



Input on SB 2094

Regarding instructional materials, an elementary grant program, and accelerated instruction

May 6, 2021

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** appreciates this opportunity to provide neutral written testimony on the committee substitute to SB 2094 by Chairman Taylor.

ATPE applauds Chairman Taylor for decoupling student grade promotion requirements from state-mandated assessments and instead focusing efforts on remediating student performance on these assessments in SB 2094.

ATPE supports efforts to separate grade promotion from student performance on state standardized assessments. Tying a serious, high-stakes consequence such as moving to the next grade level to a student's performance on a standardized test is a flawed way of incentivizing improved student performance. The emphasis in SB 2094 on the accelerated learning committee as a remedial effort aligns with ATPE's position that testing should be used to direct resources to districts, campuses, and students who need assistance.

Notwithstanding this, ATPE would like to highlight the following concerns:

- SB 2094 requires that an accelerated instruction program allow parents to choose their child's teacher if there is more than one teacher available, but does not define "available." ATPE recommends more specific language to ensure that student-teacher ratios do not become unreasonable and limit the program's chances for success.
- The accelerated learning and sustainment outcomes bonus in SB 2094 could have a greater impact if focused only on educationally disadvantaged students.
- The Strong Foundations Grant Program and language granting the commissioner authority to purchase instructional materials further consolidate power in the hands of an appointed bureaucrat. The growing and unfettered power of the commissioner to create and influence educational programs using taxpayer dollars without voter input is a concern for ATPE.

These comments are limited to the committee substitute for SB 2094 insofar as it aligns with HB 4545. ATPE thanks Chairman Taylor for abandoning language in SB 2094 as filed that would have transferred testing-related authorities from the elected State Board of Education (SBOE) to the appointed commissioner. Voters should have the ultimate say over matters relating to testing.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this input on SB 2094 and look forward to working with the committee on improving student outcomes. For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org.

The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school educators.