HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
INTERIM REPORT 2008

A REPORT TO THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
81ST TEXAS LEGISLATURE

ROB EISSLER
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE CLERK
JENNA WATTS

Committee On Public Education

January 12, 2009

Rob Eissler
Chairman
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

The Honorable Tom Craddick
Speaker, Texas House of Representatives
Members of the Texas House of Representatives
Texas State Capitol, Rm. 2W.13
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Speaker and Fellow Members:

The Committee on Public Education of the Eightieth Legislature hereby submits its interim report including recommendations for consideration by the Eighty-first Legislature.

Respectfully submitted,

_____
Rob Eissler, Chair

_____
Dan Branch, CBO

_____
Scott Hochberg

_____
Dora Olivo

_____
William "Bill" Zedler

_____
Harold Dutton

_____
Nathan Macias

_____
Diane Patrick

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The House Committee on Public Education would like to thank everyone who helped in preparing this report and the committee's interim hearings.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

INTERIM STUDY CHARGES AND SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Study best practices in instructional technology, including online course delivery, professional development, and supplementary instruction and course support. Examine the costs and benefits of these applications versus traditional delivery models.

    Subcommittee: Hochberg, Chair
    Delisi, Branch

2. Review the functions of the agencies and boards under the committee's jurisdiction. Evaluate the capacities of these agencies and boards versus their appropriate roles in supporting instruction in public schools.

3. Evaluate early childhood education programs in public schools and study the impact of different instructional and funding models on students' school-readiness and schools' operational efficiency.

    Subcommittee: Patrick, Chair
    Olivo, Macias

4. Research and evaluate state-supported policies and programs designed to attract, train, and support effective teachers and instructional leaders, including programs designed to recruit and retain teachers in hard-to-staff schools.

5. Monitor the implementation of legislation passed by the 79th and 80th Legislatures.

6. Study innovations in state educational data systems. Develop recommendations for a comprehensive state educational data system that will ensure the best available information for educators and policymakers, include unique student records that may be transferred easily among authorized institutions, minimize duplicative or onerous reporting requirements, and meet federal privacy requirements in a manner consistent with the practices of leading states. Recommend statutory changes as necessary to facilitate the implementation of the new data system and to eliminate unnecessary reporting requirements. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Higher Education)

    Subcommittee: Hochberg, Chair
    Dutton, Zedler

7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

INTERIM CHARGE 1

Study best practices in instructional technology, including online course delivery, professional development, and supplementary instruction and course support. Examine the costs and benefits of these applications versus traditional delivery models.

21st CENTURY EXPECTATIONS

Students growing up in the 21st century have a life full of technology and have access to an abundance of information from a variety of media forms. To be successful in the 21st century workplace, students must learn how to be functional and effective in working with different forms of technology. Future employers will expect their employees to be proficient in information literacy, media literacy, and communications and technology literacy. Students should be able to efficiently and effectively access information and use it accurately. They should have a clear understanding of media messages and the way they are constructed, as well as how to interpret messages. Digital technology, communication tools, and networks should be easily accessible and understood in order for students to operate effectively in a knowledge economy. Students need to be capable of using technology as a resource to research, organize, evaluate, and communicate information. Incorporating technology into education is important for the future success of Texas' students.[1]

While most Texans would agree with these goals, there is little agreement about how to meet them. It seems there are as many different meanings for the term "educational technology" as there are for "education reform." Before making a major policy decision at the state level, such as "provide a laptop for every student" or "deliver every textbook electronically", it's important to know specifically what question a particular policy initiative is designed to answer, and then to measure the results of that initiative as it is implemented.

For example, one desired outcome of technology is to improve the teaching process. Some districts that have adopted laptop immersion have found that with proper training, teachers can use the laptops to get immediate feedback on which students understand what the teacher is teaching and those that do not, and can immediately slow down, speed up, or provide individual attention. But other districts report similar results using advanced white boards with student polling devices, which cost far less, do not require expensive software or software upgrades, and are arguably easier for teachers to learn to use effectively.

So if the question is simply "how do we use technology to improve teaching?", laptops may not be the most cost-effective answer. But if the desired outcome is that students are better equipped to learn on their own and are more successful with homework assignments, the white boards are of no help. Yet, as discussed below, putting a laptop on every desk may not be the best answer either.

Additional technology-related goals include providing better ways to track and resolve students' educational deficiencies, and lowering the cost of providing educational materials. These very important questions are discussed in other interim charges, so will not be addressed here. But any overall plan for technology should consider those questions as well if we are to get the best results for taxpayer dollars.

LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR TECHNOLOGY, 2006-2020

The Texas Education Code, Section 32.001 requires the State Board of Education to develop and adopt a long-range plan for technology to guide the use of technology in Texas public education.

The fundamental goal of the Long-Range Plan for Technology is to enhance students' acquisition of knowledge through technology. Key to this goal is the belief that technology plays an important role in addressing economic and other disparities among students and is an important tool for meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

Ongoing programs have been implemented at the state, regional, and local level to meet goals in four different areas:

> *Teaching and Learning:* The students in the public education system will demonstrate technology proficiencies identified by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and will have access to the technology tools, products, and information that support their acquisition of a quality education.

> *Educator Preparation:* The teachers, librarians, counselors, and other educators in the public education system will demonstrate technology proficiencies identified by the State and will have access to the technology tools, products, and information that facilitate their work and support student learning.

> *Administration and Support Services:* The administrators in the public education system will demonstrate technology proficiencies identified by the State. Students, educators, administrators, parents, legislators, and community members will have access to the technology tools, products, and information they need to make decisions, to educate, to plan, and to learn.

> *Infrastructure for Technology:* Technology tools, products, and information appropriate for Texas schools will be accessible to the students, teachers, librarians, counselors, and administrators in the public school system via a comprehensive, integrated state technology system for voice, video, and data that is complemented by a human infrastructure of trained individuals who use and support technology.

Several Educational Technology Pilot programs were conducted to explore the ways technology can be used to provide increased learning opportunities for Texas students.[2]

While the plan sets out broad goals and recommendations, it provides little specific guidance on which approaches work, and how districts can get the most for taxpayer money without making a lot of mistakes first. The state could improve the success of technology implementation by actively testing to see what works and what does not.

A copy of the long-range plan for technology can be found at:
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/technology/lrpt/LRPTCompleteDec06.pdf.

TECHNOLOGY IMMERSION PILOT

The Technology Immersion Pilot was authorized by the 78th Legislature in Senate Bill 396. The Legislature was interested in determining whether students immersed in technology achieve better academic outcomes than students with limited access to technology.

The Technology Immersion Pilot (TIP) involves the provision of educational hardware, software, electronic curriculum, electronic assessment, professional development and technical support resources to campuses in 23 school districts around Texas. TIP has been implemented in middle schools, secondary schools, vertical teams, and even whole districts. The primary goal is to increase the academic progress of students by immersing campuses in technologies that are directly linked to the enterprise of teaching and learning. Teachers are still responsible for facilitating learning, but technology allows learning to continue outside the classroom.

There are six core components involved in the immersion process, each of which are critical to effectively linking technology, teaching and learning. Each immersion package contains these key resources:

1. A wireless mobile computing device for every student and teacher
2. Productivity software
3. Online content in the core curriculum areas
4. Online formative assessment tools
5. Ongoing professional development
6. On demand technical support

The costs to provide this package are significant. Initial costs are approximately $1400 per student, with additional yearly costs of approximately $150 per student. Some districts chose a leasing option which averaged $350-$400 per student per year and upgraded equipment after four years. Assuming a 4-year lifetime for the initial equipment, the average cost per student per year is $350-$500. A large-scale implementation would prove significant economies of scale, potentially averaging $300-$400 per student per year or less. Equipping all Texas students, middle school and up, with such a package, would cost $910 million per year, or a 3.5% increase in spending for public education.

