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Statewide Savings Associated with Mandate Relief

The Texas School Alliance is an organization comprising 37 of the state's largest school districts. These districts contain 38 percent of the state's students, and 43 percent of the state's economically disadvantaged students.

We appreciate the consideration of legislation that helps reduce district cost and improve efficiency. In order to gain a better understanding of the statewide savings associated with the repeal of certain mandates, members of the Texas School Alliance submitted data regarding for their individual districts. We have combined this data with statewide PEIMS data to try to estimate statewide savings associated with certain provisions. When reviewing this data, it is important to keep in mind that savings levels will vary substantially across districts, depending on local financial contexts, local decision making, and state budget decisions.

- **The potential savings associated with moving to a district average of 22 students per teacher in grades k through 4 with a hard cap of 25 is estimated at \$425 million per year.** This assumes that districts with 5,000 or more students experience average per student savings for students in grades kindergarten through 4 that are in line with TSA districts. We did not assume any savings for districts with enrollments of less than 5,000 students, though some savings could potentially be found here as well.

- **Each percentage point reduction in salaries has the potential to save 6,500 jobs statewide.** This data is based on statewide 2009-10 staffing and budgeted salary data and assumes reductions in salaries for all staff applied to statewide average salaries for all educational employees paid through the general fund. Slightly over half of TSA respondents indicated that they are considering this option, if the legislature makes necessary statutory changes.

- **Each furlough day could save districts a total of \$105 million per day per year.** This is based on reducing contract days and payroll costs for all professional staff and does not include additional savings associated with eliminating building maintenance costs for days not worked. It also does not include savings associated with reducing costs for non-contract employees.



- **Eliminating the independent hearing officer process could save an estimated \$20,000,000 per 1,000 hearings.** Though it is difficult to estimate the number of hearings that may take place given budget uncertainties, variation in district responses to budget cuts, and variation in district contracting policies, the majority of districts indicated that hearings are associated with a substantial cost (\$20,000 per hearing, on average).