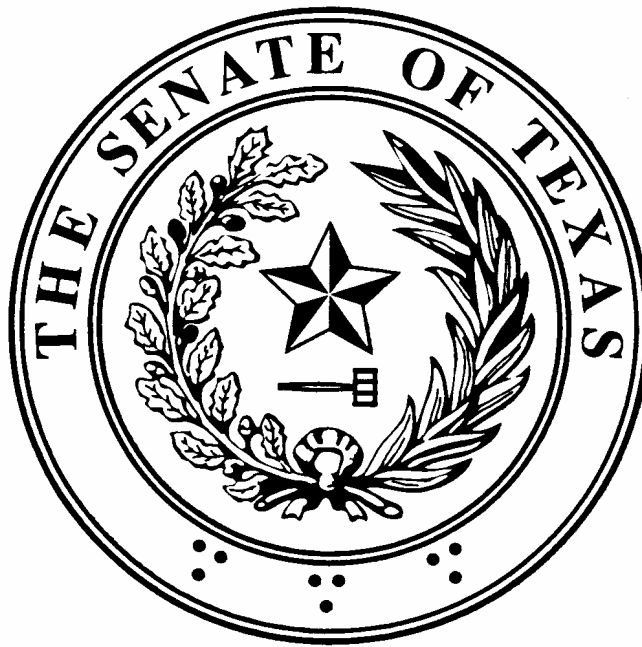


# **SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**



**Report to the 79th Legislature  
December 2004**

# SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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December 1, 2004

The Honorable David Dewhurst  
Lieutenant Governor of the State of Texas  
Members of the Texas Senate  
P.O. Box 12068  
Austin, Texas 78711

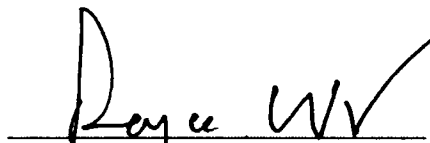
Dear Governor Dewhurst and Members of the Texas Senate:

The Senate Committee on Education is pleased to submit its final interim report with recommendations for consideration by the 79th Legislature.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Senator Florence Shapiro, Chair

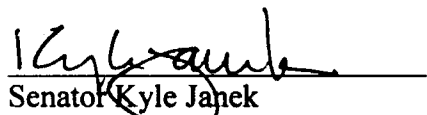
  
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Senator Todd Staples

  
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Senator Leticia Van de Putte

  
Senator Kyle Janek

  
Senator Tommy Williams

  
Senator Judith Zaffirini

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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|                                                   |    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| Charges to the Senate Committee on Education..... | 1  |
| Executive Summary.....                            | 3  |
| Committee Charge 1: Dropout Reporting.....        | 8  |
| Committee Charge 2: TAKS/Assessments .....        | 15 |
| Committee Charge 3: Early Childhood.....          | 18 |
| Committee Charge 4: Teachers.....                 | 22 |
| Committee Charge 5: Textbooks .....               | 31 |
| Committee Charge 6: Accountability .....          | 37 |
| Committee Charge 7: Business Partnerships .....   | 48 |
| Letters from Members.....                         | 51 |
| Appendix A.....                                   | 56 |
| Appendix B.....                                   | 59 |
| Endnotes.....                                     | 61 |

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## **CHARGES TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

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The Senate Education Committee is charged with conducting a thorough and detailed study of the following issues, including state and federal requirements, and preparing recommendations to address problems or issues that are identified.

- 1.** Study the implementation of SB 186 (relating to the computation of public school dropout and completion rates) and make recommendations for improvements to current statutes and programs. Explore opportunities for maximizing current resources and identifying additional state, federal, and privately-sponsored programs for at-risk students that offer innovative delivery of educational services that encourage students to finish school. Focus on mentoring programs, including, but not limited to Communities in Schools, and the use of technology to provide instruction.
- 2.** Study the performance of high school students on TAKS, the new state assessment instrument. Make recommendations to improve any performance deficiencies that are identified by the review, including alternative school schedules, mentoring programs, technology-based applications, and other innovative solutions.
- 3.** Study progress of implementation of SB 76 (relating to the provision of subsidized child-care services). Evaluate and make recommendations on opportunities for Texas to increase the educational component of the Head Start program. Examine and make recommendations relating to access to quality early education, including estimated costs, teacher availability, learning requirements, and access to services for students with special needs.
- 4.** Evaluate opportunities and make recommendations on increasing the supply of qualified teachers and improving their working conditions. The evaluation and recommendations should focus on preparation, recruitment, certification, and retention of qualified teachers, while not restricting alternative certification. Conduct an assessment of the impact of teacher incentives, including mentoring programs and other creative options for retaining teachers, and develop recommendations for implementing incentive programs.
- 5.** Study and make recommendations relating to the effectiveness of the current process of selecting, funding, and distributing textbooks. Identify areas where the current process can be made more cost efficient, including recommendations relating to innovative methods of providing instruction such as online distance learning, and the use of interactive software to address the specific challenges of remedial students and advanced readers. Identify costs and benefits of using technology to provide current and innovative instructional materials, including staffing and hardware requirements.

6. Study the TEA's implementation of the state's new accountability system and make recommendations to resolve any problems found. Examine the impact of the federal No Child Left Behind law on the state's accountability system and make recommendations for changes to state law to meet the federal legislation. Examine the ability of the current PEIMS database to meet future information needs and recommend changes, if necessary. Review and make recommendations on innovative alternatives for tracking student performance.

7. Study successful partnerships between school districts and the business community and make recommendations for maximizing the use of effective partnerships, improving the delivery of education services, and enhancing educational opportunities for Texas students, especially at-risk students.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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### **CHARGE ONE -- DROPOUT REPORTING**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Establish a statewide records exchange system that allows for automatic exchange of student records to allow for accurate tracking of student transfers and leavers.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Establish state standards that require electronic record systems to allow access by students' parents.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

Combine funding streams for duplicative at-risk programs that provide the same services to the same population of students in order to cut down on administrative burden. Transfer FTEs at TEA used to manage paperwork for duplicative programs to FTE positions that provide support and guidance to districts in how to administer programs that serve at-risk populations.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

Develop electronic courses to be made available to local districts to save on local course development costs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

Direct TEA to adopt state guidelines for the provision of virtual instruction by school districts.

### ***ADOLESCENT LITERACY PROGRAM***

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

Provide additional resources at the middle school level by creating a program that aggressively attacks poor literacy skills in identified students to promote graduation and prevent dropouts, especially for at-risk students.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

Require TEA to develop a menu of three or four adolescent literacy instruction models to be used by the schools.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

Make use of the TAKS in the 4th/5th/6th grade as a diagnostic to identify students in need of literacy help. For the approximately 30 percent of students identified, administer a more sophisticated diagnostic assessment of skills.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

Provide for a low student/instructor ratio for intensive literacy sessions for identified students.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

Establish a statewide grant program to provide funding for adolescent literacy programs that possess the following instructional qualities: 1) intensive, direct, explicit instruction in literacy skills, 2) concerted school wide approach with support from a majority of the teachers in the school who help by identifying the critical content in their subject area that is difficult to learn and repackage it in a learner-friendly way, 3) books tailored to the students ability, and 4) continuous measure of progress so adjustments can be made.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

Qualifying programs must have the following structural qualities: 1) extended time for literacy instruction, 2) alignment of instruction within the schools, and 3) strong professional development to ensure fidelity of implementation.

## **CHARGE TWO -- TAKS/ASSESSMENTS**

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Provide state funding for districts to administer college readiness and diagnostic tests such as SAT/ACT.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Expand the online TAKS Readiness and Core Knowledge (TRACK) to offer diagnostic tests and develop alternative forms of the test so that students can retest if needed.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

Require TEA to evaluate technological capabilities in all schools and then formulate a statewide plan to bring all assessments online in the next five years.

## **CHARGE THREE -- EARLY CHILDHOOD**

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Direct TEA to adopt uniform school readiness standards for early childhood education programs, based on research findings, that allow for local flexibility, including key predictors of school readiness such as literacy, math, and social skills.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Screen students upon entry to kindergarten for school readiness according to state standards. Link those results to providers and rate them for their ability to produce students who meet the school readiness standard.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

Expand the use of PEIMS statewide data system to link early childhood programs with kindergarten programs.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

Allow funding to follow eligible students to the early childhood education program of choice that meets school readiness standards, whether that program is prekindergarten, subsidized child care, or a private program.

**CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS****RECOMMENDATION 1**

Award differential premium pay for shortage subjects and hard-to-staff schools. Provide funds based on campus need as determined by turnover rates and the number teaching out-of-field.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

Provide training to all certification candidates for how to instruct second language learners and exceptional learners.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

Provide training on reading instruction at all levels to all candidates for certification.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

Continue the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS).

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

Streamline certification process for military spouses by speeding up the comparability study for certification exams from states with military bases.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**

Allow service credit for salary purposes for veterans who have been honorably discharged from military service depending on the amount of service spent in the military related to instruction.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

Provide state reimbursement of fees once the candidate graduates from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) program (\$1,150 per teacher in an amount equal to the federal matching funds).

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

Restructure the teacher salary schedule to provide a bump in pay following year one, three, and five to help retain teachers in the profession.

**RECOMMENDATION 9**

Provide online pedagogy/curriculum based directly on TEKS.



## **CHARGE FIVE -- TEXTBOOKS**

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Invest in subscription-based online instructional materials to update textbooks.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Modify the Textbook Credit Pilot Program by: 1) expanding the credits for use by all districts, and 2) allowing credits to be used to pay the difference between the state maximum cost and the actual price of a textbook (when the textbook costs more than the maximum cost).

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

Require the SBOE to improve the efficiency of the error-correction process by using “page proofs” or drafts of textbooks.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

Direct the SBOE to require harsher sanctions and penalties when a publisher fails to correct all textbook errors depending upon the stage of the textbook process.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

Provide the option to contract with an independent contractor, vendor, and/or publisher to update an adopted textbook for each subject.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

Require TEA to develop and gather data using district growth trends over a three year period to determine textbook needs in both fast growth and declining enrollment districts.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

Restore eligibility for JJAEPs to receive free textbooks.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

Develop criteria on what constitutes fulfilling a curriculum point or objective, allowing textbook review panel members to determine whether or not the textbooks conform to curriculum standards.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

Require publishers send their textbook samples to the reviewer’s home for evaluation.

## **CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Provide incentives for campuses that show growth in student performance aligned to the school accountability system.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

Continue progress on the accountability system, making adjustments when necessary.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

Follow through on the commitment and initiatives for 3rd grade students and extend those services to the 5th and 8th grade students who are held to that same standard.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

Establish reasonable goals to incrementally meet the federal expectation regarding special education and limited English proficient student performance on alternative assessments.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

Require increased oversight by TEA of districts that fail AYP or are low-performing under the accountability system. Ensure consequences for consistent low performers are applied in a meaningful manner. Require teachers at low performing schools to take the online pedagogy/curriculum courses based on TEKS.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**

Require TEA to review the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for alignment consistent with post-secondary success.

***PUBLIC EDUCATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM  
(PEIMS)***

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

Require student information systems and curriculum management systems used in Texas schools to be compliant with state standards that allow information to be translated to a statewide database.

**RECOMMENDATION 8**

Establish a classroom data link between individual students and teachers in PEIMS.

**RECOMMENDATION 9**

Automate the submission of superintendent approval forms with PEIMS data submissions.

**RECOMMENDATION 10**

Redesign the PEIMS record layout and eliminate the 80-character record length limitation.

**CHARGE SEVEN -- BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS**

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

Require TEA provide a clearinghouse on their website to list the various partnership programs with a brief description and contact information of each.

## **CHARGE ONE**

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*Study the implementation of SB 186 (relating to the computation of public school dropout and completion rates) and make recommendations for improvements to current statutes and programs. Explore opportunities for maximizing current resources and identifying additional state, federal, and privately-sponsored programs for at-risk students that offer innovative delivery of educational services that encourage students to finish school. Focus on mentoring programs, including, but not limited to Communities in Schools, and the use of technology to provide instruction.*

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## **DROPOUT REPORTING**

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## **CHARGE ONE -- DROPOUT REPORTING**

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### **BACKGROUND**

For many years, Texas school districts have been plagued with allegations of inaccuracy and falsification of records in dropout reporting. To remedy this problem, the state's response was to pass Senate Bill 186 in the 78th Legislative Session. The implementation of Senate Bill 186 required alignment to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and a redesign of the leaver reporting procedures presently used by school districts to describe the reason why a student did not return to school. The current system involves 30 different leaver codes from which districts can report.<sup>1</sup>

State law requires that student records be transferred no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the date of enrollment,<sup>2</sup> in what is for the most part a manual labor-intensive process. That 30 day window could create a significant lag in the amount of time a student receives the appropriate level of instruction, be that advanced coursework or special education services. The problem of mobility rates are high statewide, but most especially in urban and suburban areas. Each year schools process approximately 430,000 student records requests.<sup>3</sup> To counter this problem, an automatic exchange of student records between schools and districts would benefit students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Not only would the state benefit from the efficiency of such a system, but the state would secure accurate data regarding students who do not re-enroll in the Texas public schools. This could help to reach those students and devote resources toward returning them to school.

The future of an electronic records exchange system could also ease the process of applying to institutions of higher education, as districts currently manually process 720,000 transcript requests from colleges and universities annually.<sup>4</sup> This process could be automated, which would be more efficient for students, schools, and higher education institutions. Additionally, private schools could voluntarily participate in the records exchange system as well as schools from other states.