The Texas Education Agency is providing federal funding from Title II, Part D (NCLB) to participating schools to offset the cost of implementing a technology immersion package on their campus. There are four different campus configurations under which schools participate in TIP: as a whole district, as a vertical team of campuses (one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school within a feeder pattern), as a secondary campus (any combination of grades 6-12), or as a middle school campus (grades 6-8).

The overall desired outcome of a "technology immersed" campus is to create one that uses technology as a bridge to better student learning. Technology should be incorporated into teaching through professional development, and it should also lead to greater student interest, inquiry, collaboration, and content production. Technology allows learning to be available anytime, anywhere through a variety of delivery systems.[3]

Within the TIP project there are a variety of objectives. Each student in a participating school should be provided with a wireless mobile computing device. Software, online resources, and other learning technologies will be implemented to improve student achievement. Access to this technology will help to improve student performance on assessment instruments, reduce student dropout rates, and increase student attendance rates. Teacher performance should be enhanced as well, leading to higher teacher retention rates. Communication among students, teachers, parents, and administrators will be increased, and parental involvement will grow. The student's proficiency in technology will also help prepare the student to become a member of the workforce.[4]

EVALUATION OF THE TEXAS TECHNOLOGY IMMERSION PILOT (ETXTIP)

A four-year research study, partially funded by a federal Evaluating State Educational Technology Programs grant, is investigating Technology Immersion. The Texas Center for Educational Research is the TEA's partner in this study that began in the 2004-05 school year and will continue through 2007-08. Results so far have indicated that the Technology Immersion project, as implemented in Texas schools, positively correlates to improvement in the learning environment (such as attitude of students, satisfaction of parents, etc.) and in technology proficiency but has not produced significant gains in TAKS scores, except in limited areas.

The study found positive results with regard to teachers' growth rate for technology proficiency, professional productivity, and ideology (technology integration and learner-centered instruction). There was a higher frequency of students' classroom activities with technology, and greater collaboration with peers on technology-related issues. Students also receive slightly more intellectually demanding schoolwork.

Students participating in the study had overall improved technology proficiency and a higher frequency of classroom activities with technology. The proficiency gap in technology skills between economically advantaged and disadvantaged students lessened during the TIP program. Students experienced a higher frequency of interactions with peers in small-group activities, and there were proportionally fewer disciplinary actions needed.

However, despite these apparent benefits, Technology Immersion in general has shown little positive effect on TAKS scores. TAKS gains were found only for mathematics achievement at early grades, particularly for economically advantaged and higher achieving students. The effects of technology immersion on TAKS reading and mathematics achievement generally became stronger over time.

An important finding is that students showed academic gains when they were taught how to use the laptop on their own for research, collaborate with other students, and communicate with teachers after school. Students who already had computers at home were able to apply those skills, as were students who were allowed to take the laptop home. Assuming this finding is corroborated by additional research, this suggests that instead of a goal of putting a laptop on every school desk, the appropriate policy goals may be:

1. Provide enough computers in school so that all students learn computer skills, appropriate for their grade level, that include computer research skills and communication skills.

When appropriate, students should learn how to find online tutoring resources to complete homework assignments.

2. Assure that all students have access to a computer at home, either by using a computer that is already in the home or through computer loan programs through their school. The TIP program has demonstrated that concerns about maintenance and theft can be solved though methods such as low-cost computer insurance policies.

3. Assure that all students have access to the Internet at home, at least to connect to their teachers and curriculum-related web sites. How to deliver this connectivity for all students, especially those with no home telephone line is a challenge, but the growth of community Wi-Fi and the opportunity to negotiate statewide contracts for student accounts may make this goal much easier to achieve.

Adopting these goals may be far more cost-effective and produce similar or greater gains than putting a laptop on every school desk.

These goals, by themselves, do little to improve the efficacy of teachers in the classroom. There is some evidence that laptops can improve teacher effectiveness, but such improvements clearly require significant training. Even after several years, the Technology Immersion pilot is struggling to achieve the necessary level of teacher training at most pilot sites. Successful outcomes depend on how the technology is used by students and teachers' proficiency in the use of technology and their ability to link it to student learning opportunities. Teachers must learn new skills to effectively use technology in order to improve student achievement. These new skills cannot be acquired through one-day workshops[5].

Supporters of immersion continue to argue that it will work only if the proper training can be delivered, but there is no model proposed for delivering such widespread training for enough teachers in Texas to be able to deliver the benefits of immersion at scale.

Perhaps it is neither the teachers nor the training that are hindering successful implementation. Rather, it may be the nature of laptops themselves as devices that are "all-things-to-all-people" that make the training task so challenging, whereas devices designed specifically to enhance teaching, such as advanced white boards, may have a much lower time/cost-to-success.

Even if it turns out to be desirable to have a computer-like device on each desk, it may not be most cost-effective to have that device be an actual computer. Improvements in the power of desktop computers have made it possible to drive multiple workstations from a single laptop. Each workstation consists simply of a keyboard, mouse, and monitor. One device designed for the education market allows up to seven such workstations to be operated from a single desktop computer. It is possible that such advances could significantly reduce the per-student cost of immersion.

What is next for TIP?

The TIP program has provided valuable information about the positive and negative aspects and "all-in" costs of laptop immersion. The state should use this information and build on it, by

testing immersion against other technological systems, such as advanced white boards, and should test whether the benefits sought from immersion can be achieved more readily from modified approaches, such as combining technology training in school with availability of Internet-equipped computers for all students at home.

ONLINE CURRICULUM RESOURCES

There are many online course supports that assist students and teachers in the learning process. The committee heard testimony from Agile Mind sharing how they use online resources to support and enhance students' algebra experiences.   The online resources in the Academic Youth Development Initiative include:

- flexible instructional support resources and tools for helping student learn difficult content;
- interactive animations, simulations, and visualizations that deepen students' understanding of key concepts;
- explorations and investigations that challenge students and show them the power of the mathematics they are learning; and
- embedded formative assessments that help teachers manage instructional improvement.

Online resources can also support teachers. Agile Mind provides an online tool that supports and models successful teaching practices. [6]

Agile Mind is not the only provider of online curriculum support for students, teachers and schools. Online curriculum support can be utilized to provide experiences outside the traditional classroom setting and to differentiate instruction for students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature should consider the following recommendations:

1. Extend and expand the Technology Immersion Pilot to compare the effectiveness of immersion versus other technological systems to determine whether the benefits sought from immersion can be achieved with modified approaches.

2. Explore the options for establishing a computer loan program for students who do not have access to a computer at home.

3. Explore options to provide Internet access at home or connectivity between home and school for all Texas students who currently do not have access.

INTERIM CHARGE 2

Review the functions of the agencies and boards under the committee's jurisdiction. Evaluate the capacities of these agencies and boards versus their appropriate roles in supporting instruction in public schools.

INTERIM CHARGE 7

Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

The Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 7 outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Texas Education Agency and State Board of Education. Chapter 8 of the Texas Education Code establishes the Regional Education Service Centers. In Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code the duties and responsibilities of the State Board for Educator Certification are outlined.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

The Texas Education Code establishes the Texas Education Agency (agency) as the Commissioner of Education and the agency staff. The agency is charged with carrying out the educational functions specifically delegated to the agency by statute. TEC, Chapter 7 further specifies that functions not granted to the agency are the responsibility of local independent school districts.

