

## REMARKS TO THE TEXAS SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SCHOOL WEIGHTS, ALLOTMENTS & ADJUSTMENTS

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Thank you, Madame Chair and Mr. Chairman and Select Committee members for the invitation to appear today. My name is Lori Fey and I am privileged to serve as Director of Policy for the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. I am here today to share an update on the foundation's work in Texas, and specifically the groundbreaking work of the Texas Student Data System.

I want to emphasize three key points during my brief remarks today:

1. The foundation's commitment to improving academic outcomes for Texas public school students, particularly those living in urban poverty;
2. Our perspective on the importance of performance management to empower teachers and equip school and district leaders and policymakers to make informed decisions; and,
3. The significance of the Texas Student Data System vision as a groundbreaking, next generation data system platform to enable performance management and improved outcomes in all 1250+ districts statewide.

First, as you know, we are a global foundation headquartered in Austin, focused on transforming the lives of children living in urban poverty through better health and education. Since 1999, the foundation has committed more than \$650 million to global initiatives. More importantly for those of us today, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation has provided more than \$150 million for Texas public education initiatives, working in Texas school districts and charter management organizations that are impacting almost 1 million students in grades K-12. In addition, we are supporting 357 Dell Scholars (28% of the 1254 Scholars nationwide) as they pursue their higher education goals.

The foundation's focus and expertise in implementing performance management in urban school districts is well known. Many of you have heard testimony from several of our grantee organizations, including Jim Liebman, formerly with New York City's Department of Education, and a chief architect of their reform initiatives and supporting data system. One of our grantee superintendents offers a practical definition of performance management's purpose - in his words performance management means that 'what gets monitored, gets managed.' Our experience across 18 large, urban districts and 14 charter management organizations in 9 states tells us that there are three critical aspects of performance management - getting the right data into the hands of people who can take action, providing regular, dedicated time and support for intervening and monitoring results of their actions, and providing incentives and consequences for the use of data. All of this must be

done in a leadership environment that courageously admits where successes and failures lie, and that fosters a culture of collaborative problem-solving around what's working and what isn't working for children. We see very encouraging results - in Chicago, New York, Houston and Dallas. We fundamentally believe that this shift in the meaningful use of data sets the stage for profound improvements in public education effectiveness and outcomes for students. And we believe the power of performance management translates to the state level.

This is, in part, what has lead us to support and champion the Texas Student Data System vision as the next generation state longitudinal data system. Together with educators, national experts, education service centers and TEA, we are charting a new frontier for the use of education data in Texas. Last fall, the foundation announced a \$10 million commitment, specifically to support the performance management platform that will make insightful analysis and reports available for all Texas educators. And we will deliver on that commitment in a transparent and collaborative way. You can find all of the documents and updates on the project website - [www.texasstudentdatasystem.org](http://www.texasstudentdatasystem.org) - as well as a way to provide input and comments.

Over the last 3 months, we have hosted, in collaboration with the TEA, a series of 73 feedback sessions in 9 locations across the state. Over 2,000 educators volunteered their time to participate in these sessions to give us feedback on the proposed Texas Student Data System solution. Of those participants, approximately 90% told us that this information is tremendously useful in driving continuous student improvement. And had the following things to say about what they saw:

*"Love having all of this info in one place! Love the student profile!"*

*"With ability to drive down deeper this is an excellent approach"*

*"Very proactive for teacher prep"*

*"I am very excited about these changes. I personally think this is much needed information in all areas of schools and students education. As a PEIMS coordinator for 16 years it is sometimes frustrating to not always be in the loop on changes that affect our jobs and the total and final impact that can and will affect our students' education. Thanks for involving and recognizing the importance of the PEIMS department and allowing the input from PEIMS staff to be involved with these upcoming changes."*

We look forward to working together to make the Texas Student Data System a reality for all 390,000 educators and 4.7 million students in our great State.

Thank you again and I look forward to answering any questions.