To highlight the current cost of performing student records exchange, a 2004 Texas Education Agency (TEA) study, the Student Records Exchange Analysis Subproject, estimated that local school districts currently incur a human resources cost of more than \$8.3 million dollars each year. This cost is determined by estimating the average time each student record request requires (approximately 30 minutes to request, locate, copy, and fax) multiplied by the average salary of school district staff who handle such requests (\$13 per hour) and the total requests made each year for records and transcripts. Another \$720,000 was added to the total for the postage required to mail transcripts to institutions of higher education. In terms of efficiency, an automated exchange system would cut the 30 minutes of time required to five minutes for student records and one minute for transcripts, and eliminate the cost of postage altogether. This in turn would reduce the human resources cost to \$639,000, for an annual savings of almost \$7.7 million.<sup>5</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Establish a statewide records exchange system that allows for automatic exchange of student records to allow for accurate tracking of student transfers and leavers.

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## **CHARGE ONE -- DROPOUT REPORTING**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Parental involvement is paramount to a student's success in school. Regular and timely communication between parents and schools is often difficult to maintain, and parents struggle to remain informed of their child's educational progress while balancing other demands on their time.

Mr. Terry Eason, Coordinator of Instructional Support Services for the Duncanville Independent School District (ISD), suggested the concept of the Individual Academic Plan for each student. This plan involves online parental access along with automatic reports of progress for their child. At any time, parents can e-mail educators to inquire about grades, behavior reports, attendance, or to request a conference.<sup>6</sup>

Real-time parental access to student records would allow parents to be aware of and take an active role in their student's educational progress.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Establish state standards that require electronic record systems to allow access by students' parents.

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### **BACKGROUND**

In Fiscal Year 2004, it was estimated that \$3.9 billion was spent on services for at-risk students. The state appropriated \$1.4 billion, the federal government provided \$1.4 billion, and an estimated \$1.1 billion in local funds was spent to serve at-risk students.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, major entitlements still provide the majority of funds for at-risk students. These entitlement programs come from No Child Left Behind<sup>8</sup> and state compensatory education funding.<sup>9</sup> Almost \$557 million is spent on 25 state and federal competitive discretionary and formula grants. Examples of these programs are Head Start Ready to Read, AVANCE, Community in Schools, etc. With the help of local funds, these programs purchase such services as tutoring, computer-assisted instruction, teacher training, instructional materials, smaller class sizes, diagnostics, mentoring, etc.<sup>10</sup>

All these programs have the common goal to increase the performance of at-risk students. Despite this shared interest, no measure exists to compare the performance of each program against another.<sup>11</sup> The difficulty arises when these programs are not distinct packages of services. Instead, these 'programs' provide access often to the same types of services such as tutoring, teacher training, instructional materials, etc. Often times, a school district provides several programs with over-lapping services and constructing a cost benefit analysis of the different services proves infeasible. Another difficulty arises due to the lack of tracking information. For most of the programs, the details necessary to make a comparative analysis do not exist.

The data we do have on these programs may be compared and grouped into about five categories with estimated costs: 1) Intensive/Accelerated Instruction - \$401 million, 2) Intensive Language Instruction for Students with Limited English Proficiency - \$10.8

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## **CHARGE ONE -- DROPOUT REPORTING**

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million, 3) Community Based Multiple Service - \$120 million, 4) School Restructuring/Community Development - \$4.7 million, and 5) Services for Pregnant and Parenting Students - \$20.5 million.<sup>12</sup> In addition these different programs may be broken further into five categories: Pre-K/Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle Schools, High Schools, and Parents. One can easily surmise that within these programs exists a high level of paperwork undergone by school districts to meet the requirements and apply for the programmatic funds. The TEA exhausts a lot of manpower to receive and document the paperwork. Consequently, the labor intensive practices of the current system inevitably mean that many hours are wasted on paperwork and compliance for developing reports that TEA has no time to review. This produces an ineffective use of both district and TEA personnel.

More effective means do exist, however, to administer these programs that would allow for comparative analysis of the dollars spent by the state and better utilization of district and state resources. To move away from a programmatic strategy as it exists today, the state could pursue a service oriented strategy of funds delivery. Rather than fund each separate program that provides overlapping services, the state could provide grants for different categories of focus as detailed above. Each school district could then purchase the set of services that provide the best advantage for servicing their at-risk populations. This approach may cause consternation in some as they would feel the state no longer supports their favorite program. On the contrary, school districts would still be able to avail themselves of the particular programs, but the state would no longer focus on picking different programs. Instead the state would provide block granting to school districts so that they can purchase the best set of services to meet the educational needs faced by their population. TEA's current resources, which are now devoted to compliance monitoring, could re-focus from paperwork to assisting school districts in providing those services. A more aggressive approach would be a strict block granting of all compensatory and at-risk funding to school districts. Any move to a strict block granting approach would lose the competitive nature of the current approach and would need to carefully consider how to encourage efficient spending.

Regardless of the means chosen, a more effective means of administering these programs exists. The application process for these programs can be streamlined and current resources devoted to paperwork, red-tape compliance and monitoring can be devoted to providing the needed services. This will allow for better use of current resources for at-risk students and should not constitute a reduction of funding or services.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

Combine funding streams for duplicative at-risk programs that provide the same services to the same population of students in order to cut down on administrative burden. Transfer FTEs at TEA used to manage paperwork for duplicative programs to FTE positions that provide support and guidance to districts in how to administer programs that serve at-risk populations.

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## **CHARGE ONE -- DROPOUT REPORTING**

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### **BACKGROUND**

In order to provide and enhance the delivery of education coursework, Plano ISD testified before the committee regarding their eSchool program which offers high school coursework through independent internet study. Their virtual instruction electronic course program provides its students with the opportunity to enhance their high school experience, or recover credits needed for graduation. This mode of instruction also allows for flexible scheduling, which helps students who would otherwise dropout due to the demands of employment and family.<sup>13</sup>

More schools would be able to offer this service to students if electronic courses were not so costly and difficult to develop or obtain. Districts may be more prone to offer virtual instruction if they don't have to take on the burden and potential risks of course development.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

Develop electronic courses to be made available to local districts to save on local course development costs.

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### **BACKGROUND**

Many of the courses offered via virtual instruction cover content that is not measured by state assessments, such as 12<sup>th</sup> grade coursework. If the State provides funding for such courses and moves away from the primarily tuition-based system, there should be some measure of accountability for those state funds and an assurance of the quality of instruction. The ability of course providers to meet state established guidelines will ensure that only the highest quality of web-based courses are part of the Texas educational system.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

Direct TEA to adopt state guidelines for the provision of virtual instruction by school districts.

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## ***ADOLESCENT LITERACY PROGRAM***

### **BACKGROUND**

Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of

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## CHARGE ONE -- DROPOUT REPORTING

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the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read will be crucial.<sup>14</sup>

While focusing on reading levels at the elementary level, the state has paid little attention to instilling reading skills in secondary students who, for whatever reason, never achieved grade level reading skills or have fallen behind their expected level. Fortunately, there are strategies for addressing this challenge in our educational system, for it is evident that without strong reading skills students cannot be successful in other subjects and academic competencies. When students feel that they cannot ‘catch up’, many tend to ‘give up’ instead and drop out of school altogether.

The majority of Texas students who provide a reason why they dropped out of school cite poor academic performance as the reason.<sup>15</sup> Dr. Don Deshler, a professor at the University of Kansas and director of the Center for Research on Learning, and Dr. Sharon Vaughn, Director of the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts, at the University of Texas at Austin shared their expertise with the committee on the topic of adolescent literacy, which has been found as a way to address students’ poor academic performance and keep them in school in other states and schools around the nation.

Student achievement data shows that almost all Texas students read at grade level on the TAKS 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading assessment. The achievement gap between students of different ethnic and socioeconomic groups is also very narrow at that level.<sup>16</sup> However, as students advance in grade level and age, differences magnify and the impact of students’ home environment, background, and experience affect academic progress.<sup>17</sup>

Like a medical doctor, educators cannot begin to address the problem until they can diagnose it. One of the most valuable tools to address the needs of students with poor literacy skills is a diagnostic assessment. To prevent over-testing, the TAKS test can be used as an initial identifier for students with below grade level reading skills. Middle school students who fail the TAKS test should be administered a computer-adaptive diagnostic test to truly assess areas of strengths and weaknesses for educators to target. Data shows that approximately 30 percent of students who fail the TAKS test possess reading skills two levels below their own grade level, which is the group that would be targeted with intensive support in an adolescent literacy program.<sup>18</sup>

Teachers at the secondary level tend to be experts in their field, be that English, science, history, mathematics, art, or a vast assortment of other subjects. In a typical high school, each teacher is responsible for imparting knowledge in their particular area of expertise.<sup>19</sup> Instruction is subject-specific and students are expected to rely on the skills they have acquired in previous grades. Teaching literacy skills is not considered to be the responsibility of any high school teacher, as students are expected to have those skills prior to arrival. Unfortunately, this is not the case for all students. For this reason, secondary teachers must be trained in teaching literacy skills across the curriculum.



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## **CHARGE ONE -- DROPOUT REPORTING**

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Given the level of rigor in the Recommended High School Curriculum, students cannot afford to miss instruction in any subject in order to catch up on their reading skills. Therefore, these skills must be acquired while studying core curriculum content. This can be accomplished if teachers collaborate on instruction and identify critical content within their subject area. It is difficult for teachers to modify instruction for readers at various levels though if reading level-appropriate materials are not available for students.

“Public and educational attention long has been focused on the beginnings of literacy, planting seedlings and making sure they take root. But without careful cultivation and nurturing, seedlings may wither and their growth becomes stunted.”<sup>20</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

Provide additional resources at the middle school level by creating a program that aggressively attacks poor literacy skills in identified students to promote graduation and prevent dropouts, especially for at-risk students.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

Require TEA to develop a menu of three or four adolescent literacy instruction models to be used by the schools.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

Make use of the TAKS in the 4th/5th/6th grade as a diagnostic to identify students in need of literacy help. For the approximately 30 percent of students identified, administer a more sophisticated diagnostic assessment of skills.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

Provide for a low student/instructor ratio for intensive literacy sessions for identified students.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

Establish a statewide grant program to provide funding for adolescent literacy programs that possess the following instructional qualities: 1) intensive, direct, explicit instruction in literacy skills, 2) concerted school wide approach with support from a majority of the teachers in the school who help by identifying the critical content in their subject area that is difficult to learn and repackage it in a learner-friendly way, 3) books tailored to the students ability, and 4) continuous measure of progress so adjustments can be made.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

Qualifying programs must have the following structural qualities: 1) extended time for literacy instruction, 2) alignment of instruction within the schools, and 3) strong professional development to ensure fidelity of implementation.

## **CHARGE TWO**

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*Study the performance of high school students on TAKS, the new state assessment instrument. Make recommendations to improve any performance deficiencies that are identified by the review, including alternative school schedules, mentoring programs, technology-based applications, and other innovative solutions.*

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## **TAKS/ASSESSMENTS**

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## **CHARGE TWO -- TAKS/ASSESSMENTS**

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### **BACKGROUND**

The most broadly accepted entrance exams used by colleges and universities throughout the United States are the SAT and ACT. These tests gauge the knowledge and skill sets needed to be successful in college. Texas graduates consistently perform below the national average on these exams.<sup>21</sup>

Some argue that state-by-state comparisons are not valid due to differences in participation rates and student demographics.<sup>22</sup> However, our state average score reveals that Texas high schools fail to properly prepare many of their students for college.<sup>23</sup> One piece that would solve the college preparedness puzzle is diagnosing students' level of readiness prior to graduation. These deficiencies can be detected and corrected before taking the college entrance exams.

The PSAT is the preparation test for the SAT and each test is administered by The College Board. This test is generally administered in the 10<sup>th</sup> and/or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. ACT, Inc. has two preparation tests: EXPLORE which is taken in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and PLAN in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Generally, increased participation on the college readiness tests in other states has led to improved scores on the college entrance exams.<sup>24</sup> Further, each of these tests are designed to give teachers a diagnostic tool to help assess students' academic strengths and weaknesses.

Each Texas school district should choose which college preparation exam program their students will participate in and the State should fund that program as well as the college entrance exam of each student's choice.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Provide state funding for districts to administer college readiness and diagnostic tests such as SAT/ACT.

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### **BACKGROUND**

Following the passage of Senate Bill 1108 in 2003, the Texas Education Agency worked with the University of Texas to develop an online diagnostic assessment and intervention program to promote success among 11<sup>th</sup> grade students on the exit-level TAKS test. The TAKS Readiness and Core Knowledge (TRACK) system was launched in the spring of 2004. Prior to the administration of the test, students, schools, and parents were granted free and unlimited access via the internet and immediate feedback from the assessments.<sup>25</sup>

At the time the committee heard testimony from Dr. Pedro Reyes, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Texas system, the TRACK website had received over five million hits. Almost 22 percent of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students registered to take the diagnostic assessments on the TRACK website in its first year, and close to 50,000 students accessed the learning materials online to help them address areas of deficiency identified by the diagnostic assessment.<sup>26</sup>

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## **CHARGE TWO -- TAKS/ASSESSMENTS**

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Currently, only one diagnostic assessment is available to students. If accelerated instruction is received at school or online, there is no way to measure improvement. If multiple test forms were available students could retest, and teachers who administer the diagnostic assessment to a class of students would not be concerned about students looking onto their neighbor's screen.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Expand the online TAKS Readiness and Core Knowledge (TRACK) to offer diagnostic tests and develop alternative forms of the test so that students can retest if needed.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The Educational Technology Division of the Texas Education Agency reported in the Statewide Texas School Technology and Readiness (STaR) Chart Summary Report that in 2002-2003 only 2,351 campuses (47 percent) of those that completed the STaR survey were at the "Advanced Tech" or "Target Tech" stages in infrastructure, meaning they were prepared to offer computer based assessments online. Because only 66 percent of the campuses in the state completed the survey, TEA only had information that 31 percent of all campuses were at this stage of readiness. The results for the 2003-2004 school year paint a slightly different picture. We now know that 4,202 campuses (58.4 percent of those surveyed and 54 percent of campuses overall), are in the infrastructure stages that indicate readiness to offer computer based assessment. These results are more reliable, as the 2003-2004 results are based upon 93 percent of campuses completing the survey.<sup>27</sup>

A multi-year plan should be put in place with annual goals that allow for a measure of progress to move all schools towards the "Target Tech" stage of readiness. This would allow the state to take steps each year toward achieving the level of infrastructure readiness that would permit assessments to be administered online in all schools statewide.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

Require TEA to evaluate technological capabilities in all schools and then formulate a statewide plan to bring all assessments online in the next five years.