TEC 7.021 establishes the powers and duties of the Texas Education Agency. Among the duties specified in statute the agency shall administer and monitor compliance with education programs required by law, conduct research, analysis, and reporting to improve teaching and learning, carryout the duties related to adult and community education, develop a program of instruction in driver education and traffic safety, and review school district fiscal reports.[7]

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

The TEC, Chapter 7 grants the governor, with advice and consent of the senate, the power to appoint the commissioner of education. The commissioner serves a term of office of four years commensurate with the term of the governor. The governor with the advice and consent of the senate may remove the commissioner from office. The only requirement for a person to serve as commissioner of education is that they be a citizen of the United States.

TEC 7.055 establishes the powers and duties of the commissioner of education as the educational leader of the state, executive officer of the agency and as executive secretary of the State Board of Education.[8]

Perspectives of the Commissioner of Education
Commissioner Robert Scott shared with the committee during a public hearing on May 28, 2008 his perspectives on recent legislative reforms and the role of the Texas Education Agency.

Mr. Scott informed the committee that the agency, along with the vertical teams, has been working on the college-readiness standards. As of May 2008, the commissioner had only adopted the ELAR college-readiness standards. The commissioner is undertaking an external review and validation of the other subject areas before adopting the college-readiness standards for science, math and social studies. The commissioner is looking forward to including the college-readiness standards to upcoming reviews to the Career and Technical Education curriculum (Update: The commissioner adopted the college-readiness standards for ELAR in the spring and Math in July; the commissioner has not adopted the CRS for Science or Social Studies).

The commissioner also shared with the committee the implementation of the accreditation process established in House Bill 1 (79th Legislature, 3rd Called Session). He informed the

committee that the vast majority of school districts will be accredited with less than a dozen anticipated to be accredited-warned or accredited-probation. However, a few campuses statewide could be closed as a result of multiple-year low academic performance (Update: Two high schools, Sam Houston HS and Johnston HS, were closed; one middle school, Wiley MS, was closed by board of trustee vote, but closure is being contested in court).

The commissioner shared with the committee his pleasure with the response of school districts and teachers to incentive programs.

Looking forward to the next legislative session, the commissioner believes that the Legislature needs to begin discussing revisions to the school finance system, in response to concerns that school districts are raising to him.[9]

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The State Board of Education (board) is established in TEC 7.101 as an elected board of fifteen members. Board members are elected during the biennial general elections. A person is ineligible to run for the board if the person holds political office. Candidates for the board must be a bona fide resident of the districts with one year's continuous residence in the district before the election, be a qualified voter of the district, and must be at least 26 years of age. A registered lobbyist may not serve on the board.

Board members are not entitled to receive compensation for their service on the board but are entitled to reimbursement of their expenses.

The board is required to hold four meetings a year in Austin.

The board chair is appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate for two years. A chair who serves two consecutive terms is ineligible to be chair until four years after the end of their second term. The board shall organize, adopt rules of procedure, and elect, by separate votes, a vice chair and secretary.

The board is limited to only the duties relating to school districts or regional education assigned to the board by the constitution or by statute. The constitution grants the board management authority over the permanent school fund.

The primary statutory duties of the board include, but are not limited to:
- establishing curriculum and graduation requirements,
- setting the performance standard of student assessment instruments,
- granting open-enrollment charters,
- adopting and purchasing textbooks, and
- adopting rules to administer the bond guarantee program.[10]

Perspectives of State Board of Education Members
Dr. McLeroy provided the committee an overview of the role and functions of the State Board of Education during a public hearing on July 16, 2008. According to Dr. McLeroy, the SBOE has a positive impact on state education policy. Dr. McLeroy's also asserted that an elected board is

able to make difficult decisions and choices to the benefit of students that the state agency would be unable to make.

Dr. McLeroy's testimony focused primarily on the recent adoption of the English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) curriculum. The messy process included major debates over differing educational philosophies and educational approaches. The final standards were adopted by a 9 to 6 vote.[11]

Several members of the SBOE disagreed with Dr. McLeroy. Mr. Bob Craig, Ms. Pat Hardy and Ms. Mavis Knight expressed their frustration and disappointment with the process. Mr. Craig, Ms. Hardy and Ms. Knight believe that the majority of the board ignored the teacher expert input resulting in the board adopting inadequate ELAR standards. [12]

Mr. Ken Mercer expressed his support for the final document and felt that the process was democratic and played out to the benefit of the students of Texas.[13]

Following the testimony of the SBOE members, many teachers and citizens testified (deleted, because the sentence already says, "following the testimony of...") about their frustration with lack of transparency regarding the adoption process for the ELAR curriculum. Witnesses further testified that their testimony was ignored by the board, resulting in a curriculum that will not prepare students for postsecondary pursuits.[14]

STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is 14-member board. The commissioner of education and the commissioner of higher education each appoint a non-voting member to represent the commissioner on the board. The governor also appoints a non-voting member who is a dean of a college of education. The remaining 11 members are all appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate. The members include four members who must be teachers employed in public schools, two members who must be school administrators, one public school counselor, and four citizens of Texas who are not employed by a school district or educator preparation program in an institution of higher education.

The board elects a presiding officer to a two-year term and may elect other officers at its discretion.

Board members are not entitled to receive compensation for their service on the board, but are entitled to reimbursement of their expenses.

SBEC is required to meet at least once each quarter and may meet other times at the call of the presiding officer.

The Texas Education Agency provides administrative support to SBEC.

The statutory duties of the board include, but are not limited to:
   • supervise the executive director's performance,

- approve an operating budget for the board,
- appoint advisory committees to recommend standards for each class of educator certificates,
- adopt rules to provide for the regulation of educators including specific classes of certificates,
- establish training requirements for educator candidates,
- establish an accountability system for educator preparation programs,
- provide for disciplinary proceedings,
- adopt and enforce the educator's code of ethics, and
- provide for continuing education requirements.

The State Board for Educator Certification is required to submit to the State Board of Education a written copy of each rule it proposes to adopt for review. With a two-thirds vote, the SBOE may reject a rule but may not amend the proposed rule.[15]

REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

The Texas Education Code, Chapter 8 provides for the establishment and operation of 20 regional education service centers (ESC). The centers are located throughout the state so that each school district has the opportunity to participate in the services offered by the ESC.

A seven-member board of directors governs each center. The ESC board of directors employs an executive director.

ESCs are charged with assisting school districts in improving student performance, enabling school districts to operate more efficiently and economically, and implementing initiatives.[16]

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature should consider the following recommendations:

1. Monitor the Texas Education Agency's implementation of legislation to ensure fidelity with legislative intent.

2. Require the Texas Education Agency to implement the objectives of the Office of the Inspector General report regarding the agency's procurement procedures.

3. Require the State Board of Education to adopt by board rule a process of curriculum revision and adoption that includes the input of educators and citizens.

INTERIM CHARGE 3

Evaluate early childhood programs in public schools and study the impact of different instructional and funding models on students' school-readiness and schools' operational efficiency.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The 68th Texas Legislature recognized the importance of early childhood education for certain high-risk kindergarten students. In 1984, the Legislature mandated prekindergarten education for high-risk four-year-olds in Texas public schools in House Bill 72. The law for prekindergarten education, enacted in May 1985, became effective with the 1985-86 school year. The Texas Education Code requires school districts to offer prekindergarten classes if the district identifies 15 or more eligible children who are at least four years of age. A school district may offer prekindergarten classes if the district identifies 15 or more eligible children who are at least three years of age. A district may not charge tuition for a prekindergarten class offered under this section.

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

Prekindergarten (PK) is a grade level for children ages three and four. This includes students in a state-funded PK program or a locally-funded PK program. Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) is a program that provides special education services for children with disabilities ages three through five. These students may have any disability recognized under IDEA-B in Texas including mental retardation, emotional disturbance, learning disability, or autism.

