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Testimony on HB 500
March 15, 2011

- With the adoption of HB 3 in 2009 Texas for the first time embedded in law the concept of postsecondary readiness as the organizing principle of the public education accountability system.
- Along with the replacement of the TAKS in grades 3-8, HB 3 incorporated the concept of end of course (EOC) exams in high school, initially adopted in SB 1031, which called for the end of the TAKS exit exam, a big step forward because they could be used as final exams, total testing time could be reduced by the elimination of TAKS, and instruction could be devoted entirely to the curriculum rather than teaching to an unrelated test.
- All of this means that for the first time, after HB 3 is fully implemented, when a student walks across the stage and receives a Texas high school diploma it will mean that he or she is prepared for college and the 21st century workforce without the need for remediation.
- What this new organizing principle further means is that we have adopted a postsecondary ramp, with benchmarks for achievement at every grade level and vertically aligned assessments that tell us where every child is on that ramp leading to the postsecondary readiness standard as the exit.
- We have been on a journey leading to this standard and these expectations for our students and our educators for over a decade. With the adoption of HB 3 we are here.
- As a result, Achieve, Inc. gave Texas its only top rating in accountability criteria in terms of its inclusion of all four critical college and career readiness indicators.
- This should have been a “stop the presses” moment—a very big deal for Texas. Maybe we didn’t do a good enough job in educating the public on this breakthrough. If so, certainly my

organization bears part of the responsibility, because that's a big part of our mission.

- The message here should have been that we have moved past the old accountability and assessment regime to a new one. TAKS is out, the transition to HB 3, STAAR, and EOC are underway (never as fast as we would like, but underway).
- Now we have people who want to go back to the pre-HB 3 days, to delay implementation, to revisit the HB 3 debates on the expectations of our students and our educators, to fight the last war.
- And in the current budget environment, we expected that, but we didn't expect HB 500.
- This bill goes further than an implementation delay to accommodate the budget crisis; further than a request for full funding of curriculum; it undermines the organizing principle of HB 3.
- If reliability of funding for instructional and curriculum materials is the issue here, let's have that discussion, and you will find that we fully support the necessary funding for the implementation of HB 3 on schedule, including the EOC exams.
- You will also find that we aggressively support the maintenance of non-foundational grant funding that provides much-needed intervention to support remedial initiatives in the schools.
- But let's not fight the last war; let's not reopen the provisions of the legislation that has put Texas back at the top of expectations for our educators and our kids. Let's not undermine HB 3.