



Testimony of the Texas School Alliance On Senate Bill 518

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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. We appreciate the focus on middle-grades education and think that the creation of a High School Readiness Pilot program is a positive step. TSA has registered in opposition to Senate Bill No. 518 because of concern that 1.) the effort is duplicative of the personal graduation plan requirements now in effect, 2.) the sanctions potentially imposed by the commissioner related to the use of compensatory education dollars could withhold funds from districts and campuses most in need of resources, 3.) the terms of the bill will create burdensome additional reporting requirements by requiring districts to report spending by specific strategy within the compensatory education program, 4.) the bill creates the further stratification of dollars which may lead to reduced, rather than increased levels of efficiency, and 5.) it is tantamount to yet another accountability system that is unique to middle school grades..

Currently, our accounting system does not track expenditures by strategy within program, and creating a system to track expenditures in this way could be a complex enterprise given the variation in the ways that school districts use resources to respond to unique local circumstances. This is particularly true if the bill is intent on creating a reporting mechanism that tracks each educational intervention by student.

We appreciate the efforts to improve middle school education in Senate Bill 518 and hope that these aspects of the bill can be improved. We look forward to working with you on the bill.