Early Education (EE) is a grade level for students between the ages of zero and five who have not been placed in prekindergarten or kindergarten. This includes students receiving special education services who do not meet the two hours of instruction per day required for membership and students in the Head Start program which does not meet the requirements for state funds. This also includes students served by PPCD teachers in a licensed child care facility working in a collaborative partnership with a school district.[17]

A district's prekindergarten program shall be designed to develop skills necessary for success in the regular public school curriculum, including language, mathematics, and social skills.

In FY08, half-day Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funds average $3,650 per student. Eligible students must be: 1. at least three years of age and 2. are either limited English proficient, educationally disadvantaged, homeless, military dependents, and/or foster children. Requirements include a minimum of 3 hours of instructional time, a certified teacher employed by LEA, and state adopted instructional materials and curriculum.[18]

EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES

Prekindergarten Expansion Grant
The purpose of the expansion grant is to expand prekindergarten programs by increasing existing half-day prekindergarten programs to full-day.

The Prekindergarten Expansion Grant program is designed to allow school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to apply to the Texas Education Agency for grants to: (1) continue funding existing full day prekindergarten programs, and (2) establish new prekindergarten programs at campuses which previously did not operate such a program, if additional funding is

appropriated.

The agency has determined that the eligibility criteria and requirements for the Texas Prekindergarten Expansion Grant will remain unchanged for the 2008-2009 school year. Districts currently receiving funds under this program will again be eligible for continuation grants for the 2008-2009 school year, provided they have and continue to meet all grant requirements, including submission of either a School Readiness Integration (SRI) Plan or an Exemption Request for SRI. The funding formula for the grant program will remain the same as well, and Cycle 14 of the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant will proceed as usual with the application being available in late spring/early summer 2008.[19]

Early Childhood School Readiness Program
The 79th Texas legislature changed the name of Texas Head Start--Ready to Read Program to the Early Childhood School Readiness Program. The Early Childhood School Readiness Program, with $7,500,000 appropriated by the 80th Texas Legislature (HB 1, General Appropriations Act, Rider 43) for fiscal year 2008 and $7,500,000 in fiscal year 2009, provides an educational component to public prekindergarten, Head Start, university early childhood programs, or private nonprofit early childcare programs that have entered into an integrated program with a public school. These funds are distributed on a competitive grant basis to preschool programs serving at least 75 percent low-income students to provide scientific, research-based, pre-reading instruction, with the goal of directly improving the pre-reading skills of three- and four-year-old children and identifying cost-effective models for pre-reading interventions.[20]

Prekindergarten Early Start Grant Program
The bulk of the Prekindergarten Early Start Grant Program funds is allocated to the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program which is designed to allow school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to apply to TEA for grants to: (1) continue funding existing full-day prekindergarten programs, and (2) establish new prekindergarten programs at campuses that previously did not operate such programs. There are currently 289 grantees for 2007-2008.

Texas Early Education Model (TEEM)
TEEM represents an early education model project that encourages shared resources among three groups of government-funded public and private child-care programs that serve poor and at-risk children.

The model is designed to improve resource coordination efforts by streamlining public prekindergarten, Head Start, and child care resources, increase program access by limiting program waiting lists, and incorporate children's social and emotional development with its focus on school readiness. Findings from the intervention programs that delivered research-based curriculum, professional development with mentoring, and progress monitoring for children to half of the TEEM classrooms showed substantial and often significant growth for the children in a two- to three-month period in many areas of early literacy and language. Certified teachers, space, and professional development were shared to cost-effectively serve more children. It is

projected for 2008-2009 that more than 45,000 students will be served in TEEM classrooms.

TEEM provides integration of services through high quality teacher training, classroom mentoring, technology-driven hand-held progress monitoring capabilities, and sharing of training and classroom space in a community. For the 2008-2009 biennium, the 80th Texas Legislature continued to fund TEEM through the Early Childhood School Readiness Program, and charged the State Center for Early Childhood Development with overseeing the program using TEEM as the model.[21]

School Readiness Integration (SRI)
The key principles of the school readiness integration model are to prepare all children to enter kindergarten on or above grade level, to keep them on grade level, and to implement a school readiness integration model that is community-based and individualized to meet each community's needs. The benefits of a community-designed model are to share certified or highly qualified teachers, space, and to expand program capacity; join professional development; and develop similar approaches for progress monitoring.

The goal of implementing an SRI plan is to establish a cohesive service model that will dramatically improve early literacy, language, math and social development for preschool eligible children. A high quality early childhood education program that coordinates prekindergarten resources between public school districts, Head Start programs, and child care providers (including centers positioned on military installations) will assist preschool children in achieving school readiness and having a successful transition into kindergarten.[22]

School Readiness Certification System (SRCS)
Texas School Ready!™
Senate Bill 23 (79th Legislature) called for the development of a web-based School Readiness Certification System which has been piloted with all TEEM sites and with approximately 250 for-profit child care programs. The Texas School Ready!™ program is administered by the Texas State Center for Early Childhood Development and certifies preschool education classrooms that have effectively prepared their students for kindergarten. The program is based on the actual linking between the quality instructional practices that must be in place in a preschool program to get children ready for kindergarten, and the children actually achieving scores showing they were on track in the areas of reading and social skills when they went to kindergarten. Programs are certified based on the quality of various components including teaching practices, professional development, community integration, instruction per student, and the kindergarten classroom performances of children exiting the program.

The State Center has a database that provides parents, school administrators, the public, statewide stakeholders, and policy makers with information regarding the quality of early childhood education programs in their communities and state. Such information can be used both by parents in selecting the programs to place their children in and by stakeholders to improve the quality of early childhood education and direct resources in an informed manner.[23] As a result of SB 1871 (80th Legislature), school districts and open-enrollment charter schools are required to submit TPRI/Tejas LEE to the State Center to allow them to match student

records and to determine the school readiness status of students entering kindergarten. For early childhood education programs that do not meet certification requirements on their first application submission, detailed data can inform needs and spur plans for technical assistance and program improvement.

There are 487 Texas School Ready!™ certified classrooms. The number of certified school ready programs is expected to increase each year. As the goal is that every child will attend a Texas School Ready!™ classroom, classrooms not meeting criteria will be able to go through a program assistance process.[24]

Texas Prekindergarten Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pilot Program
The purpose of this program is to implement multi-age programs serving 3-, 4-, and 5-year olds that assure that English language learning children receive appropriate activities to enter school prepared to succeed. The program provides many opportunities for the acquisition of English, while supporting the child's first language including social services, appropriate training and modeling, and research-based curricula and supplies to enhance the development of both languages. Instruction is conducted in both languages so that children can learn concepts in the language they understand while developing their English skills. Programs include bilingual education specialists and continued professional education to support the teachers.

Texas Higher Education and Early Childhood Education Partnership Program
The 80th Texas Legislature set up this new program to provide a competitive grant to institutions of higher education so they may offer professional development programs to child care providers. The Texas Workforce Commission provides TEA with $1,000,000 in each year of the biennium to fund this program.[25]

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature should consider the following recommendations:

1. Expand opportunities for non-TEEM sites to apply for School Readiness Certification, including public school districts, private child care providers, and Head Start programs.

2. Require the State Center for Early Childhood Development (SCECD) to provide technical assistance to sites that apply for School Readiness Certification, but do not meet the standards. The SCECD may charge a fee to the provider to cover the cost of the technical assistance and only provide the technical assistance at the request of the provider.

3. Explore options for increasing federal, state and local funding sources to increase enrollment, expand eligibility and partnerships, and improve the quality of early childhood education programs across the state.

INTERIM CHARGE 4

Research and evaluate state-supported policies and programs designed to attract, train, and support effective teachers and instructional leaders, including programs designed to recruit and retain teacher in hard-to-staff schools.