## **CHARGE THREE**

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*Study progress of implementation of SB 76 (relating to the provision of subsidized child-care services). Evaluate and make recommendations on opportunities for Texas to increase the educational component of the Head Start program. Examine and make recommendations relating to access to quality early education, including estimated costs, teacher availability, learning requirements, and access to services for students with special needs.*

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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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## **CHARGE THREE -- EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Accountability has been an effective means of driving educational improvement in grades K-12. Schools respond in a positive manner when their effectiveness with students is measured and a ratings assigned. Even without the threat of sanctions for poor performance, schools strive to exceed state expectations and earn ratings such as ‘recognized’ and ‘exemplary’. This same principle should be applied to early childhood education and a provider’s ability to prepare students in a manner that ensures their success in school.

Many parents base their impression of a school on its accountability rating. The ratings help guide families’ decisions when relocating, as they serve as a basis for comparison with other similar schools. Currently, the only ratings that exist for early childhood education programs are those based solely on the physical characteristics of the facility and responsive interactions with students.<sup>28</sup> When enrolling a student, parents must trust word-of-mouth recommendations or the promotional materials given to them by the provider to judge the provider’s academic program. None of these measures are based on the provider’s ability to prepare school-ready students. None of these indicators are based on performance data that can allow a comparison between providers. We need a shift to a system where “quality is defined as a function of how ready children are to begin school.”<sup>29</sup>

The heart of our accountability system for grades K-12 is that it is based on educational outcomes produced by students, not the process used by providers. Accountability allows for local control as the school provides an education in the best manner to meet that particular student’s needs, and the state concerns itself with the end goal of whether or not that student met state expectations. Whether or not a student leaves a program ready for school is an indication of the quality of program provided.

The State Center for Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee on Senate Bill 76 recommended measuring the strongest predictors of school readiness: letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and vocabulary.<sup>30</sup> Measurement data from the pilot program shows that growth in these three areas that contribute to success in school was significantly higher in classrooms that employed the techniques of the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM).<sup>31</sup>

If a provider demonstrates that its students meet the school readiness standards, it would receive that rating from the state and a symbol to represent that status to parents. If a school does not achieve the readiness standard, the Advisory Committee recommended levels of readiness to illustrate that the school is lacking one of three components, two of three, and so on.<sup>32</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Direct TEA to adopt uniform school readiness standards for early childhood education programs, based on research findings, that allow for local flexibility, including key predictors of school readiness such as literacy, math, and social skills.

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## **CHARGE THREE -- EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Because schools have no prior knowledge of the student, many screen children with locally developed assessments prior to entry into kindergarten for placement purposes. To avoid administering an additional test to four and five-year-old children, that assessment could be standardized statewide and given to all children upon entry into kindergarten. The standardized assessment would measure a child's school readiness for diagnostic purposes with kindergarten educators and accountability purposes for early childhood education providers. In their report, the State Center for Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee on Senate Bill 76 recommended measuring children with an early reading and early literacy assessment such as the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) or its Spanish equivalent, the Tejas LEE, a brief social skills screener, and an early math skills assessment.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Screen students upon entry to kindergarten for school readiness according to state standards. Link those results to providers and rate them for their ability to produce students who meet the school readiness standard.

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### **BACKGROUND**

Currently no data system exists to collect information on early childhood education programs, which makes it impossible to collect information on school readiness skills. School districts use the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to collect data on enrollment, student performance, staff, and school spending. This system could be expanded to include early education providers, and student performance data collected through the kindergarten screening would then be linked back to the early education provider for accountability purposes.

Additionally, there is a need for attendance and enrollment tracking when students are served by more than one program or a program operating in an integrated partnership. If a student is enrolled in prekindergarten in the morning followed by an afternoon in a subsidized childcare program, right now that child would be counted twice. This same circumstance could occur if a school district has entered into a partnership with a childcare facility for a public school teacher to provide prekindergarten instruction in the childcare facility. When children are counted twice, it makes it difficult for the State to determine how many children are being served through early education programs and whether or not the educational needs of the eligible children in the state are being met.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

Expand the use of PEIMS statewide data system to link early childhood programs with kindergarten programs.

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## **CHARGE THREE -- EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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### **BACKGROUND**

State law requires a district to offer prekindergarten classes if the district identifies 15 or more children who are at least four years of age and homeless, educationally disadvantaged, or unable to speak and comprehend English.<sup>33</sup> There are currently 148 districts (14 percent) that do not offer prekindergarten services because they do not meet that requirement,<sup>34</sup> but there are likely some students residing in those districts who are denied services.

Due to the fact that a district, rather than a campus, is required to offer services, they may choose to offer services in one location for students district-wide. There are 276 school districts with prekindergarten enrollment of 1-22 students,<sup>35</sup> which can be assumed to amount to only one class. In some districts this poses a transportation challenge for some children who could be better served by another program in a closer location, be that a campus in a neighboring district, a subsidized childcare program, or a privately operated program.

If a student meets the eligibility requirements to qualify for services and the proposed program meets school readiness standards, the funding to which they are entitled should follow them and flow to the provider that the parents feel best meets the child's educational needs. There are many details to such an approach that must be considered which this recommendation does not touch. These considerations include such concerns as whether to provide for a hold harmless provision for the public programs.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

Allow funding to follow eligible students to the early childhood education program of choice that meets school readiness standards, whether that program is prekindergarten, subsidized child care, or a private program.



## **CHARGE FOUR**

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*Evaluate opportunities and make recommendations on increasing the supply of qualified teachers and improving their working conditions. The evaluation and recommendations should focus on preparation, recruitment, certification, and retention of qualified teachers, while not restricting alternative certification. Conduct an assessment of the impact of teacher incentives, including mentoring programs and other creative options for retaining teachers, and develop recommendations for implementing incentive programs.*

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## **TEACHERS**

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## CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS

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### BACKGROUND

It is common knowledge that the state's most effective and experienced teachers tend to flock to campuses that offer teaching assignments in schools with records of high performance, other effective experienced teachers with which they can collaborate, and students who are eager and willing to learn. By contrast, inexperienced teachers are traditionally assigned to teaching positions in schools with records of low performance which tend to have higher numbers of other inexperienced teachers and students who are at-risk of dropping out of school. These children tend to be more challenging to educate.

Typically, teacher shortages are caused by high rates of attrition more so than an inadequate supply of new teachers.<sup>36</sup> In fact, as of 2002, there were approximately 420,000 individuals in Texas holding valid teaching certificates which qualify them to serve as a Texas educator, but only 290,000 of those teachers were actually employed as such by the Texas public schools.<sup>37</sup> The statewide shortage is far more acute in certain content areas such as math, science, bilingual education. Content shortages can vary to some degree based on the surrounding job market though, and there are schools and communities that experience teacher shortages caused by high teacher turnover far more than others. Attrition rates have been found to be higher in urban schools with high populations of minority and economically disadvantaged students.<sup>38</sup> In Texas, schools that are small or located in remote areas also experience high teacher turnover rates as well as high numbers of educators teaching out of field.<sup>39</sup>

While general pay increases may help recruit and retain teachers away from other professions, they do not encourage qualified teachers to enter schools with high populations of students who are educationally disadvantaged. Many teachers who leave cite working conditions, student discipline, and lack of administrative support as their reasons for leaving the classroom. Hence, we may never be able to pay salaries high enough to retain all teachers. However, differential pay is likely to influence a teacher's decision of which school with which to be employed. Researchers have found that minority teachers in Texas are especially receptive to increased pay as a means to reduce attrition. It was found that a \$1,000 increase in pay would reduce attrition by 2.9 percent overall and by 5-6 percent among minority teachers.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, that same pay increase would reduce attrition by 6.2 percent in high risk districts, compared to 1-2 percent in medium and low risk districts.<sup>41</sup>

An increased pay program for teachers with remarkable success can be found in the City of Chattanooga, Tennessee. This program specifically targets their schools with the greatest need by identifying nine inner city schools with records of low performance and putting an incentive program in place that encourages the very best teachers to teach in those nine schools. Teachers in those nine schools whose students demonstrated a level of improvement above 115 percent qualify for \$5,000 bonuses. Overall improvement on the campus is also rewarded through \$10,000 bonuses for the principal and a bonus for every faculty member of at least \$1,000. This program has been successful not only at recruiting and retaining high performing teachers to these campuses, who need them the most, but also at improving student achievement overall.<sup>42</sup>

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## **CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS**

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Similar programs can be found in other states around the nation. Teachers willing to work in the 11 hard-to-staff schools in New Orleans receive \$2,500 incentives and 125 hours of professional development.<sup>43</sup> In North Carolina, secondary math, science, and special education teachers who agree to work in high-need schools earn a bonus of \$1,800.<sup>44</sup> Florida rewards quality educators who teach in the state's lowest performing schools with bonuses of up to \$3,500.<sup>45</sup>

A component that is integral to implement any increased pay program for teachers is data. Texas is fortunate to have a wealth of data on teachers' employment patterns and field of certification. This information can be used to identify campuses that experience both high rates of teacher turnover and have high numbers of teachers teaching outside their field. If a campus demonstrates a trend of high numbers in both these areas over a three year period, they demonstrate a need for qualified teachers to fill a shortage. The State should use multi-year data to determine where targeted premium pay would be most effective in recruiting and retaining teachers in hard-to-staff schools.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Award differential premium pay for shortage subjects and hard-to-staff schools. Provide funds based on campus need as determined by turnover rates and the number teaching out-of-field.

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### **BACKGROUND**

A huge issue facing Texas to meet the increasing needs of all students is educator preparation. Sharon Gray, Program Coordinator of Alternative Certification for Teachers in the Rio Grande Valley, testified about the educator preparation offered by her program to candidates for certification. All candidates receive training in how to provide students with reading instruction, regardless of the grade or subject they plan to teach.

Additionally, each candidate is provided with training in how to instruct students with disabilities and students with limited proficiency in English.<sup>46</sup> Students in the educator preparation program at Texas A&M University are also required to have training in bilingual education and/or English as a Second Language (ESL).<sup>47</sup>

These preparation programs have recognized the importance for certified teachers to have training in how to meet the needs of all students. Currently, 80 percent of Texas students with disabilities are educated in a general education classroom 50 percent or more of the school day.<sup>48</sup> As a state, one of our goals is to educate special education students in a general education setting as often as possible when that is the appropriate setting for that particular student. As this number increases, so has the need for teachers to be trained in inclusive practices that enable them to modify instruction for special needs students.

In the ten years from 1993 to 2003, the number of students being served by bilingual or ESL services has increased 24 percent faster than the population overall. While that portion of the population comprised 9.7 percent of the overall population during the 1992-93 school year, bilingual students made up 13.5 of the student population in

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## **CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS**

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2002-03.<sup>49</sup> Historical patterns and projections from the State Demographer's Office both show the large role migrants play in the state's population growth, the majority of which is due to net migration.<sup>50</sup> Teachers have an increased number of students with limited English proficiency assigned to their classrooms. They must be prepared to educate students who struggle with the challenge of not only learning content but a second language as well.

State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) rule requires that "the preparation of all candidates for certification must include the specified requirements for reading instruction adopted by the Board for each certificate."<sup>51</sup> In order to ensure teachers have the skills and knowledge necessary to reach all Texas students, the SBEC board should carefully consider the requirements for educator preparation. It must include training in how to modify instruction for the needs of disabled and second language learners who are not yet proficient in English. Additionally, the requirements for reading instruction must be comprehensive enough so that every certified teacher possesses the ability to help students learn to read, regardless of their assigned grade level.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Provide training to all certification candidates for how to instruct second language learners and exceptional learners.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

Provide training on reading instruction at all levels to all candidates for certification.

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## **BACKGROUND**

Teacher turnover rate for beginning teachers is higher than the average rate for all teachers. Almost 90 percent of the teachers who left the profession had 0-5 years of experience.<sup>52</sup> That fact is startling considering that over one-third of all teachers in Texas have five or fewer years of experience and seven percent of all teachers have less than one year of experience.<sup>53</sup>

The Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS), an initiative of SBEC, is designed to provide systematic support for beginning teachers in their first and second years on the job. The program was first implemented in 1999 using a \$10 million federal grant, which was distributed statewide through the 20 regional education service centers. Between 1999 and 2003, 20 percent of the state's beginning teachers have been served through TxBESS. The Texas Workforce Commission provided an additional \$3 million grant to sustain the program during the 2003-2004 school year, and SBEC has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Texas Education Agency to receive \$700,000 during the 04-05 biennium to support new educators through TxBESS. To date, TxBESS has served approximately 10,000 teachers.<sup>54</sup>

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## **CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS**

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Of the teachers who began teaching in 1999-2000, 85 percent of teachers who participated in the TxBESS program were still in the classroom in 2001-02, while only 75 percent of non-participants returned for their second year.<sup>55</sup> Among minority beginning teachers, the difference is even more profound, with 91.4 percent of beginning Hispanic teachers in the TxBESS program returning for their second year of teaching compared to the statewide average of 73 percent of Hispanic beginning teachers returning to the classroom for their second year. Results are similar for African-American beginning teachers with 87.4 percent of TxBESS participants returning compared to an average for that group of 76.8 percent.<sup>56</sup>

Clearly, providing support to beginning teachers early in their careers reduces teacher turnover and increases the experience and quality of educators overall. TxBESS costs approximately \$2,700 per teacher per year of support.<sup>57</sup> Using the most conservative estimate, Texas loses approximately \$329 million annually due to teacher turnover, with a high end cost estimation of \$2.1 billion per year.<sup>58</sup> The cost of teacher turnover represents a loss of resources to the education system that will never be returned, whereas investing in quality mentoring programs reaps the rewards of teacher retention and teacher quality. The time administrators currently spend on tasks associated with recruiting, hiring, and training a new teacher could be better spent on responsibilities that support teaching and learning.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

Continue the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS).

