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TSA Testimony on Senate Bill 1383

The Texas School Alliance comprises 37 of the largest school districts in the state, representing 38 percent of the state's total student enrollment, 43 percent of Texas' economically disadvantaged students, and 59 percent of the state's LEP students. Senate Bill 1383 seeks to create a new, separate appraisal and professional development system for campus principals.

Specifically, the bill authorizes the commissioner to establish school leadership standards and a set of indicators of successful school leadership, and to develop aligned training, appraisal and professional development systems. TSA districts wish to point out that the state already has ample mechanisms for holding principals accountable for academic productivity. In addition, the state education agency is currently cutting staff, just as districts are; this hardly seems like the time to create yet another set of standards for state leadership to impose on schools and districts across the state that would require significant training to implement with reliability. If the state's priority is to protect the classroom, then it makes little sense to begin such a massive undertaking as this, at the same time that new assessment programs and student performance standards are being implemented, and new accountability systems are being developed. TSA believes that these other, more fundamental systems need time to take hold before it is either possible or appropriate to establish leadership standards, associated indicators, and aligned appraisal and development processes.