HARD-TO-STAFF

Dr. Edward J. Fuller and the Education Research Center published a report on Hard-to-Staff Positions and Schools in Texas. Through school district personnel and state data, the report concluded that shortages are present in the areas of special education, bilingual education/English as a Second language (ESL), and secondary foreign language, mathematics, and science positions. Close to 95% of school districts identified science and mathematics as shortage areas. Using certification of teachers as a way of identifying teacher shortage, the report indicated that 11.7% of bilingual education teachers, 7.7% of special education teachers, and 4.4% of ESL teachers at the elementary level are not certified. Six subject areas in middle school had greater than 10% of teachers not fully certified: foreign language, science, self-contained classes, bilingual education, mathematics, and special education. Many shortage issues were tied to school demographics, as schools serving over 75% economically disadvantaged students had about 2.3 times more teachers not fully certified than schools with less than 25% economically disadvantaged students.

Hard-to-staff schools, not easily defined, often display certain student characteristics, teacher turnover rates, levels of teacher quality, and student achievement. Student characteristics taken into account include percentage of economically disadvantaged students, percentage of bilingual/ESL students, percentage of special education students, and percentage of mobile students. High teacher turnover rates help identify schools with difficulty retaining staff, and low teacher quality demonstrates difficulty in hiring qualified teachers. Student achievement is often included in the definition in order to identify schools that perform at high levels despite possible weaknesses in other areas.

In order to identify hard-to-staff schools the research took into account TAKS passing rates, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students, and yearly teacher turnover rates of greater than 20%. The research concluded that 190 elementary schools (about 5%) were labeled hard-to-staff, as well as 77 middle schools (about 5%) and 74 high schools (about 6%). The level of teacher quality was significantly lower in these hard-to-staff schools compared to not hard-to-staff schools, most notably in the percentage of teachers not fully certified.[26]

STATE PROGRAMS

Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG)
Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG) creates a financial incentive system for classroom teachers who have demonstrated a positive impact on student academic achievement.

Campuses that meet the performance criteria below are eligible to apply for TEEG. Campuses rated Academically Unacceptable (AU) in 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007 are not eligible for grant funds.

> Rank within the top-half of campuses enrolling high percentages of educationally disadvantaged students and either:
> - Receive an Exemplary or Recognized accountability rating, or
> - Rank within the top-quartile of performance in comparable improvement in mathematics, reading, or both.

In FY07, $100 million was appropriated for TEEG. The program received $97.5 million annually for FY08 and FY09.

In order to participate in TEEG, campuses must create an incentive program plan to reward teachers. Seventy-five percent of the funds must rely on objective and quantifiable measures for two required criteria: impact on student achievement and collaboration and can include up to two optional criteria: teacher initiative, commitment, personalization, professionalism and campus involvement and teacher assignment to hard to staff or high turnover subject areas. Campuses may use the remaining twenty-five percent of the funds on additional incentives, mentoring and induction, professional development, and other promising practices aimed at improving teacher quality and raising student achievement.

In partnership with the Institute for Pubic School Initiatives (IPSI) at the University of Texas System and national experts on performance award programs, the Texas Education Agency provides specialized technical assistance for grantees.

The National Center for Performance Incentives (NCPI) at Peabody College at Vanderbilt University completed a quantitative study on the first of five planned cycles of TEEG. The report includes an overview of the TEEG program during its first year of implementation, a description of the participating schools and their incentive plans, and the early implementation experiences of the participating campuses.

The evaluation reported that 98% of schools used student performance on a variety of standardized assessments to evaluate teacher performance. Design features of campus incentive programs were similar across the state. The evaluation indicated that teachers believe that the measurements and/or assessments incorporated in their campus incentive plan can distinguish between effective and ineffective teachers at their campuses.[27]

District Award for Teacher Excellence
The District Award for Teacher Excellence (DATE) grant program provides financial support to districts in creating or continuing a system of awards for educators demonstrating success in improving student achievement.

Funding is intended to support the establishment of district award programs that accomplish the following:
 1. Award teachers for positively impacting student achievement;
 2. Create capacity and sustainability for improved instruction within the district;
 3. Align with overall district goals; and
 4. Demonstrate district commitment through matching funds (15% in-kind or cash).

DATE is a non-competitive grant available for the 2008-2009 school year to all school districts that complete the required notice of intent to apply, participate in technical assistance, comply with program timelines and activities, and submit a completed grant application. Funds will be based on the 2006-2007 average daily attendance (ADA) of the participating districts. There is $147.5 million available for the 2008-2009 school year with districts receiving $59 per ADA.

Three hundred fifty districts are currently participating in the program. Districts were provided technical assistance and an eight month planning period.

At least sixty percent of the grant funds will be used to reward teachers that positively impact student academic improvement, growth, and/or achievement. The remaining percent of funds may be used on other allowable activities including stipends and awards for recruitment and retention of teachers, career, mentor, and master teachers, on-going applied professional growth, increasing local data capabilities to support instruction and accountability, principals that increase student performance, other school staff and implementing elements of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP).

District-level planning committees will establish goals for their district award plans that are consistent with and motivated by their district improvement strategic plans. Once the district goals have been determined, district-level planning committees will create an awards plan that is either: 1) district-wide, 2) for select participating campuses including Targeted Campuses, or 3) to implement TAP.

If a district chooses to implement the program in a subset of campuses, then districts are required to target their highest-need campuses. DATE plans should award classroom teachers who are the most effective at improving student performance.[28]

Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program
The Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) grant program provides appropriate funding to school districts for mentor teacher stipends, additional meeting time for mentors and teachers, and mentor training. The program supports enhanced beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs by assigning qualified mentor teachers to classroom teachers with less than two years of experience. Districts can use funds for mentor teacher stipends, scheduling time (substitutes), and mentor training. Cycle 1 (2007-2009) provided $15 million to 50 districts which funded 2742 mentors serving over 3700 beginning teachers. Under Cycle 2 (2008-2010), $15 million was awarded to 35 districts. Cycle 2 funded 2729 mentors which served almost 3500 beginning teachers.[29]

According to a policy brief from the New Teacher Center (NTC) at University of California, Santa Cruz, high-quality induction programs increase teacher retention rates and improve instruction. NTC analysis indicates that, after five years, induction programs return $1.66 for every dollar invested.[30]

Research also demonstrates that the top school systems in the world recognize that good teachers are trained by good teachers. This requires one-on-one coaching in the classroom to help novice teachers improve their instruction.[31]

The agency is working on an evaluation of BTIM for legislative review.

Texas Principal Excellence Program
Texas Principal Excellence Program (TxPEP) is designed to improve the management of principals. Principals of campuses rated academically unacceptable are required to participate in the program. The program is provided through a partnership between the American Productivity and Quality Center and the University of Houston at Victoria School of Business Administration. Cycle 1 of the TxPEP ended in June 2008 with over 300 principals completing the program. Registration for Cycle 2 closed in September 2008 with over 300 principals participating.

An evaluation report is due to the legislature by January 1, 2009. The report will examine the impact of program participation on principal leadership abilities and behavior and school level factors (e.g., student achievement, graduation rates).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature should consider the following recommendations:

1. Structure the DATE program to encourage school districts to provide incentives to the most effective teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools.

2. Provide financial incentives to teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas to work in underperforming public schools for several years.

3. Research and investigate non-financial incentives to attract effective teachers to hard-to-staff campuses including but not limited to reduced class sizes, enhanced professional development opportunities, increased time to plan and collaborative with colleagues, planning time, visiting teachers, and enhanced security.

4. Expand access and support for induction programs for beginning teachers.

INTERIM CHARGE 5

Monitor the implementation of legislation passed by the 79th and 80th Legislatures.

During the 79th Legislature, 3rd Called Session the focus on education reform centered on school finance and postsecondary readiness. The 80th Legislature continued to work to improve instruction, to keep our students healthy and safe and to create a world-class education system for all of our students.