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### **BACKGROUND**

In 2001, the 77th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1721, which allows SBEC to issue a Texas teaching certificate to any candidate who holds a certificate in another state or country and who has passed (a) certification exam(s) “similar to and at least as rigorous as” the corresponding Texas certification exam(s). To implement HB 1721, SBEC has identified states that have potentially comparable certification exams, designed and initiated a test comparability, and set passing standards for tests which have thus far been found to be comparable to corresponding Texas exams.

Almost 200 exams have been examined and 74 have been found “similar to and at least as rigorous.” Currently, it has been determined that five states: Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, New Mexico, and Oklahoma have examinations comparable to Texas to which we have been able to establish similar passing standards. Additionally, a number of exams administered by Praxis and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) as well as some exams of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences have been found comparable to Texas exams.<sup>59</sup> SBEC is only able to perform a comparative study on the examinations of states and entities that are willing to allow us access.

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## **CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS**

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Educators with out-of-state certification may be considered highly-qualified under the No Child Left Behind standards and employed by a Texas school district for one year while satisfying the requirements for certification in Texas. However, concerns have been raised regarding the difficulty of military spouses in transferring their educator certification to Texas when relocating. Working toward establishing comparability standards of the examinations of states where other military bases are located should be a priority. This will eliminate barriers for military families and place qualified teachers in Texas classrooms.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

Streamline certification process for military spouses by speeding up the comparability study for certification exams from states with military bases.

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### **BACKGROUND**

Texas leads the nation in the number of military veterans who have become teachers, with twice the number of our closest competing state. While on active duty, many military personnel serve in a capacity responsible for teaching young men and women as part of their military career. Senior enlisted and officer personnel often spend years in positions in which they design courses, evaluate curriculum, and deliver instruction to classes at military service schools.<sup>60</sup> When these veterans transition from a career in the military to a career in teaching, no credit is given for their service in military schools. Instead, they begin at the base of the salary schedule, with zero years of experience.

When these veterans choose to enter our public schools as classroom teachers, their service to our nation should be recognized as well as their teaching experience. As Meryl Kettler, Coordinator of Texas Troops to Teachers, suggested to the committee, individuals who have been honorably discharged from military service should be awarded creditable service for salary purposes.

The maturity, discipline, skills, and dedication our military veterans bring to our classrooms are to the benefit of Texas students. This recognition would serve the dual purpose of acknowledging their valuable service to the country and perhaps recruiting more from the military into the schools.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

Allow service credit for salary purposes for veterans who have been honorably discharged from military service depending on the amount of service spent in the military related to instruction.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) sets forth “to advance the quality of teaching and learning by maintaining high and rigorous standards for what

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## **CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS**

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accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.”<sup>61</sup> It provides a voluntary system that certifies teachers who meet these standards offering 24 advanced credentials. The rigorous assessment process collects standards-based evidence of accomplished teaching practice via portfolio and assessment. Completing this process is considered by the American Council on Education to be equivalent to six hours of graduate school credit.<sup>62</sup>

In spring 2004, a study of the effectiveness of National Board-certified teachers reported that students make greater academic gains when taught by these teachers. Nationally there are over 32,000 teachers who have earned National Board certification, while less than one percent of those teachers are employed in Texas public schools.

The fee for National Board certification is \$2,300 per teacher. The US Department of Education, through funds allocated by Congress, provides federal subsidies for teachers seeking National Board certification, and these funds are administered by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). The maximum amount of the federal subsidy awarded to a teacher is 50 percent of the total cost (\$1,150). The amount of federal funds allocated to Texas teachers for this purpose would cover 50 percent of the cost for 482 teachers. During the 2003-04 school year, only 60 teachers applied for these funds. All 60 teachers received the subsidy, but the funds not used in Texas were then used to assist teachers in other states. That same amount of funds, \$555,000, is available to Texas teachers during the 2004-05 school year, but again only a limited number of teachers have applied.<sup>63</sup>

Some local school districts have worked with their teachers to cover these expenses in the past. They provide an annual salary supplement to National Board certified teachers, while others provide professional support for candidates completing the process. More educators in Texas may be willing to work through the rigorous process, proven to improve teacher quality, if they were not required to cover the \$1,150 cost. Texas should provide a reimbursement program so that a teacher who wishes to earn this honor could do so free of charge. This investment would improve the quality of teachers and instruction offered in public schools.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

Provide state reimbursement of fees once the candidate graduates from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) program (\$1,150 per teacher in an amount equal to the federal matching funds).

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### **BACKGROUND**

Teacher salaries are structured in a manner that steadily increases for each year of experience, regardless of what teacher employment and retention trends indicate. As stated previously in this report, almost 80 percent of the teachers who left the profession had 0-5 years of experience.<sup>64</sup> As indicated on the table in Appendix B, high numbers of educators leave the profession in their first five years of teaching. Since 1999, 12 percent of the teachers who quit did so after only one year in the classroom, 16 percent left after

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## **CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS**

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two years, and 18 percent quit at the conclusion of their third year. Employment data clearly demonstrates that once a teacher returns after his or her fifth year of experience, they will remain in the profession until retirement.

In order to retain qualified teachers in the profession, it is imperative to provide a strong base of support during the early years an educator spends in the classroom. Additionally, we should configure our salary structure in a manner that proactively uses the data we have available to us and help retain teachers in the profession. If an individual considers leaving the profession, they may decide to stay one more year if they know their salary will receive a significant boost after one more year of experience. That “one more year” could become many more years, successfully retaining a highly-qualified educator.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

Restructure the teacher salary schedule to provide a bump in pay following year one, three, and five to help retain teachers in the profession.

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### **BACKGROUND**

One of the most important assets the state has to ensure the effective learning and maturation of its students are highly qualified and motivated teachers. As a consequence, ensuring that teachers attain the proper professional development provides a crucial key for continual improvement and connectivity of the teacher force. As presented earlier, TxBESS provides a stark example of what a quality teacher mentoring program can do for teacher retention.<sup>65</sup> Despite the important fact that it focuses on the crucial first two years for teachers, the price of the TxBESS program at \$2,700 per teacher has proven costly and prohibitive in reaching all Texas teachers.

Online learning provides an alternative to traditional training that is not limited to time and place.<sup>66</sup> This mechanism can help to reach teachers regardless of where they work, eliminate or reduce travel time and expense, provide large numbers of teachers with quality professional development within a specific time period, and create a learning community where teachers have contact with other teachers who share common experiences and goals.<sup>67</sup>

According to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), early research on this topic shows that participant success is at least equal to or often better than participation in traditional professional development.<sup>68</sup> For example, the Baltimore and Howard County schools have provided online professional development since 1991 in topics that include special education, reading and literacy and several that target new teacher training. Feedback from these courses shows that 94 percent of the online participants indicated that they gained more knowledge by taking the course online versus a traditional setting.<sup>69</sup>

Online pedagogy and curriculum courses based directly on TEKS can provide an alternate route of professional development. In addition, it can provide professional



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## **CHARGE FOUR -- TEACHERS**

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development across the life span of a teacher's career. The use of online professional development can also be tailored with follow up assessments for teachers in low-performing schools to ensure that those teachers have the necessary tools to achieve performance growth with their students.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

Provide online pedagogy/curriculum based directly on TEKS.

## **CHARGE FIVE**

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*Study and make recommendations relating to the effectiveness of the current process of selecting, funding, and distributing textbooks. Identify areas where the current process can be made more cost efficient, including recommendations relating to innovative methods of providing instruction such as online distance learning, and the use of interactive software to address the specific challenges of remedial students and advanced readers. Identify costs and benefits of using technology to provide current and innovative instructional materials, including staffing and hardware requirements.*

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## **TEXTBOOKS**

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## **CHARGE FIVE -- TEXTBOOKS**

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### **BACKGROUND**

The State of Texas adopts textbooks for statewide use, which makes it one of the nation's largest purchasers of textbooks. For fiscal year 2002-03, the legislature appropriated \$570 million for the purchase of textbooks. Previously, the appropriation for FY 2000-01 was \$471 million.<sup>70</sup> Ultimately, the State Board of Education (SBOE) determines a "ceiling" amount of money that is needed to purchase textbooks, and then the legislature allocates that money to buy the textbooks and identifies the funding sources.<sup>71</sup> Generally, the SBOE will issue a proclamation to order new textbooks; however, publishers will develop a textbook that will normally take three years before a school district can actually decide to order it for its teachers and students.<sup>72</sup>

One avenue to address these concerns is an online subscription. This concept assumes maintenance and preservation of textbooks within a nine year cycle that is currently in place. The updates via the internet would be in the form of toolkits for teachers. These toolkits could be provided by one vendor that would make available resources to supplement the instructional materials under contract or provide completely new content in cases where it is warranted (e.g. world events, scientific discoveries). The resources would be compatible with any of the state-adopted instructional materials for that subject. In addition, the subscription-based online instructional materials would be subject to the same review by a textbook review panel to determine fulfillment of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives. These reviews should take place in June and be ready for adoption, ordering, and distribution when schools begin class in August. Although cost estimates remain unresolved and undetermined, conventional wisdom suggests if the State of Texas is one of the largest buyers of textbooks, publishers, vendors, and/or other participants will be willing to negotiate with a market force such as the State of Texas. Overall, this recommendation seeks to address the concern that the textbook cycle is too long, textbook costs keep rising each biennium, and the information contained in certain textbook subjects (e.g. science and social studies) becomes outdated when it reaches the classroom.<sup>73</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Invest in subscription-based online instructional materials to update textbooks.

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### **BACKGROUND**

In the 77th Legislature, Representative Scott Hochberg passed House Bill 623, known as the Textbook Credit Pilot Project.<sup>74</sup> The program was designed to allow a participating school district or charter school to receive credits for selecting textbooks that are priced lower than the state maximum cost established by the SBOE.<sup>75</sup> Currently, 30 school districts are participating in this pilot.<sup>76</sup> By statute, 50 percent of the total textbook credit of a participating school shall be credited to the state textbook fund and the other 50 percent of the credit shall be given to the participating school.<sup>77</sup> The credit shall apply toward the requisition of additional textbooks or electronic textbooks on the conforming or nonconforming list.<sup>78</sup> Textbook credits are generated by 30 school districts. Although the Educational Materials and Textbooks (EMAT) is capable of generating credits for all

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## **CHARGE FIVE -- TEXTBOOKS**

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school districts, there are limitations on how the inventory for textbooks purchased with credits could be managed. EMAT at this time is based on an eligibility quota (103 percent currently). Programming changes would be needed that would allow districts to purchase textbooks with credits without affecting their eligibility under the established quotas. The main concern with this pilot remains that the application of credits is too limiting.<sup>79</sup> If a savings is made in the purchase of one textbook subject (e.g. math), that savings may not be applied to a different textbook subject (science) where there was overage.<sup>80</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Modify the Textbook Credit Pilot Program by: 1) expanding the credits for use by all districts, and 2) allowing credits to be used to pay the difference between the state maximum cost and the actual price of a textbook (when the textbook costs more than the maximum cost).

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### **BACKGROUND**

For each subject in the required curriculum, the SBOE must establish a review and adoption cycle for textbooks from grades prekindergarten all the way through high school.<sup>81</sup> During a particular stage in the textbook adoption cycle, a publisher will submit a sample product (textbook) for review. The publisher will make corrections, appear at a show-cause hearing to accept or protest corrections, make corrections again, and then submit the final product for adoption pending a final cursory review that future corrections have been made before shipment orders take place in June. Although this review process may seem thorough and comprehensive, it is not without its shortcomings. Currently, publishers do not submit their corrected copies until late spring (usually the month of May) following the adoption which took place in November. School districts begin ordering textbooks in June.<sup>82</sup> This is invariably too late to keep textbooks free from errors which happen to escape the scrutiny of a textbook review panel as well as consulting or professional experts who ultimately produce the textbook.<sup>83</sup>

The legislature should increase the certainty that no errors will appear in a textbook, and require that publishers submit page proofs or rough drafts instead of a hardbound textbook draft to improve the efficiency of the error correction process. Prior to adoption, the SBOE should acquire page proofs or documents with final content before the current submission date for samples for textbook panels (usually in April of the adoption year). Fact checking and error detection conducted by staff or a contractor will be complete by the time the textbook review panels begin their work to determine coverage of the TEKS. As panel members evaluate textbooks and discover errors, they can check the proofs to determine if that error has already been documented. This will save valuable time and allow ample time for the review panelists to focus on coverage of the TEKS.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

Require the SBOE to improve the efficiency of the error-correction process by using “page proofs” or drafts of textbooks.

