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Senate Bill 8 Testimony

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.

The Texas School Alliance strongly supports to the provisions of Senate Bill 8. These provisions are necessary to allow school districts to effectively manage coming budget reductions and will enable school districts to operate more efficiently. We believe that the provisions in SB 8 will provide districts much needed flexibility to manage resources in the best possible way for each district, given unique local circumstances. We think that this focus on local decision-making is appropriate and will allow Texas educators to maintain focus on student outcomes. TSA feels that this is a step forward in Texas educational policy.

Specifically, we want to comment on the following provisions.

SB 8 provides districts much needed flexibility on salary requirements by repealing the requirement that districts must continue to pay staff their current salary levels. This will allow school districts to reduce budgets in response to the state fiscal crisis while minimizing the impact on students and minimizing potential staff layoffs. The provision also allows districts to use scarce resources more strategically to attract teachers to shortage areas and to retain high quality, effective teachers.

SB 8 moves the 45 day notice requirement to 10th day before the last day of school. This allows campus staff to maintain focus on instruction through the end of the school year and allows the district to more fully evaluate its financial condition before making employment decisions.



SB 8 allows for the possibility of up to 6 furlough days. This will be an important tool for some districts to use to effectively manage the coming budget reductions and will help to prevent significant staff layoffs and program reductions.

SB 8 preserves instructional time by repealing the requirement that students be pulled out of non-physical education classrooms to take the fitness gram.

We appreciate the trust in local school districts that this bill demonstrates and look forward to working with you as the bill moves through the process.