Below is a sample of the legislation and initiatives passed by the 79th and 80th Legislatures to improve student achievement for all Texas students.

79th LEGISLATIVE SESSION

House Bill 1 (3rd Called Session) was a significant piece of legislation designed to address school finance and postsecondary readiness.

House Bill 1 - School Finance
House Bill 1 has resulted in the reduction of local tax rates for school district maintenance and operations (M&O) by roughly one-third of the rates that were in place for the tax year 2005. The provisions of this bill provided additional state funds to make up for the loss of local M&O tax revenue created by the required tax rate compression, in part by increasing the formula yields in the school finance formulas and in part by using a hold harmless mechanism to make up for any losses not covered by the yield increases.

Generally, school districts are held harmless to the amount of revenue per student in weighted average daily attendance (WADA) as they had in 2005–06. School districts have the ability to raise enrichment revenue by levying tax rates in excess of the compressed tax rate. In 2006–07 and 2007–08, school districts could earn a yield equivalent to that of Austin ISD on the first four pennies of tax effort above their compressed tax rate (often referred to as "golden pennies"). Beginning in 2008–09, the golden penny yield is extended to include the first six cents of tax effort beyond the compressed tax rate. School districts have the local discretion to increase their tax rates by four cents above their effective tax rate (or $1.00, whichever is lesser) without seeking voter approval. Districts that wish to tax beyond this limit must seek approval from local voters. Pennies of tax effort that exceed the golden penny level of tax effort are also equalized, but at the lower yield of $31.95 per WADA. The maximum legal M&O tax rate is $1.17 per $100 of assessed valuation.

In 2007–08, 919 districts levied one or more of the golden pennies for enrichment. Of these districts, 121 levied a tax rate exceeding the golden penny level. In addition to funds for property tax relief, school districts also receive funds for the high school allotment, at the rate of $275 per student in grades 9-12, and for a teacher pay raise that was authorized in the bill. Funds for the pay raise amount to $2,500 per eligible employee.

House Bill 1 - Best Practice Clearinghouse
The bill directed the Texas Education Agency to establish an online clearinghouse of best practices for use by school districts. The Best Practices Clearinghouse (the Clearinghouse)

launched February 1, 2008. As of August 31, 2008, the Clearinghouse website had received 136,640 hits or an average of 642 hits per day. A total of 25 best practices from *exemplary* and *recognized* schools are included in the Clearinghouse: 19 in the area of instruction, five in business management, and one in school finance/resource allocation. The Clearinghouse also links to 1,436 best practices from the LBB's *A+ Ideas for Managing Schools* work. A redesign of the Clearinghouse website has recently been completed. Shortly after the redesign is implemented, another 17 best practices which have been completed will be added to the Clearinghouse. Best practices related to advanced placement strategies, response to intervention, and college readiness are included in this new group of summaries.

Plans include a more targeted recruitment of best practices in the areas of dropout prevention, bilingual/ESL education and school finance/resource allocation. An online user survey is also planned in order to gather feedback about the effectiveness of the program.

House Bill 1 - Education Research Centers
HB 1 created three centers for educational research. The Education Research Centers (ERC) Joint Advisory Board met for the first time on September 3, 2008. The major action taken by the board at its first meeting was the adoption of polices for the board and for the three ERCs. The board did not take action on any of the seven research projects presented for approval. The board requested that a special meeting of the board be held in October 2008 to consider procedures and criteria for approving proposals and consider only the seven research projects included in the September board materials. The ERC board approved four of the seven research projects.

House Bill 1 - School Leadership Pilot Program
HB 1 required the agency to develop and implement a school leadership pilot program for principals. The legislation required principals of campuses rated academically unacceptable to participate in the program. Cycle 1 of the School Leadership Pilot Program, funded as the Texas Principal Excellence Program (TxPEP) ended in June 2008 with over 300 principals completing the program. Registration for Cycle 2 closed in September 2008 with over 300 principals participating. More of the Cycle 2 principals have chosen to participate than those that are required by statute to participate. The agency has made adjustments to improve the program. Cycle 1 participants gave high feedback ratings for the web-based seminars, also known as webinars, and networking opportunities. The TEA has strengthened both components for Cycle 2, while also expanding the course offerings from 15 webinars to over 400 online offerings. Participants will develop an individualized learning plan based on the results of their 360 degree assessment. Participants will also spend less time away from campus while receiving more opportunities for practical application of their professional development.

House Bill 1 - Mentors
The bill required the commissioner to administer a teacher mentor program, including adopting rules to address the qualifications and duties of teacher mentors. The legislation also directed the commissioner to provide appropriate funding to school districts for mentor teacher stipends, additional meeting time for mentors and teachers, and mentor training. Funds were to be used to implement or enhance beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs by assigning

qualified mentor teachers to classroom teachers with less than two years of experience. Districts could use funds for mentor teacher stipends, scheduling time (substitutes), and mentor training. Cycle 1 (2007-2009) provided $15 million to 50 districts which funded 2742 mentors serving over 3700 beginning teachers. Under Cycle 2 (2008-2010), $15 million was awarded to 35 districts. Cycle 2 funded 2729 mentors which served almost 3500 beginning teachers.

House Bill 1 - Awards for Student Achievement Program
Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG)
HB 1 established a teacher incentive program for high poverty campuses with high levels of achievement and improvement. This program received $100 million in FY 2007 and $97.5 million in FY 2008 and 2009. The bill requires seventy-five percent of the funds to be used to provide teachers who have had the biggest impact on student achievement with financial awards. The remaining twenty-five percent of the funds may be used to reward other campus staff and leadership, teacher mentoring, and research-based professional development. The Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG) Cycle 3 began on October 1, 2008, and ends February 29, 2010. Approximately 1,000 campuses are participating in the program. The year one evaluation was released in February 2008, and another report is expected this fall.

House Bill 1 - Educator Excellence Award Program
District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE)
House Bill 1 established a teacher incentive program that provides funding to any district that wants to establish a local incentive program. Sixty percent of the funds from this program must be used by districts to create incentive plans to reward educators, principals, and other school staff. Forty percent of the funding from this program may be used for additional programs such as teacher stipends, principal awards, teacher mentoring and implementing components of the Teacher Advancement Program.

The District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) Cycle 1 project period began on September 1, 2008 and will end February 28, 2010. There are 213 participating districts. This program received $147.5 million in funding for FY 2009.

The agency provided guidance to districts for the planning year and will continue its partnership with the Technical Assistance Center to guide districts throughout the implementation year. The agency along with the Technical Assistance Center is planning a technical assistance session for each of the 20 Educational Service Centers. The agency plans to develop resources for districts and campuses for both program planning and implementation.

The agency released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for evaluation of the DATE program and has yet to select a vendor as of September 1, 2008. The agency is also tasked with providing an interim report to the legislature in December 2008 and will work with districts to complete the report.

House Bill 1 - Vertical Teams

The legislation required the commissioners of education and higher education to establish vertical teams composed of public school and higher education faculty to recommend college readiness standards and expectations; evaluate whether the TEKS serve to adequately prepare students for college level work; recommend strategies for aligning public school curricula with college readiness standards; and develop instructional strategies, minimum standards for curricula, professional development materials, and online support materials.

In 2007, Texas College Readiness Standards (CRS) were drafted by vertical teams comprised of higher education and public education faculty representing the four foundation areas of the public school curriculum: math, science, English language arts, and social studies. The standards, organized into four subject areas and a set of cross-disciplinary standards, were adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on January 24, 2008. The standards have been submitted to the commissioner of education for review and approval.

