



Input on HB 2209

Relating to the Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership Program

August 12, 2024

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** offers the following input on HB 2209:

ATPE conducted a survey of our membership in late July 2024. Of the members who took part in the survey, 23% stated that their districts are currently participating in the R-PEP program. The feedback was very positive, with all of the 23% whose districts took part in the program expressing satisfaction with the opportunities offered to their students and how the program is run overall in their districts. 82% of respondents said they had no concerns about the program. More than 90% of respondents said the program had not added any increased burden on them as an educator or expanded their roles in any way.

One commenter expressed: “As a public school employee, I have the privilege to witness first hand the greatness the Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership provides for students in rural areas. Coming from Falfurrias, Texas, students here are limited to what they can do, through this partnership they are able to achieve post secondary success in an equitable way, just as those students who reside in Austin and Houston, Texas. I strongly urge the continuation of this deeply needed and fundamental partnership for my students here in Brooks County I.S.D.”

The concerns expressed by ATPE members about the program had mainly to do with long-term costs, time students are spending in transport from one location to another, and some wished that the program would expand to benefit larger districts. Suggestions from members included expanding the program to include clerical skills, nursing, and engineering. Members also suggested more information be shared with parents and the public concerning the program and what it offers to students.

Overall, this program seems to be benefiting our rural students and educators in these districts seem pleased with the results for their students.

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 90,000 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.