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## **CHARGE FIVE -- TEXTBOOKS**

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### **BACKGROUND**

After a publisher submits a textbook for review and adoption, if an error is found, the SBOE shall impose a reasonable administrative penalty against a publisher or manufacturer who knowingly violates a provision to sell a textbook that is not free from factual error.<sup>84</sup> An official complaint must be filed first, followed by a hearing to determine an apparent violation, and then the commissioner shall file a report to the SBOE for possible sanctions.<sup>85</sup> The penalties and categories of factual errors vary depending upon timeliness, the discovery in a student or teacher edition, or severity of errors.<sup>86</sup> However, these current sanctions seem miniscule compared to the egregious harm that occurs when an error is found in a student edition that is ordered and circulated throughout the state.<sup>87</sup> An error of this type found in the textbook's first year of existence would normally cost a publisher \$25,000 plus one percent of sales.<sup>88</sup> The highest penalty that can be assessed is \$30,000 plus one percent of sales if found in a second year textbook in a student edition.<sup>89</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

Direct the SBOE to require harsher sanctions and penalties when a publisher fails to correct all textbook errors depending upon the stage of the textbook process.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The current textbook process does not allow for any type of instructional updates on state-adopted textbooks (whether it is online or hardbound) without going through a textbook review process.<sup>90</sup> A textbook usually has a lifespan or cycle of 6-8 years in circulation before a proclamation is issued calling for new textbooks.<sup>91</sup> Core curricula subjects such as science and social studies suffer the stigma of being outdated as soon as they enter the classroom and can only be updated if "extraordinary circumstances" exist.<sup>92</sup> For example, the SBOE could adopt an emergency, supplementary, or revised proclamation for government/history textbooks to address the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.<sup>93</sup> The SBOE issued a proclamation for the first time in 2001, asking publishers to provide subscriptions to web-based instructional material.<sup>94</sup> However, this idea may need further exploration to include independent publishers and/or vendors (different than the publisher who manufactured the state-adopted textbook).

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

Provide the option to contract with an independent contractor, vendor, and/or publisher to update an adopted textbook for each subject.

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### **BACKGROUND**

There are over 100 school districts in the State of Texas that are recognized as fast growth districts according to the Fast Growth School Coalition.<sup>95</sup> According to the coalition, districts that are considered fast growth will have a total enrollment of more than 2500 students and enrollment growth over the last five years of over 10 percent or

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## **CHARGE FIVE -- TEXTBOOKS**

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3500 students.<sup>96</sup> In terms of ordering textbooks, superintendents file a report in April with the commissioner projecting their Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for the upcoming textbook needs at the start of the school year in August.<sup>97</sup> Currently, textbook capacity rates have been set at 103 percent for all school districts.<sup>98</sup> This creates a problem for a fast growth school district because of the unpredictability which can exceed the 103 percent capacity rate more easily than a declining enrollment school district.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

Require TEA to develop and gather data using district growth trends over a three year period to determine textbook needs in both fast growth and declining enrollment districts.

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### **BACKGROUND**

Only school districts or open-enrollment charter schools may qualify to receive state-sponsored free textbooks.<sup>99</sup> Current law does not entitle Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEPs) to free textbooks.<sup>100</sup> There are currently 26 state-sponsored JJAEPs in the state.<sup>101</sup> A school district can contract with a local JJAEP who has been adjudicated by a court to provide the necessary instruction to further a student's education.<sup>102</sup> However, there is an instructional challenge facing JJAEPs when they contract with a number of districts teaching students with different, state adopted textbooks.<sup>103</sup> In that instance, JJAEPs desire to be on the same eligibility list as districts and open enrollment charter schools to order state-adopted textbooks to provide instruction using one textbook.<sup>104</sup> Options available to resolve this issue include the creation of Memorandum of Understanding between JJAEPs and school districts or amendment of the Texas Education Code.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

Restore eligibility for JJAEPs to receive free textbooks.

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### **BACKGROUND**

In May 1995, the 74th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1, establishing a new Texas Education Code, directing the SBOE to adopt the TEKS for the required curriculum of the state.<sup>105</sup> The role of a textbook review panel is guided by the State Review Panel Handbook.<sup>106</sup> The Handbook describes in general detail the adoption requirements, state review procedures, travel information, and appendices containing legislative materials related to the textbook process. However, issues arise as to how a textbook meets all of its TEKS objectives in order to obtain the status of a conforming textbook. The evaluation review procedure given to panelists does not state with clarity what constitutes meeting TEKS curricula.<sup>107</sup> Although panelists are asked to identify if the content in a textbook meets TEKS objective (e.g. Is the student expectation addressed? Yes or No), a small section devoted to "*Comments*" to clarify their responses seems wholly inadequate to describe what constitutes fulfilling a TEKS objective much less a 100 percent

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## **CHARGE FIVE -- TEXTBOOKS**

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conforming textbook.<sup>108</sup> In addition, panel members are asked to find at least three examples of TEKS coverage in order to increase the rate of agreement among panel members reviewing the same product.<sup>109</sup> The mere mention of one of the TEKS is cause for concern with no available guiding standard for textbook review panel members.<sup>110</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

Develop criteria on what constitutes fulfilling a curriculum point or objective, allowing textbook review panel members to determine whether or not the textbooks conform to curriculum standards.

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### **BACKGROUND**

Part of the textbook review and adoption process involves having members of a textbook review panel attend “official meetings according to the applicable provisions of the General Appropriations Act.”<sup>111</sup> More specifically, panel members come to Austin to stay in a hotel for a week, fill out evaluations forms for a particular textbook/subject, and then make recommendations to the commissioner for approval of conforming or nonconforming status.<sup>112</sup> According to the Texas Administrative Code, room, board, and traveling expenses are paid by the state to have textbook panelists review textbooks here in Austin.<sup>113</sup> In the interest of fiscal efficiency, publishers should send their textbooks for review to each panel member selected to be a part of the textbook process.<sup>114</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

Require publishers send their textbook samples to the reviewer’s home for evaluation.

## **CHARGE SIX**

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*Study the TEA's implementation of the state's new accountability system and make recommendations to resolve any problems found. Examine the impact of the federal No Child Left Behind law on the state's accountability system and make recommendations for changes to state law to meet the federal legislation. Examine the ability of the current PEIMS database to meet future information needs and recommend changes, if necessary. Review and make recommendations on innovative alternatives for tracking student performance.*

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## **ACCOUNTABILITY**



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## CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY

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### BACKGROUND

Education is a collaborative process. Educators who work together as a team to educate students demonstrate the power of systematic change. Those campuses that work together with the goal of student achievement and demonstrate their success through the improvement and growth of their students should be rewarded. The top performing campuses who qualify according to state rankings should receive incentive dollars as a reward for a job well done.

In the past, our accountability system has focused on punishment for poor performance through sanctions for schools and districts deemed academically unacceptable. However, we have not provided enough rewards for excellence.

Since the implementation of the Advanced Placement (AP) Incentive Program in 1997, AP passing scores in Texas have risen well above the national average, and continue to soar. In addition, the achievement gap has closed considerably among students in different sub-groups. The College Board reported that the premiere school in the nation for producing more minority AP exam passers is the Science and Engineering School in Dallas ISD.<sup>115</sup> It is important to note that this school is one of the select schools chosen by Advanced Placement Strategies, Inc. (APS) for an AP incentive program beyond the scope of the statewide incentives. The state incentives have only paid for student testing fees, teacher training, and campus rewards with strict spending limits. APS is a non-profit corporation that works with Texas schools with high populations of minority and economically disadvantaged students and the private sector to provide monetary incentives to students and the educators of those students who achieve passing scores.

Carolyn Bacon, Executive Director of the O'Donnell Foundation, testified before the committee concerning the effectiveness of AP Strategies, Inc. While AP passing scores in Texas have improved by 110 percent since 1995, the passing rates in the schools where additional incentives are offered to teachers and principals through AP Strategies, Inc. have increased 385 percent.<sup>116</sup> The demonstrated success of the AP Incentive Program indicates that incentive programs should be expanded beyond the scope of AP courses and exams to student achievement overall.

Educators have no control over what a student knows or can achieve when he or she first walks in the door. However, they do have a great deal of influence over what level of growth the student achieves under their tutelage. For this reason, a growth measure should be used to determine eligibility for incentives. Using this method will reward teachers for gains and academic growth the students achieve on their campus.

Teachers on campuses that demonstrate the greatest amount of improvement should be rewarded with meaningful monetary bonuses. There are many methods by which this can be accomplished and indicators that could be used as determinants. As with the school accountability system, factors should include TAKS performance and graduation/drop-out rates. The structure of the most successful program is still to be determined, as no one approach stands out from the rest. The heart of the matter is that teachers in schools that move beyond the status quo, to the benefit of students, should be rewarded.

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## **CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY**

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By using a growth measure, campuses will be encouraged to work with the hard to reach students who need help the most, as these students will have the highest potential to make improvement gains. Schools that demonstrate the most improvement in each of the ratings levels within the accountability system (Exemplary, Recognized, and Academically Acceptable) should be rewarded for their outstanding work with students.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Provide incentives for campuses that show growth in student performance aligned to the school accountability system.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The current accountability system can be traced back to the enactment of Senate Bill 7, in 1993. This bill required the creation of the Texas public school accountability system to rate school districts and evaluate schools. The accountability system is possible due to a comprehensive student-level information system (known as the Public Education Information Management System or PEIMS), a statewide curriculum (now known as TEKS) and an assessment system that tests knowledge of the statewide curriculum (now known as TAKS). The system is a collaborative product of TEA staff, educators and school board members, business and community representatives, professional organizations, and legislative representatives.<sup>117</sup>

The system itself has grown over time. Despite the maturation that may have occurred, it has been consistently guided by some overarching principles: student performance, recognition of diversity, system stability, statutory compliance, appropriate consequences, local program flexibility, local responsibility, and the public's right to know.<sup>118</sup> It has been noted that two of the keys to the success of the Texas accountability system are the separate reporting of test scores for different groups of students and setting performance standards just above those of the current system's performance while continually raising those standards in future years.<sup>119</sup>

The accountability system is able to drive student success because it is predictable, consistent and supports reasonable goals. Historically, districts have known what standards they need to meet and as a consequence rise to the challenge of increasing student performance.<sup>120</sup> Changes made to the system have been in line with the overarching principles of the system and thus allow school districts to remain focused on the twin goals of raising student performance and increasing student participation. In order to enjoy continued success, the legislature should remain true to the goals of the accountability system and ensure that any changes made are predictable and in line with the natural progression of the core principles behind the accountability system.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Continue progress on the accountability system, making adjustments when necessary.

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## **CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY**

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### **BACKGROUND**

The 2004-05 school year is the first time in which fifth grade students will have to pass the reading and mathematics portion of the TAKS test in order to advance to the next grade level. This accountability measure was enacted by Senate Bill 4 in 1999, as a part of the Student Success Initiative which required passage of the third grade reading assessment for promotion to the fourth grade and will require passage of the eighth grade reading and mathematics TAKS test for promotion in the 2007-08 school year.

In order to ensure the readiness of students to pass each of these assessments, the Texas Reading Initiative (TRI) was implemented during the 1999-2000 school year. The TRI is a multi-pronged research-based education reform effort aimed at providing information and resources to assist parents, educators, administrators, public officials, and business and community leaders as they work toward the goal of literacy for all children.

Four Teacher Reading Academies provided systematic professional development in reading instruction to teachers in grades K-3. From 1999 to 2002, 79,038 teachers were trained in a manner that helped them put scientifically-based research into practice and students on track for school success. Since that time, 38,329 more teachers have been trained, through both face-to-face and online settings,<sup>121</sup> but, due to funding cuts, we do not have the same quality assurance for the academies as the four conducted from 1999-2002 which included four full days of intensive training, for which participating teachers were paid a stipend, given a voucher to cover travel expenses, and instructional materials.

State Board for Educator Certification data tells us that 7,411 new teachers have begun teaching kindergarten and first grade in the last two years. During that time, we have not gone back to provide the same high quality training to teachers new to the classroom. Additionally, only 5,152 fourth grade teachers received training compared to the average of 28,000 teachers who have received training in each of the earlier grades.<sup>122</sup> According to the findings in the TEA evaluation of the academies, teachers who received this training are more likely to be retained as teachers, not only within the public school system, but also in the same grade level in which they were trained. It was also found that for every additional 10 percent of teachers who received training, the percentage of students meeting the TAKS standard increased 0.7 percentage points.<sup>123</sup>

House Bill 1144 created the Texas Math Initiative in 2001, which was modeled after the state's reading initiative and applicable to grades 5-8. Teacher training academies were conducted in 2002 for math teachers in grades 5-6 and in 2003 seventh grade math teachers were trained as well. The TEA evaluation of the academies found that student performance improved among sixth and seventh grade students taught by teachers who received training.<sup>124</sup> This year's fifth grade students are the first group of students to have benefited from both the reading and math initiative teacher training programs, as it is the first time two initiatives have overlapped.

In addition to the teacher training, each of these initiatives have provided students with other services such as accelerated instruction intervention, instructional materials,

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## CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY

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diagnostic assessment instruments that allow for targeted instruction, and intensive after-school and summer instructional programs. Unfortunately, as funding cuts have been made to the initiatives and TEA in general, these services have been reduced or the funding for the initiatives has been supplanted to cover cuts in other areas.

We must assure that the same high quality services are provided to all students, not just the first wave of students held to a standard that disallows social promotion. Each student deserves high levels of support to ensure their success.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Follow through on the commitment and initiatives for 3rd grade students and extend those services to the 5th and 8th grade students who are held to that same standard.

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### BACKGROUND

Texas state law provides for the State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) and the Locally Determined Alternative Assessment (LDAA) for special education students who receive modified instruction and for whom the standard assessment instrument, even with allowable medications, would not provide an appropriate measure of student achievement.<sup>125</sup> The SDAA and LDAA measure annual growth based on the appropriate expectations and instructional level for each student as decided by the student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. These assessments are the best measure for the majority of students with disabilities because it provides student specific feedback for educators that is relevant to instruction and helps them assist students in meeting their instructional goals.