The standards are now subject to review and approval by the Commissioner of Education and incorporation into the curriculum by the State Board of Education. Work is underway to fulfill the final phases, Phase Two and Phase Three, of the college readiness requirements set forth under HB 1. Phase Two, which requires a gap analysis, is under way. The primary purpose of the gap analysis is to identify the gaps between the CRS and the TEKS. The first team to conduct a gap analysis was the reconstituted mathematics vertical team. The next two subject areas to be reviewed by the vertical teams are English language arts and science. It is yet to be determined as to when the final subject area, social studies, will be reviewed. Upon completion of Phase Two, the vertical teams, in Phase Three, will develop or establish minimum standards for curricula, professional development materials, and online support materials for students who need additional assistance.

80th LEGISLATIVE SESSION

House Bill 188

House Bill 188 repealed the moratorium on textbook proclamations, authorizes the State Board of Education (SBOE) to provide for midcycle textbook adoptions, and expands the textbook credit program statewide. A list of current proclamations can be found at www.tea.state.tx.us/textbooks/proclamations.

In spring 2008, the agency issued a Request of Information (RFI) to gauge publisher interest in midcycle review and adoption. Responses indicated many publishers would be interested in participating in midcycle, primarily in reading and math. Many others expressed concerns about the fee of up to $10,000 per program and indicated it was the primary reason they would not likely participate. Results of the RFI were shared with the SBOE and approval was given to begin planning for a midcycle review. Plans are underway to provide a draft midcycle proclamation for SBOE discussion in November 2008.

The agency has incorporated changes in the EMAT redesign to accommodate textbook credits. Proclamation 2010 is the first opportunity for cost to be a factor in district selection of

instructional materials. Once the agency receives the Notice of Intent to Bid from publishers this December, TEA will share more information with districts about how the textbook credit program works.

House Bill 426
House Bill 426 required school districts with disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEP) to employ only certified teachers and provide seven hours of instruction. HB 426 also required TEA to adopt specific minimum standards for the operation of a DAEP to ensure a quality education for students enrolled in such programs.

Proposed rule establishes minimum standards for the operation of DAEPs. As directed by statute, the proposed new rule includes provisions relating to student-to-teacher ratios; student health and safety; reporting of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of students; training for teachers in behavior management and safety procedures; and planning for a student's transition from a DAEP to a regular campus. The proposed effective date of this rule was October 5, 2008.

The TEA will submit a report to the legislature, in December 2008, regarding the cost of enforcing standards adopted under the provisions of the bill, including the cost of conducting onsite monitoring and alternative methods of monitoring compliance with the standards.

House Bill 1270
House Bill 1270 requires the commissioner to establish a pilot program in which a participating campus provides intensive reading or language intervention to participating students. The minimum criteria that a program must meet to be selected by a participating campus must include neuroscience-based, scientifically validated methods, scientifically based reading interventions or instructional tools that have been proven to accelerate language acquisition and reading proficiency for struggling readers. Vendors have been identified through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and schools to participate in the pilot will be identified based on 2007-2008 3rd grade Reading Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores. The pilot will begin in the fall of 2008.

House Bill 1287
House Bill 1287 calls for elective courses on the Bible's Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and New Testament and their impact on the history and literature of Western civilization, often referred to as Bible literacy. Following State Board of Education (SBOE) approval of proposed rules for first reading and filing authorization at the March 2008 meeting, the proposal, which includes the proposed essential knowledge and skills of a course on Bible literacy, was required to be submitted to the Attorney General for review to ensure that the course complies with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution before the SBOE adopted the proposal. Both the statute and rule require that a course offered under this section follow applicable law and all federal and state guidelines in maintaining religious neutrality and accommodating the diverse religious views, traditions, and perspectives of students in their school district. A course under this rule shall not endorse, favor, promote, disfavor or show hostility toward, any particular religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective.

Subsequent to receiving a response from the Attorney General's Office that the proposal had been reviewed and appears to be facially valid under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, the SBOE approved the new section for second reading and final adoption at the July 2008 meeting. The rule becomes effective September 1, 2008 and will allow professional development and preparation to offer courses beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

An attorney general's ruling on August 28, 2008 clarified that local school district officials will determine whether to offer elective courses in Hebrew Scripture and the new Testament. If districts do not offer stand alone courses, then local officials are responsible for determining how to offer instruction in the subject of religious literature, including Hebrew Scripture and the new Testament in their existing classes.

A teacher of a course offered under section 28.011 must hold a minimum of a High School Composite Certification in language arts, social studies, or history with, where practical, a minor in religion or biblical studies. School districts continue to have the discretion to teach the subject using the TEKS for Special Topics in Social Studies or Independent Study in English. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for these courses focus on the skills students should develop, and the content decisions are left to local district discretion.

House Bill 2237
House Bill 2237 established the High School Completion and Success Initiative Council (Council) to identify strategic priorities and make recommendations to improve effectiveness, coordination, and alignment of high school completion and college and workforce readiness efforts. On March 11, 2008, the Council adopted a Strategic Plan designed to guide the use of federal and state funds appropriated or received for high school reform, college readiness, and dropout prevention.

The bill established several new programs designed to promote high school completion and postsecondary readiness, several which are included below.

> **Mathematics Instructional Coaches**
> The legislation established a pilot program to provide intensive instructional coaching and professional development for teachers who instruct students in mathematics at the middle school, junior high school or high school level. As of August 29, 2008, twenty-nine school districts received funds totaling approximately $4.75 million to provide mathematics coaching for teachers. Four hundred and eight teachers are being served on ninety-seven campuses in FY08.

> **Mathematics, Science, and Technology Teacher Preparation Academies**
> The bill created academies at institutions of higher education to improve the instructional skills of teachers to perform at the highest levels in mathematics, science and technology. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board granted awards to the University of Texas at El Paso and Texas State University-San Marcos to establish the teacher

preparation academies.

Grants for Student Clubs
The bill established a pilot program to provide grants to school districts to fund student academic and co-curricular club activities for students at risk of dropping out of school. Grants were not to exceed $5000 per school year, and must be matched by other federal, state, or local funds. Sixty-one districts received funds to support clubs that provide positive and structured activities. Three hundred-seventy clubs on 118 campuses received grants for FY08.

Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot
The legislation established a pilot program to provide grants to school districts to implement local collaborative programs to reduce dropouts and provide at-risk students with job-skills and continuing education opportunities. Collaborations are between local businesses, government or law-enforcement agencies, nonprofit or faith-based organizations, or institutions of higher education. Programs must provide paid employment or internship opportunities and outreach to connect eligible students with program services. As of August 28, 2008, six districts received grants to establish collaborative programs.

Intensive Summer Programs (to Facilitate Transition from High School to Postsecondary Institution)
The bill established programs to provide intensive academic instruction during the summer in English Language Arts, mathematics, and science to facilitate the transition of students from high school to a postsecondary institution. As of August 28, 2008, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has granted funds to nine colleges and universities to implement summer bridge programs.

Intensive Summer Programs (for Middle and High School Students)
The bill established programs to provide intensive academic instruction during the summer semester to promote college and workforce readiness for middle school and high school students identified as being at risk of dropping out of school. As of August 28, 2008, thirty school districts received grants to create summer programs.

Many these programs will be evaluated to determine effectiveness. More detailed information about all of the programs in HB 2237 can be found at www.tea.state.tx.us.

House Bill 3485
House Bill 3485 requires the agency to establish a panel to review and recommend revisions to the Career and Technology Education (CTE) curriculum. The panels make recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBOE) as necessary to increase the academic rigor of the CTE curriculum. The legislation further requires the SBOE to revise the CTE TEKS based on the recommendations of the panel no later than September 1, 2009. The CTE Panel began meeting in February 2008. The SBOE established CTE Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Review Committees that began the review of the current CTE courses and TEKS in April 2008. The CTE Panel has provided information and guidance to the CTE Review Committees and

presented preliminary recommendations to the SBOE in May 2008. There have been several vertical alignment meetings among K-12, postsecondary and business and industry representatives to engage in dialogue and guide the TEKS revision to meet postsecondary and industry needs. The SBOE is scheduled to discuss and adopt new CTE TEKS by September 1, 2009 as directed by this legislation. Districts are required to use the revised TEKS beginning with the school year 2010-2011.

