

Senate Committee on Education
February 1, 2011

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Small, rural schools make up about half of the school districts in the state of Texas. There are several mandates that particularly apply to small, rural schools. I am sure several of these will be mentioned today in other testimony, so I respectfully submit this written testimony to support testimony from other education associations.

Flexibility in Compensatory Education Funding. Please consider allowing schools the flexibility to use Comp Ed money for salaries for those districts/campuses that have an Acceptable Rating. This will allow small schools to use the money to hire needed teachers, rather than sometimes duplicative programs.

Flexibility in Bilingual Education allotment.

Please consider allowing schools the flexibility to use Bilingual funds for salaries for those districts/campuses that have an Acceptable Rating.

Utility Discount.

Please consider allowing public schools the same utility discount (20%) that colleges receive. Small schools that are located in Electric Cooperatives need this same flexibility.

Certification Requirements.

Please consider allowing public schools some flexibility in certification requirements, such as Charter schools are allowed. Small schools spend a large percentage of salaries on some positions in which the teachers are "Highly Qualified" according to the Federal Requirements, but they cannot teach the subject because of Texas standards.

DAEP Certification Requirements

Please consider allowing public schools some flexibility with the certification requirements for having a certified teacher in every subject for every grade level to teach students in Disciplinary Alternative Education (DAEP) settings. This is too burdensome for small schools.

Eliminate Fitness-Gram Requirement.

Please consider eliminating the Fitness-Gram Requirement.

Non-Renewal Notice Requirements.

Please consider moving the non-renewal notice requirements from mid-march/April to the end of the school year.

Thank you for your service to children in Texas. If you have any questions, I am available to visit with you further about any of these issues.