The federal guidelines of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act allow for a maximum of one percent of students to be counted as *Proficient* in the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on the results of an alternative assessment which tests students at instructional level rather than enrolled grade level. About 13 percent of the students in grades measured by AYP receive special education services. During the 2002-03 school year, nine percent of students were tested at their instructional level rather than their grade level, with eight percent of students being tested with the SDAA and one percent being administered the LDAA.<sup>126</sup>

The State of Texas and NCLB share a common goal: to assess students with disabilities at the highest instructional level appropriate for the student. School districts and campuses should continuously review the instructional opportunities for special education students and attempt to provide grade level or near grade level instruction as much as possible. When a student receives grade level instruction, they can typically be assessed with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) rather than the SDAA. This can bring the percentage of students alternatively assessed down some, but most likely still not to the one percent required by the US Department of Education.<sup>127</sup> Steps must be taken in order for Texas to meet federal requirements and continue to offer appropriate instruction and assessment of students.

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## **CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY**

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The SDAA is a unique form of assessment unlike those administered to special education students in other states. Some states have looked to it as a model in the past because of the data specific to student goals that it offers as well as the appropriate levels at which it can be offered. In December, representatives from the US Department of Education will conduct a peer review of the SDAA II, which is set to be administered for the first time in spring 2005. This test is even more closely aligned with the state curriculum and expectations than its predecessor and it is hoped that through this review the USDE will recognize its value and endorse it as a suitable measure for the purposes of AYP.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

Establish reasonable goals to incrementally meet the federal expectation regarding special education and limited English proficient student performance on alternative assessments.

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### **BACKGROUND**

As referenced earlier in this report, the Texas accountability system focuses on raising standards and increasing student participation. All students are held to the same standard using a criterion-referenced state assessment program that is aligned to the state curriculum and assesses all students at specific grade level. One of the keys to the success of the Texas system has been the setting of realistic targets for increased standards with continual improvement and refinement of the system. Both positive and negative consequences are applied to results.

Current law allows the Commissioner of Education to impose several sanctions on either a district or campus.<sup>128</sup> The sanctions range in order of severity from a public notice of deficiency to the appointment of district management teams or campus intervention teams.<sup>129</sup> Scoring the lowest rating for consecutive years increases the severity of the possible sanctions including closure, consolidation or reconstitution.<sup>130</sup>

The Texas accountability system is not the only accountability measure to which a district and campus are subject. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that all schools and districts be evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In order to continue eligibility for federal funding, schools must meet the AYP requirements. Districts and campuses in Texas will receive two ratings: one that indicates the performance under the Texas Accountability System and one that indicates whether they satisfied AYP.<sup>131</sup>

NCLB carries its own sanctions for districts and campuses that fail to meet AYP. Generally, the sanctions increase in severity for consecutive years of failure. The sanctions range from campus or district improvement plans, to school choice, to replacement of personnel.<sup>132</sup>

The accountability system has matured over the years. With the addition of AYP the measure of student success has grown. Most districts and campuses have become increasingly aware of the requirements and made the changes necessary to meet the

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## CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY

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higher standards. As our measurement and standards have matured so also must our sanctions. Increased oversight and more stringent consequences for districts and campuses that fail to meet standards should be explored. In addition, requirements such as pedagogy and curriculum training for teachers at low performing campuses can improve the chances of those schools succeeding in meeting increased expectations.

### RECOMMENDATION 5

Require increased oversight by TEA of districts that fail AYP or are low-performing under the accountability system. Ensure consequences for consistent low performers are applied in a meaningful manner. Require teachers at low performing schools to take the online pedagogy/curriculum courses based on TEKS.

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### BACKGROUND

The TEKS identify what Texas students should know and be able to do at every grade and in every course in the foundation and enrichment areas as they move successfully through our public schools.<sup>133</sup> The TEKS were developed by the SBOE with the direct participation of educators, parents, business and industry representatives, and employers.<sup>134</sup> The purpose of the TEKS is for all students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to read, write, compute, problem solve, think critically, apply technology, and communicate across all subject areas.<sup>135</sup> The TEKS shall also prepare and enable all students to continue to learn in *postsecondary educational*, training, or employment settings.<sup>136</sup>

Texas' future depends on properly educating its students and preparing them for college. As referenced earlier, preparing Texas students for college is one of the primary purposes of the TEKS.<sup>137</sup> Projections of population trends suggest that in the absence of changes being made, income growth will not keep pace with household growth, and average incomes in Texas will decline.<sup>138</sup> As incomes are projected to decline, educational attainment levels in Texas are also projected to decline.<sup>139</sup> The labor force is projected to be less educated and will consist of a higher percentage of workers without a high school education and lower percentage of workers with post secondary degrees.<sup>140</sup>

Failure to prepare students for college success has more than just a future impact on Texas. Preliminary data suggests that enrollment in higher education institutions was 1.13 million students. That number is forecasted to grow to 1.28 million by 2015.<sup>141</sup> The percent of out-of-state students at Texas institutions ranges from two to 40 percent.<sup>142</sup> As a consequence, the large majority of students enrolled at Texas higher education institutions were educated from the Texas public school system. Too many of these students must take remedial courses in college due to a lack of skill in courses necessary to succeed at the college level. These remedial courses cost Texas millions of dollars each year for education that should have been attained in the K-12 system. In 2002-03, the state spent \$184.8 million on remedial courses.<sup>143</sup>

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## **CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY**

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Traditional measures of high school achievement do not necessarily address the question of college readiness.<sup>144</sup> Testimony to the committee suggested that a better job could and should be done on aligning the TEKS to college readiness.<sup>145</sup> In addition, studies show a lack of alignment in Texas with at least one version of what is needed to prepare students for success at the college level.<sup>146</sup> While every child may not seek out post-secondary education, the state should seek to align the TEKS to college readiness and ensure that the skills and knowledge being taught in Texas high schools prepares Texas students for post secondary success.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

Require TEA to review the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for alignment consistent with post-secondary success.

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## **PUBLIC EDUCATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PEIMS)**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) was created in 1986 in response to legislation calling for greater accountability in the Texas public school system. PEIMS has helped Texas lead the nation in providing public education information to support accountability, funding allocations, and monitoring of Texas public schools. The system was developed before it was common for technology to be significantly integrated in the workplace.

PEIMS data enabled longitudinal studies and analysis of educational practices that could drive instructional improvement. A respectable amount of free research has been conducted in Texas by experts with national standing due to the availability and quality of our data. Over the years, demands on the system have increased and the volume of data reported has expanded greatly. While PEIMS processes and systems have evolved steadily, critical renovations are necessary to keep pace with federal and state requirements, to increase efficiency and effectiveness and to realize additional benefits in the future. We are now in danger of falling behind in a field in which a forward-thinking Texas has led for years.

Our educational system is comprised of more than 1,200 school districts and open-enrollment charter schools, more than 7,800 campuses, and more than 4.2 million students. Due to increased accountability and record keeping requirements from both the state and federal levels, not to mention the high mobility rates that now plague both urban and rural districts, managing student records is not an easy job. As mentioned previously in this report, each year schools process approximately 430,000 student records requests.<sup>147</sup> Additionally, districts manually process 720,000 transcript requests from colleges and universities annually.<sup>148</sup> An automatic exchange of student records between

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## CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY

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schools and districts would benefit students, teachers, administrators, parents, and institutions of higher education.

As indicated in a previous section of this report, in the TEA Student Records Exchange Analysis Subproject, it was estimated that local school districts incur a human resources cost of more than \$8.3 million dollars each year. This cost is determined by estimating the average time each student record request requires (approximately 30 minutes to request, locate, copy, and fax) multiplied by the average salary of school district staff who handle such requests (\$13 per hour) and the total requests made each year for records and transcripts. Another \$720,000 was added to the total for the postage required to mail transcripts to institutions of higher education. An automated exchange system would cut the 30 minutes of time required to five minutes for student records and one minute for transcripts, and eliminate the cost for postage altogether. This in turn would reduce the human resource cost to \$639,000, for a savings of almost \$7.7 million.<sup>149</sup>

Institutions of higher education have an interest in this issue as well. The Texas Higher Education Efficiency Committee of the Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors issued a progress report in April of this year which described the potential cost savings for high schools and colleges. The report noted that while Texas colleges and universities are currently capable of transferring records between institutions by electronic means, high school transcripts are still transmitted on paper. They estimate cost savings for high schools and colleges just for the purpose of transcript exchanges between those two entities would reach over \$6 million per year. They also estimate that the cost to implement such a system statewide would be approximately \$16 million, which means the payback period for the state would be less than three years.<sup>150</sup> If considerations are given to the total savings that could be made at the high school and college level, a total of \$8.6 million could be saved statewide on an annual basis.

Triand, Inc. is a privately held company founded in 2001 that offers software products such as the Web-enabled Student Transcript (WEST). WEST is currently being used by 30 percent of the school districts in Texas.<sup>151</sup> The fact that this system is so widely used should decrease the cost for implementation and reduce the burden on school districts if the system is set up to allow for local control in the design and nature of the software program used at the local level. Similar to our current PEIMS structure, state standards should be put in place that allow local schools to communicate with TEA and other educational entities. As long as that communication and transmittal of information can occur, local districts should be free to determine the electronic system used to manage records and other data.

One of those standards and requirements for every participant in this network would be to maintain the strictest of privacy for students. The same standard of protection of privacy that exists for students today would be maintained or perhaps improved. With an electronic transferal of records, it is less likely that unauthorized persons would have access to copies that are made or faxed. In a secure environment, access could be even more controlled than it is today.



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## **CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY**

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### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

Require student information systems and curriculum management systems used in Texas schools to be compliant with state standards that allow information to be translated to a statewide database.

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### **BACKGROUND**

Currently, there are more than 4.2 million students and 288,000 teachers in Texas public schools. Data is collected regarding teacher class responsibility each fall and student course completion data is reported each spring. There are more than 15 million records submitted for over 1.1 million high school students using 2,300 course codes.<sup>152</sup> However, there are no data elements in PEIMS that link individual students to individual teachers. Because teacher-student associations cannot be assumed to be permanent or mutually exclusive during the course of a year, student-teacher links would probably have to be done through course “sections,” somewhat like sections in college courses. All courses and sections taught by each teacher would be reported, as well as all courses and sections taken by each student. The course-section codes would provide the links between teachers and students.

Student-teacher links could be established in the current PEIMS structure, but it is doubtful that the existing system could handle the additional requirements.

Improvements should be made to enable the system to associate individual student and teacher information so that all information can be directly linked to student performance. Concerns exist regarding how this information may be used. Careful attention should be paid that the information is used for purposes for which it is an accurate reflection.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

Establish a classroom data link between individual students and teachers in PEIMS.

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### **BACKGROUND**

Similar to the process of submitting paper copies of student records and transcripts is the manual process of submitting superintendent approval forms for the required four data submissions per year. In a cost-benefit analysis performed by TEA, it was estimated that 15 minutes of staff time is used at the school district, regional education service centers (ESC), and Texas Education Agency (TEA) levels to submit and process the forms. At the school district level, that staff time is estimated to cost \$13 per hour for a \$14,797 cost per year. Staff members who process these forms at the ESC earn an average \$30 per hour for a statewide annual cost of \$34,147. TEA personnel who perform this duty make \$18.45 per hour for an agency cost of \$21,000. When all of these amounts are combined, the human resource cost for manually processing these forms each year is almost \$70,000.

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## **CHARGE SIX -- ACCOUNTABILITY**

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Efficiency can be achieved through an automated process. With an automated submission process in place, only two minutes of staff time would be required at the district and agency level, thereby reducing the cost to \$4,773 for a potential savings of \$65,000.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

Automate the submission of superintendent approval forms with PEIMS data submissions.

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### **BACKGROUND**

When PEIMS was developed in the 1980's, records were subject to an 80-character limit due to the limitations of punch card technology. Technology has evolved significantly since that time, but the per record character limit remains. Removing this limit would mean that duplicate reporting could be greatly reduced, and a great deal of the time and process intensive edits required for data submission to TEA could be alleviated. Eliminating this limit would improve data quality and provide more flexibility in data specifications.

This change in infrastructure is estimated to cost \$5-6 million<sup>153</sup> and would eliminate many of the limitations found within the current system to help Texas stay abreast with technology in the modern era.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

Redesign the PEIMS record layout and eliminate the 80-character record length limitation.

## **CHARGE SEVEN**

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*Study successful partnerships between school districts and the business community and make recommendations for maximizing the use of effective partnerships, improving the delivery of education services, and enhancing educational opportunities for Texas students, especially at-risk students.*

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## **BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS**

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## CHARGE SEVEN -- BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

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### BACKGROUND

In the early 1980s, American business leaders began the movement to become heavily involved in education reform due in part by the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. They understood education was integral to economic competitiveness calling for change aimed at improving the public school system.<sup>154</sup>

In Texas, business leaders went a little further taking the initiative to form statewide organizations to advocate education reform. It was no surprise the advent of the Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) came about in 1989. TBEC, along with Texas Association of Partners in Education (TAPE), has been consistently in the forefront bridging businesses and school districts to provide the delivery of educational services.<sup>155</sup> TBEC has been instrumental in the development of the Recommended High School Program, the Texas Reading Initiative, TEXAS Grant Program, Texas B-On-Time Loans, Texas Scholars, and College for Texans Campaign, and many more programs such as these.<sup>156</sup>

TAPE has also been an assertive player in changing the way schools and communities work together to build a positive vision for our Texas youth.<sup>157</sup> The Houston Healthy Communities Healthy Youth Initiative is just one example of TAPE's involvement engaging the community in several events to create a shared community vision, targeting key arenas of the community for training in asset development, and sustaining asset building efforts by constant networking and periodic convening.

