

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 872

No one would speak against efficiency and productivity; we certainly don't here. However, we are very concerned that this center, created as per SB 872 and governed by three political appointees with no connection to public education, will not accurately reflect efficiency nor productivity, and therefore submit this testimony in opposition to the bill.

Section 9.003 (2) in the bill requires the center to "evaluate and rank the productivity and cost-effectiveness of each school district, campus, and open enrollment charter school and provide a progress report . . ."

While the evaluation and ranking methodology is not closely defined within the bill, we are concerned that such evaluation and ranking will not make publically known the funding levels under which districts operate. Without including the ranking of districts by state and local revenue per penny of tax rate per WADA, any other ranking defies any semblance of fairness or accuracy.

Money does matter, and just as importantly, so does the lack of money. After experiencing decades of an inequitable, unfair and inefficient system of public school funding, how can districts trust that a newly-formed state agency can devise a method of studying school districts that adequately and accurately reflects the true efficiencies occurring within our schools?

This type of study attempts to measure productivity when there is not an equitable standard of funding with which to be productive. Productivity between various entities cannot hope to be accurately measured unless there are fair and equitable standards that adequately account for historic variations in funding levels and local tax effort.

Until the state funds all districts at a level that allows them to provide similar educational opportunities relative to their students' needs, any analysis of public school district efficiency and productivity will be tarnished.