



Texas Institute for Education Reform

**TEXAS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION REFORM
2011 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES**

PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Defend gains from HB 3 in 2009 and prior accountability legislation. Oppose efforts to weaken accountability, dilute postsecondary readiness standards, and lower academic rigor for career and technical education (CTE) programs.
- Improve the current TEA growth measure with value-added measures to make it a more accurate measurement of student achievement gains over time. Ensure that ongoing improvement to the PEIMS data system support the use of value-added measures.
- Adopt “parent trigger” legislation that permits 51% of parents in a school that has not met federal AYP goals for several years to vote in new management—including charter school management.

EDUCATION FUNDING AND PRODUCTIVITY

- Continue significant funding for non-foundation school grant programs that directly drive HB 3 and other vital state goals such as District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE), the algebra readiness and critical professional development elements of the Student Success Initiative, Teach for America, Early Childhood School Readiness, the Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative, and critical elements of the High School Completion and Success Initiative—especially the emerging focus on middle school transformation.
- The state should, within an independent state agency and with cost savings identified in related areas, study cost effectiveness and productivity, rank school districts in terms of financial productivity and accountability, and create incentives within the state funding mechanism for greater efficiencies in spending.
- Reduce the number of state regulations (such as the state minimum salary schedule, class size ratios, etc.) on schools and empower school officials to be creative and make changes based on local needs and goals.
- Adopt legislation that expands access to the Texas Virtual Schools Network and removes barriers to private and charter digital learning.
- Support a legislative interim study on the state education governance system to determine if there is a more effective and efficient way to establish cohesive state education policy.

DATA SYSTEMS

- Ensure that the enhanced data systems being developed separately by the TEA and the THECB are compatible, provide free access for all school districts, and track individual annual student progress throughout K-20 in the following areas: attendance, courses completed, credit accumulation, disciplinary action, annual growth, remediation rates, and the degree to which students are on track toward on-time high school graduation at the PSR level. Additionally, the systems should include student-teacher linkages and information regarding the educator preparation programs and professional development

programs for all teachers. The TEA and THECB should enter into a written agreement covering compatibility, data sharing, data collection/entry, and data use by each agency, educators, researchers, campuses, districts, and institutions of higher education.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

- Support the passage of charter school legislation to raise the cap on the number of charters the state can issue, ease the application process for successful charter schools to open new schools, and encourage co-location of charter schools and traditional schools.
- Find better performance measures for both traditional and charter school “Dropout Reduction High Schools”.
- Create a fair, but more efficient, method of revoking the charters of low-performing charter schools and charter schools that are financially insolvent. Create a new entity to authorize and revoke charters.
- Extend the state’s bond guarantee through the Permanent School Fund to charter schools.
- Promote fair funding for successful charter schools to include local tax revenue, facilities funding, and maintenance and operation funding.

EDUCATOR QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

- Continue to work with the State Board for Educator Certification and the Texas Education Agency to ensure the proper implementation of the enhancements to the Accountability System for Educator Preparation in SB 174.
- Enhance local control by giving districts more autonomy in human resource management—including teacher compensation. Avoid statewide teacher compensation adjustments, which hamper local efforts to allocate resources based on effectiveness.
- Improve access to the teaching profession by expanding truly alternative routes to teacher preparation and certification.
- Improve school leadership by enabling the expansion of recruitment from non-traditional backgrounds.
- Adopt legislation or administrative rules to:
 - Include student academic growth in annual teacher and principal evaluations,
 - Streamline the process for removal of ineffective teachers by basing their non-probationary status on demonstrated and continued effectiveness,
 - End forced teacher placement in schools, and
 - Eliminate teacher retention, compensation, and assignment determined by seniority, advanced degrees, and other “inputs” and require that all staff reductions give priority to teacher effectiveness.

For more information on these issues, contact:

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