Georgetown Partners in Education (PIE) is another program directed to motivate and prepare Georgetown students not only for success in school but also for success in the workplace and in the community. Georgetown PIE elects a 24-member Board of Directors to oversee the implementation of its six to eight programs. These programs currently use over 2,000 volunteers, who donate 30 minutes a week during their lunch hour mainly to help effect positive change in the lives of over 8,500 students.<sup>158</sup>

Transforming low-performing schools into high academic schools is the mission of Project GRAD. Unlike programs that serve one school at a time, Project GRAD works with the lowest-income schools in a "feeder pattern" format. Project GRAD targets elementary and middle schools that feed into one high school delivering a comprehensive set of research-based programs in reading, math, classroom management, social services, parent involvement, and college preparation. Project GRAD works with principals, teachers who agree to the training, parents who sign contracts to ensure involvement in their child's education, and business leaders who sign on to mentor, tutor, or make contributions.<sup>159</sup>

Although these programs and others like this exist all over the state, there is still a vacuum that exists for most districts who have little or no exposure to what is available or can be accomplished through ingenuity, hard work, and implementation of surrounding resources.<sup>160</sup>

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## **CHARGE SEVEN -- BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS**

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The legislature should require TEA to provide a clearinghouse on their website to list these various and other partnership programs with a brief description and contact information. The business community can provide a wealth of knowledge and expertise that would otherwise be unavailable to school districts. The lack of awareness by a community and school districts can prevent the effective collaboration between school districts and the business community. However, this clearinghouse should assist districts and individuals in the community in identifying programs that could work in their community.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Require TEA provide a clearinghouse on their website to list the various partnership programs with a brief description and contact information of each.

## **LETTERS FROM MEMBERS**



# The Senate of The State of Texas

Senator Leticia Van de Putte, R. Ph.

District 26

November 8, 2004

The Honorable Florence Shapiro  
State Senator  
Capitol Building  
Room 3E.2  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Senator Shapiro:

Thank you for your leadership during the 78th Interim as chair of the Senate Committee on Education. I would like to commend you and your staff for organizing such informative hearings and preparing a Report that contains many strong recommendations. In particular, I thank you for your kind consideration and inclusion of my comments into the final draft.

Although I am signing in support of the committees recommendations, I would like to share some specific concerns regarding Charge #1, recommendation #3.

***Charge 1, Recommendation 3: Combine funding streams for duplicative at-risk programs that provide the same services to the same population of students in order to cut down on administrative burden. Transfer FTE's at TEA used to manage paperwork for duplicative programs to FTE positions that provide support and guidance to districts in how to administer programs that serve at-risk populations.***

As the language of the background for this recommendation makes clear: "This...[change] should not constitute a reduction of funding or services." In order to ensure that our changes do not result in such reductions, I respectfully request we be prudent in our evaluation of whether these programs provide "duplicative" or "same" services. We must be cautious not to overlook whether some of these programs that might be considered "duplicative" provide services that are not "duplicative".

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Committees: Veteran Affairs and Military Installations, Chair  
Administration • Business & Commerce • Education • Subcommittee on Higher Education

The Honorable Florence Shapiro

Page 2

November 8, 2004

Please include this letter in the final report as a record of this particular concern. Again, thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective regarding the Senate Committee on Education Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leticia Van de Putte" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Leticia Van de Putte, R.Ph.





**Judith Zaffirini**

**State Senator, District 21**  
**President Pro Tempore, 1997**

**Committees**

**Finance, Vice Chair**  
**Education**  
**Health and Human Services**

**Committees**

**International Relations and Trade**  
**Legislative Budget Board**

**November 16, 2004**

**Senator Florence Shapiro, Chair**  
**Senate Education Committee**  
**Texas Legislature**  
**Austin, Texas 78711**

**Dear Chair Shapiro:**

Thank you for your leadership as Chair of the Senate Education Committee. It is my privilege to serve with you, and I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective regarding the Interim Committee report.

Because the report includes many fine recommendations that could improve the quality of education for many Texans, I am delighted to sign it. Simultaneously, however, I submit this letter to record my abiding concerns.

I believe strongly that the legislature's top priority should be to provide the funding necessary to support existing educational programs and professionals. Any proposal for new programs or differential pay should be considered *only after* schools are brought up to capacity to support the current agenda of achieving higher standards and teachers are provided with an across-the-board pay raise. I also have concerns about three specific recommendations in the report:

First, the recommendation to allow funding to follow eligible students to the early childhood education program of choice should not be construed as an endorsement of a voucher program. The recommendation pertains only to new funding that may be provided specifically for the purpose of integrating early childhood services as provided by SB 76, which I authored and passed last session, and does not sanction a reduction of funding for public prekindergarten programs. Moreover, as reflected in the recommendation, there need to be assurances that these dollars are going to quality early childhood education programs that have met school readiness standards.

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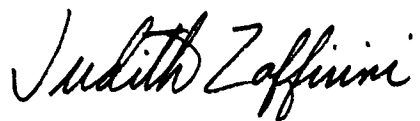
Second, it is important to reiterate that the recommendation to combine funding streams for duplicative at-risk programs is intended to eliminate the administrative burden of these programs and not to reduce funding or services for at-risk students. School districts should continue to have a wide array of at-risk programs available to address the many needs of a large and diverse population.

Finally, I strongly caution against using the data that will be available as a result of the recommendation to establish a classroom data link between individual students and teachers in PEIMS as a basis for "value-added" or teacher-based incentives. Despite the appearance of an easy association between individual teachers and student performance on standardized tests provided by this system, recent research casts significant doubts on the validity of such a methodology. The intent is to collect data only for information purposes. To exceed this recommendation by using these data as a basis to rate and reward teachers would be wholly unfounded.

Thank you for your dedication to these important issues. Count on my continued leadership to help ensure that every Texan has access to a quality education. I look forward to continuing working with you and other members of the committee during the forthcoming legislative session.

May God bless you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith Zaffirini".

Judith Zaffirini, PhD

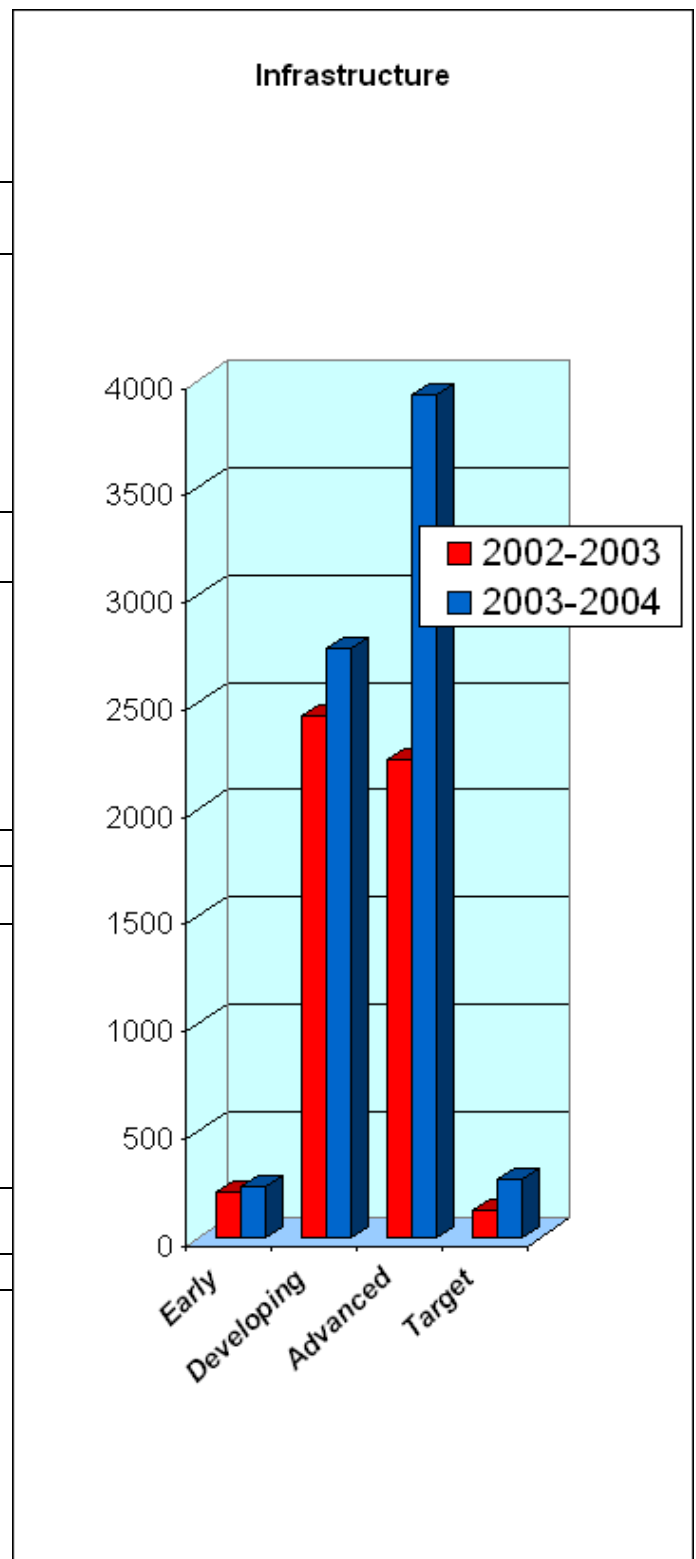
JZ/wve

## **APPENDIX A**

### ***Documents Produced by the Texas Education Agency***

| Texas STaR Chart       | Teaching and Learning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |      |         |       | Educator Preparation and Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |      |         |       | Administration and Support                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |      |         |       | Infrastructure                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |      |         |       |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------|-------|
|                        | Number                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |      | Percent |       | Number                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |      | Percent |       | Number                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |      | Percent |       | Number                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |      | Percent |       |
| <b>Early Tech</b>      | 397                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 385  | 8%      | 5.4%  | 370                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 284  | 7%      | 4%    | 297                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 280  | 6%      | 3.9%  | 212                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 238  | 4%      | 3.3%  |
| Description            | Instruction is teacher-centered and students occasionally use software applications and/or use tutorial software for drill and practice. No technology integration occurs in the foundation subject area TEKS. Some K-8 Technology Applications TEKS are met; high schools offer at least 4 Technology Applications courses.                                                                   |      |         |       | Technology skills include multimedia and the Internet. 10% of educators meet SBEC standards. Administrators recognize benefits of technology in instruction. There is minimal personal use. 5% or less of technology budget allocated for professional development.                                                                            |      |         |       | There is no campus technology plan. Technology is used mainly for administrative tasks. No technical support is onsite. There is no district technology coordinator. Technology Allotment is only source of funding.                                                                |      |         |       | There are 10 or more students per computer. There is dial-up connectivity. There is no web-based learning. There is shared use of technology resources.                                                                                                      |      |         |       |
| <b>Developing Tech</b> | 3,276                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 4173 | 66%     | 58.1% | 2,958                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 4016 | 59%     | 55.9% | 2,642                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 3674 | 53%     | 51.1% | 2,437                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2746 | 49%     | 38.2% |
| Description            | Instruction is teacher-directed and students regularly use technology on an individual basis to access electronic information and develop communication and presentation projects. There is minimal use of technology in foundation TEKS. Most Technology Applications TEKS are met K-8; high school campuses teach at least 2 Technology Applications courses.                                |      |         |       | Use of technology is for administrative tasks and classroom management. There is use of online resources. 40% of educators meet SBEC standards. Administrators expect teachers to use technology. 6-24% of technology budget allocated for professional development.                                                                           |      |         |       | Campus plan aligned with Long-Range Plan for Technology. Teachers and administrators have vision for technology. One technical support staff to 750 computers. There is a full-time district technology director. The Technology Allotment and local funding is used for purchases. |      |         |       | There are 5-9 students per computer. There is direct connectivity to the Internet in 50% of classrooms and library. Most rooms are connected to WAN/LAN. One educator per computer, shared use of other resources.                                           |      |         |       |
| <b>Advanced Tech</b>   | 1,283                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2535 | 26%     | 35.3% | 1,618                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2773 | 32%     | 38.6% | 1,777                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 2841 | 36%     | 39.5% | 2,227                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 3933 | 45%     | 54.7% |
| Description            | Instruction is teacher-facilitated and students work with peers and experts to evaluate information, analyze data and content in order to problem solve. Technology is integrated into foundation area TEKS, and activities are separated by subject and grade. All Technology Applications TEKS are met K-8; high school campuses offer and teach at least 4 Technology Applications courses. |      |         |       | There is integration of technology into teaching and learning. There is use of online resources regularly. 60% of educators meet SBEC standards. Administrators recognize and identify exemplary use of technology. 25-29% of technology budget allocated for professional development.                                                        |      |         |       | Campus plan board approved and supported by supt. 1 technical support staff to 500 computers, full-time district technology director. Technology Allotment, e-Rate, competitive grants and local funding.                                                                           |      |         |       | There are 4 or less students per computer. There is direct connectivity to Internet in 75% of classrooms and library. Web-based learning is available. All rooms are on LAN/WAN. There is one educator per computer. There is shared use of other resources. |      |         |       |
| <b>Target Tech</b>     | 44                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 93   | 1%      | 1.3%  | 54                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 113  | 1%      | 1.6%  | 284                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 391  | 6%      | 5.4%  | 124                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 269  | 2%      | 3.7%  |
| Description            | The teacher serves as facilitator, mentor, and co-learner. Students have on-demand access to all appropriate technologies to complete activities that have been seamlessly integrated into all core content areas. All Technology Applications TEKS are met K-8; high school campuses offer all Technology Applications courses and teach at least 4 courses.                                  |      |         |       | There are regular technology-supported learner-centered projects. There is vertical alignment of Technology Applications TEKS and anytime, anywhere use of online resources. Administrators ensure integration of appropriate technology. 100% of educators meet SBEC standards. 30% or more of budget allocated for professional development. |      |         |       | Campus plan focused on student success, supported by board and administration. There is one technical support to 350 computers. Campus instructional support staff. Technology Allotment, e-Rate, state and federal competitive grants and local funding are available.             |      |         |       | There is on-demand access for every student, direct connectivity available in all rooms and web-based resources in multiple rooms. All rooms are connected to WAN. They are fully equipped with appropriate technology.                                      |      |         |       |
| <b>Total</b>           | <i>5000 campuses (out of 7,621) completed chart</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |      |         |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |      |         |       | <b>7186 (of 7,733) completed chart</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |      |         |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |      |         |       |

| Texas STaR Chart       | Infrastructure                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |              |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Level of Progress      | 2002-03                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 2003-04      |
| <b>Early Tech</b>      | 212 (4%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 238(3.3%)    |
| Description            | There are 10 or more students per computer. There is dial-up connectivity. There is no web-based learning. There is shared use of technology resources.                                                                                                      |              |
| <b>Developing Tech</b> | 2,437 (49%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2746 (38.2%) |
| Description            | There are 5-9 students per computer. There is direct connectivity to the Internet in 50% of classrooms and library. Most rooms are connected to WAN/LAN. One educator per computer, shared use of other resources.                                           |              |
| <b>Advanced Tech</b>   | 2,227 (45%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3933 (54.7%) |
| Description            | There are 4 or less students per computer. There is direct connectivity to Internet in 75% of classrooms and library. Web-based learning is available. All rooms are on LAN/WAN. There is one educator per computer. There is shared use of other resources. |              |
| <b>Target Tech</b>     | 124 (2%)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 269 (3.7%)   |
| Description            | There is on-demand access for every student, direct connectivity available in all rooms and web-based resources in multiple rooms. All rooms are connected to WAN. They are fully equipped with appropriate technology.                                      |              |



## **APPENDIX B**

### ***Documents Produced by State Board for Educator Certification***

Herbert, Karen S. and Michael C. Ramsay. State Board for Educator Certification. Teacher Turnover and Shortages of Qualified Teachers in Texas Public School Districts 2001-2004. August 2004: 12.

