeks to enlist a parent representative in every neighborhood school who will accept the responsibility to post encouraging stories about their local school on social media.

“School districts do a good job of communication, but there’s nothing like the peer perspective. Parents want to know the recommendation of another parent. Social media is a more powerful storytelling venue, because it’s empowering parents to tell the stories,” she explained.

## **Associate director of Pastors for Texas Children**

Vickrey’s commitment to public education recently led her to accept the position of associate director of [Pastors for Texas Children](#), an organization that mobilizes faith leaders and congregations to support neighborhood public schools.



Charles Foster  
Johnson

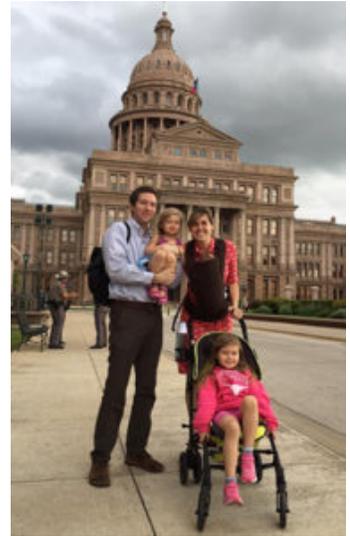
Vickrey is a minister who holds a Master of Divinity degree from Wake Forest Divinity School, as well as both the daughter and wife of pastors. Her father, George Mason, is pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, and her husband, Garrett, is pastor of Woodland Baptist Church in San Antonio. She has worked in the past with the Dallas Faith Communities Coalition, and she continues to serve with [Faith Commons](#).

“Cameron grew up in the church, understands the Scriptures and knows the teachings of Jesus. Out of her deep faith comes her commitment to public education ... She is an incarnational presence in her local neighborhood school,” said Charles Foster Johnson, executive director of Pastors for Texas Children.

Her personal experience as a volunteer at Oak Meadow Elementary School and advocate for public education makes her “a natural fit” for her new role with Pastors for Texas Children, Johnson continued.

“She is an actual incarnational example of exactly what we are asking every pastor and every Christian leader in Texas to do,” he said.

# ‘That sealed the deal’



When asked to testify before the House Public Education Committee, Cameron Vickrey went to Austin with her husband Garrett, pastor of Woodland Baptist Church in San Antonio, and their three children. (Courtesy Photo)

Because of Vickrey’s proven commitment to public education, Johnson called on her a few years ago to testify in Austin before the House Public Education Committee.

“At the time, I had a 7-week-old baby, and my other two children were preschoolers,” she recalled. “So, Garrett and I took all three girls took all

three girls to Austin, where we spent the day—and into the evening.”

After waiting 11 hours to testify, Vickrey finally was granted the opportunity to address the committee.

“By that time, my 4-year-old had melted down. So, she came up with me to the microphone,” Vickrey recalled. “There was nothing remarkable about anything I said, but it was such an affirming experience. One of the representatives on the committee said, ‘We’ve seen you here all day with your babies.’ He noticed and expressed appreciation.

“That sealed the deal for me. From that point, I felt God pushing me toward this.”

Johnson affirmed her sense of calling and applauded her effectiveness.

“There is no advocate more powerful than a minister mom,” he said.

## **Teachers and administrators need support**

Public schools faced unanticipated challenges in the last two months of the recently completed school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they face uncertainty as they plan for the next school year, Vickrey noted.



When Cameron Vickrey finally was allowed to testify before the House Public Education Committee, her then-4-year-old daughter insisted on accompanying her to the microphone. (Courtesy Photo)

Churches have “stepped up to feed children” who typically depend on school lunch programs and meet other needs, she said. Now, congregations can lift up school administrators and classroom teachers during an unprecedented time, she added.

“School superintendents and administrators have never faced decisions like this before,” Vickrey said. “We can be flexible, patient and supportive of them in their decisions.

“We should be praying—a lot—for leaders of our schools and for teachers whose jobs have changed drastically.”

Congregations that have provided in-person mentoring and tutoring programs may have new opportunities to offer those services through video conferences and other remote methods, she added.

Public schools serve all children and represent the broad scope of humanity, Vickrey said. They have the responsibility to educate every child, regardless of special needs, ethnicity or socio-economic background, and to prepare them for society.

“We can show love for all God’s children by working in support of public schools,” she said. “We should pour all the resources we can into public schools. It’s a way to look out not only for our children, but for all children.”