*Years of Experience of Teachers Who Quit Teaching from 1999-2004*

| <b>Years of Experience*</b> | <b>Percentage of Teachers Who Quit</b> | <b>Cumulative Percentage</b> | <b>Count of Teachers</b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1                           | 12%                                    | 12%                          | 638                      |
| 2                           | 16%                                    | 28%                          | 881                      |
| 3                           | 18%                                    | 46%                          | 989                      |
| 4                           | 17%                                    | 64%                          | 940                      |
| 5                           | 17%                                    | 80%                          | 891                      |
| 6                           | 10%                                    | 90%                          | 519                      |
| 7                           | 3%                                     | 93%                          | 184                      |
| 8                           | 2%                                     | 95%                          | 97                       |
| 9                           | 0.9%                                   | 96%                          | 49                       |
| 10                          | 0.6%                                   | 96.5%                        | 32                       |
| 11                          | 0.5%                                   | 96.9%                        | 27                       |
| 12                          | 0.4%                                   | 97.4%                        | 22                       |
| 13                          | 0.2%                                   | 97.6%                        | 11                       |
| 14                          | 0.3%                                   | 97.9%                        | 16                       |
| 15                          | 0.3%                                   | 98.2%                        | 16                       |
| 16                          | 0.2%                                   | 98.4%                        | 11                       |
| 17                          | 0.2%                                   | 98.6%                        | 11                       |
| 18                          | 0.1%                                   | 98.7%                        | 5                        |
| 19                          | 0.1%                                   | 98.8%                        | 5                        |
| 20                          | 0.1%                                   | 98.9%                        | 5                        |
| 21                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.1%                        | 5                        |
| 22                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.2%                        | 5                        |
| 23                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.3%                        | 5                        |
| 24                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.4%                        | 5                        |
| 25                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.5%                        | 5                        |
| 26                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.6%                        | 5                        |
| 27                          | 0%                                     | 100%                         | 0                        |
| 28                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.7%                        | 5                        |
| 29                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.7%                        | 5                        |
| 30                          | 0%                                     | 100%                         | 0                        |
| 31                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.9%                        | 5                        |
| 32                          | 0.1%                                   | 99.9%                        | 5                        |
| 33                          | 0%                                     | 100%                         | 0                        |
| 38                          | 0%                                     | 100%                         | 0                        |
| 39                          | 0%                                     | 100%                         | 0                        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>100%</b>                            | <b>100%</b>                  | <b>5,403</b>             |

\* Years of experience indicates how many years a teacher taught before quitting. Quitting was identified as not being employed in a Texas public school district for at least two consecutive years during the period from 1999 to 2004.

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## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Texas. Education Agency. Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2002-03 (Document No. GE04 601 08). 2004. 6 Oct. 2004  
<[http://www.tea.state.tx.us/research/pdfs/dropcomp\\_2002-03.pdf](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/research/pdfs/dropcomp_2002-03.pdf)>.
- <sup>2</sup> Section 25.002, Texas Education Code.
- <sup>3</sup> Texas. Education Agency. "Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Student Records Exchange Analysis Subproject". Texas Senate Education Committee Public Hearing. 7 Sept. 2004: 4-5. 6 Oct. 2004,  
<[http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/commit/c530/meetings/090704/downloads/Interim6\\_1\\_CloudtDvorak.pdf](http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/commit/c530/meetings/090704/downloads/Interim6_1_CloudtDvorak.pdf)>.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Texas. Education Agency. Student Records Exchange Analysis Subproject: Subproject Summary. Austin, TX.: 2004.
- <sup>6</sup> Eason, Terry. Texas Senate Education Committee Public Hearing. 7 Sept. 2004. 6 Oct. 2004,  
<<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/ram/archive/2004/sep/090704EC.ram>>.
- <sup>7</sup> Measuring Effectiveness of State and Federal Funding for At-risk Students (State Auditor's Office [SAO] Report No. 05-009, November 2004), pp. 18-20.
- <sup>8</sup> No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law 107-110.
- <sup>9</sup> Section 42.152, Texas Education Code
- <sup>10</sup> Measuring Effectiveness (SAO Report No. 05-009), p. 14.
- <sup>11</sup> SAO was charged to do this by appropriation rider.
- <sup>12</sup> Measuring Effectiveness (SAO Report No. 05-009), p. 43.
- <sup>13</sup> Galloway, Cathy and Hewett, Mary. Texas Senate Education Committee Public Hearing. 7 Sept. 2004. Senate Committee on Education. 6 Oct. 2004  
<<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/ram/archive/2004/sep/090704EC.ram>>.
- <sup>14</sup> Moore, David.W., Thomas W. Bean, Deanna. Birdyshaw, & James A. Rycik. Adolescent literacy: A position statement. International Reading Association, Inc. 1999: 3. 16 Oct. 2004  
<[http://www.reading.org/downloads/positions/ps1036\\_adolescent.pdf](http://www.reading.org/downloads/positions/ps1036_adolescent.pdf)>.
- <sup>15</sup> Texas. Education Agency. Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2002-03 (Document No. GE04 601 08). Austin, TX: 2004. 6 Oct. 2004  
<[http://www.tea.state.tx.us/research/pdfs/dropcomp\\_2002-03.pdf](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/research/pdfs/dropcomp_2002-03.pdf)>.
- <sup>16</sup> Texas. Education Agency. TAKS Assessment data.
- <sup>17</sup> Moore at 4.
- <sup>18</sup> Deshler, Donald. Texas Senate Education Committee Public Hearing. 8 Sept. 2004. 18 Oct. 2004,  
<<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/ram/archive/2004/sep/090804EC.ram>>.
- <sup>19</sup> Moore at 4.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> The College Board. "Table 3: Mean SAT Verbal and Math Scores by State, with Changes for Selected Years." 2004 College-Bound Seniors Tables and Related Items. 6 Oct. 2004,  
<[http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/about/news\\_info/cbsenior/yr2004/table\\_3\\_mean\\_sat\\_verbal\\_math\\_by\\_state.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2004/table_3_mean_sat_verbal_math_by_state.pdf)>.  
ACT, Inc. ACT Average Composite Scores by State. 16 Oct. 2004,  
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- <sup>22</sup> The College Board. "A Word about Comparing States and Schools." 2003 College-Bound Seniors Tables and Related Items. 11 Oct. 2004  
<[www.collegeboard.com/about/news\\_info/cbsenior/yr2003/html/related.html#comparing](http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2003/html/related.html#comparing)>.
- <sup>23</sup> The College Board. Table 3: Mean SAT Verbal and Math Scores by State, with Changes for Selected Years. 2004 College-Bound Seniors Tables and Related Items. 6 Oct. 2004,  
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- <sup>24</sup> ACT Educational Services. Measuring Illinois Students' Progress Toward State Learning Standards. EPAS Case Studies. 2003. 6 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.act.org/epas/pdf/il.pdf>>.
- ACT Educational Services. Measuring Colorado Students' Progress Toward State Learning Standards. EPAS Case Studies. 2003. 6 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.act.org/epas/pdf/co.pdf>>.
- ACT Educational Services. Preparing Oklahoma Students for the Future. EPAS Case Studies. 2003. 6 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.act.org/epas/pdf/ok.pdf>>.
- <sup>25</sup> TRACK. UT Telecampus. 6 Oct. 2004 <[www.track.uttelecampus.org](http://www.track.uttelecampus.org)>.
- <sup>26</sup> Reyes, Pedro. Texas Senate Education Committee Public Hearing. 7 Sept. 2004. 6 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/ram/archive/2004/sep/090704EC.ram>>.
- <sup>27</sup> See Appendix A – STaR Chart
- <sup>28</sup> State Center for Early Childhood Development. The Report of the State Center for Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee on Senate Bill 76: Feasibility of Coordinating Government-Funded Child-Care Programs in a Manner that Promotes Access to Child-Care Programs and Results in Improved School Readiness. 2004: 43.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup> Landry, Susan. Senate Bill 76 Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) Project. Texas Senate Education Committee Public Hearing. 23 Aug. 2004. 20 Oct. 2004 <[http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/commit/c530/meetings/082304/downloads/Charge3\\_SLandry.pdf](http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/commit/c530/meetings/082304/downloads/Charge3_SLandry.pdf)>.
- <sup>31</sup> State Center for Early Childhood Development at 37-39.
- <sup>32</sup> Landry at 18.
- <sup>33</sup> Section 29.153, Texas Education Code.
- <sup>34</sup> Texas. Education Agency. Pre-K enrollment. PEIMS data.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Ingersoll, Richard M. *Is there really a teacher shortage?* Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy: University of Washington: 2003: 9. 27 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.gse.upenn.edu/inpress/Is%20There%20Really%20a%20Teacher%20Shortage.pdf>>.
- <sup>37</sup> Herbert, K. S. and M.C. Ramsay. State Board for Educator Certification. Teacher Turnover and Shortages of Qualified Teachers in Texas Public School Districts 2001-2004. August 2004: 5. 1 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/reprtdatarsch/ReportforSenateEducationCommittee.pdf>>.
- <sup>38</sup> Lankford, Hamilton, Susanna Loeb, & James Wycoff. "Teacher sorting and the plight of urban schools: A descriptive analysis." Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24(1), 2002: 37-62. 27 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.teacherpolicyresearch.org/webpage%20Teacher%20Sorting%20EEPA.pdf>>.
- <sup>39</sup> Herbert at 7-8.
- <sup>40</sup> Kirby, S.N., Naftel, S., & Berends, M. *Staffing at-risk school districts in Texas: Problems and prospects*. Santa Monica, CA, 1999: 57. 31 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1083/>>.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Corker, Bob. Texas Joint Select Committee on Public School Finance Public Hearing. 6 Nov. 2003.
- <sup>43</sup> Southeast Center for Teaching Quality. Recruiting teachers for hard-to-staff schools: Solutions for the Southeast & the nation. Chapel Hill, NC, 2002: 11 Oct. 2004 <[http://www.teachingquality.org/resources/pdfs/hard\\_to\\_staff\\_schools\\_regional\\_brief.pdf](http://www.teachingquality.org/resources/pdfs/hard_to_staff_schools_regional_brief.pdf)>.
- <sup>44</sup> Cornett, L.M., & Gaines, G.F. Quality teachers: Can incentive policies make a difference?. Southern Regional Education Board. Atlanta, 2002: 10. 31 Oct. 2004 <[http://www.sreb.org/main/highered/leadership/quality\\_teachers.pdf](http://www.sreb.org/main/highered/leadership/quality_teachers.pdf)>.
- <sup>45</sup> Gaines, G.F. Teacher salaries and state priorities for education quality – A vital link. Southern Regional Education Board. Atlanta: 2000: 17. 31 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.sreb.org/main/benchmarks2000/teachersalaries.asp>>.
- <sup>46</sup> Gray, Sharon. Texas Senate Education Committee Public Hearing. 23 Aug. 2004. 26 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/ram/archive/2004/aug/082304EC.ram>>.
- <sup>47</sup> Jolly, Deborah. Texas Senate Education Committee Public Hearing. 23 Aug. 2004. 26 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/ram/archive/2004/aug/082304EC.ram>>.
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- <sup>49</sup> Texas. Education Agency. PEIMS data.
- <sup>50</sup> Murdock, Steve H. The Texas Challenge in the Twenty-First Century: Implications of Population Change for the Future of Texas. December 2002: 7-9. 12 Oct. 2004  
<<http://txsdc.tamu.edu/download/pdf/TxChall2002.pdf>>.
- <sup>51</sup> Section 228.30(a), Texas Administrative Code.
- <sup>52</sup> See Appendix B.
- <sup>53</sup> Texas. Education Agency. PEIMS data.
- <sup>54</sup> Texas. State Board for Educator Certification. Teacher Retention. Texas Senate Committee on Education Public Hearing. 23 Aug. 2004: 3. 26 Oct. 2004  
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