Senate Bill 7
The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is currently reimbursing school districts, charter schools and private schools for the purchase of automated external defibrillators (AED). As of September 1, 2008, $4,357,351 has been disbursed to local education agencies to pay for 3133 AEDs. SB 7 required certain staff members to receive training on the use of AEDs and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The training is ongoing. Districts are required to ensure that the required staff complete the training mandated by the legislation.

The bill also requires that a pilot program be developed for grade 6 to provide cardiovascular screenings. The agency chose Championship Heart through a Request for Proposal process to administer that screening. The agency will be delivering a report to the Legislature with its findings by January 1, 2009.

Senate Bill 9
SB 9 authorized and required greatly expanded criminal history information reviews for most classes of educators and school employees, including national criminal history background checks based on the submission of fingerprints for all certified and currently employed educators, as well as all substitute teachers, whether or not certified, by September 1, 2011, certain charter school employees, and all non-certified school employees hired after January 1, 2008. The implementation of SB 9 requires cooperation between the TEA and the Department of Public Safety, Independent School Districts, Regional Service Centers and Charter Schools. Implementation began in January 2008. After some initial start up issues related to the newly created technology systems, the TEA began processing the thousands of individuals being submitted. Currently, DPS and TEA are responding to the occasional issues as they arise.

Through the first eight months (as of August 29) of the process the following data is available:

Independent School Districts (certified educators) completed:	101
Independent School Districts (certified educators) in process:	5
Independent School Districts beginning on or after September 4:	59
(Includes Dallas ISD)	
Number of certified educators completed:	50,000
Number of non-certified employees completed:	34,000
Number of certified educators with criminal histories:	3,400
Number of non-certified employees with criminal histories:	5,000

Senate Bill 530
School districts and charter schools began annually administering the required fitness assessments in grades 3-12 during the 2007-2008 school year. The agency released the statewide results on July 1, 2008. Eighty-five percent of districts submitted the required data on 2.6 million students. The results by district can be found at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/health/PFAI.html.

The commissioner adopted rules for middle school physical activity effective beginning for the 2008-2009 school year. The rules provide flexibility to school districts in determining how to provide moderate to vigorous physical activity for 30 minutes/daily for four semesters in grades 6-8 which is required by the legislation.

Senate Bill 1031
Senate Bill 1031 phases-out the TAKS test for grades 9-11 and phases in the following end-of-course assessments starting with 9th grade students in the 2011-2012 school year.

English	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
English I	Algebra I	Biology	World Geography
English II	Geometry	Chemistry	World History
English III	Algebra II	Physics	US History

In order to graduate, students will be required to earn a cumulative score within each core subject area, equal to earning a grade of 70 on each exam. Students scoring below 70 will receive accelerated instruction and have the opportunity to be re-tested. Students must score at least 60 in order to count the score toward the cumulative number. The score a student achieves on the end-of-course exam shall be worth 15% of the student's overall grade for that course.

Each of the end-of-course assessments are currently in different stages of development. Currently Algebra I, geometry and biology are available to school districts as an optional online assessment that districts can use to measure student achievement. Chemistry and United States history tests will be available for school districts to use on a voluntary basis beginning in spring 2009. The remaining tests will be phased in until 2012-2013 when the last test, English III, will be operational. The end-of-course assessments will become mandatory for students entering the 9th grade in the 2011-12 school year.

The legislation also established a committee to review the accountability system and make recommendations regarding how the system should be structured. The Select Committee on Public School Accountability has been holding meetings throughout Texas and taking public testimony. The committee will issue a report with its recommendations on December 1, 2008.

Senate Bill 1788
Senate Bill 1788 authorizes the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish and administer a state virtual school network (TxVSN) to provide education to students through electronic means. Region 10 Education Service Center (ESC) in collaboration with Harris County Department of Education will serve as central operations for the network. Region 4 ESC will manage the course review process and five providers have been approved to provide the required professional

development to teach online via the TxVSN. The approved providers are Education Development Corporation, Inc., ESC Region 4, ESC Region 11, Harris County Department of Education, and Texas A&M Center for Distance Learning Research. Plans are to begin offering online courses for grades 9-12 in January 2009 and expand course offerings in the school year 2009-2010.   More information about TxVSN can be located at www.txvsn.org.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature should consider the following recommendations:

1. Continue to monitor implementation of legislation from previous sessions to ensure that legislative goals are being met.

2. Require reports and updates from agencies and boards responsible for administering major pieces of legislation.

INTERIM CHARGE 6

Study innovations in state educational data systems. Develop recommendations for a comprehensive state educational data system that will ensure the best available information for educators and policymakers, including unique student records that may be transferred easily among authorized institutions, minimize duplicative or onerous reporting requirements, and meet federal privacy requirements in a manner consistent wit the practices of leading states. Recommend statutory changes as necessary to facilitate the implementation of the new data system and to eliminate unnecessary reporting requirements. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Higher Education)

BACKGROUND

Collecting data on students is helpful because it allows Texas to follow their educational journey. Ideally, by collecting longitudinal data, it would be possible to follow individual student growth, determine the value-added of specific programs, and identify consistently high-performing schools, classrooms, and systems worthy of study. In addition, this would allow the state to better align secondary and post-secondary education and training and make way for better accountability. It could also show the impact of teacher preparation and professional development on student learning, and allow transparency of information on inputs and outcomes of the educational system.

For a state data system to meet goals, it must be accurate, timely, and accessible. The Data Quality Campaign is a program dedicated to bringing together policymakers and public supporters in pursuit of fully developing high-quality longitudinal data systems in all states by 2009; increasing understanding and promoting valuable use of such data to improve student achievement; and promoting, developing, and using common data standards and efficient data transfer and exchange. The program identifies ten essential structural elements to creating a longitudinal data system, including:

- Unique statewide student identifier;
- Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information;
- Ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure growth;
- Information on untested students;
- Teacher identifier system with ability to match teachers to students;
- Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned;
- Student-level college readiness test scores;
- Student-level graduation and drop-out data;
- Ability to match student records between P-12 and post-secondary systems; and
- State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.[32]

FINDINGS

While Texas meets most of the ten criteria of the Data Quality Campaign, Texas' data collection does not satisfy all of the requirements. For example, Texas' system does not indicate which teacher preparation programs produce the graduates whose students have the strongest academic growth.[33]

The Texas data system was created primarily in response to legislative mandates for accountability data, and is, as a result, more suited for accountability and compliance than for performance management or analysis. Barriers to effective data use in Texas include:

- Data sets that are disconnected across and sometimes within agencies, programs, and institutions;
- Existing data that is often not available in a timely manner;
- Some critical data that is not consistently collected;

- Some data that is collected may not be critical;
- Many educational institutions that lack the capacity for effective data collection and evaluation;
- Interpretations of federal FERPA regulations are inconsistent across states and groups, leading to difficulty getting complete and timely data sets for analysis.[34]

There is a P-16 education data system in Texas that tracks the progress of students as they progress through the education pipeline, and eventually transition into the workforce. The Higher Education Coordinating Board, in collaboration with the Texas Education Agency, collects such data in a system called TPEIR (Texas P-16 Public Education Information Resource). TPEIR organizes highly specialized data on primary, secondary, and higher education data based on key audiences. The TPIER provides stakeholders in public education, including but not limited to administrators, educators, state leadership, researchers, and professional organizations, with ready access to education-based information for purposes of research, planning, policy development and decision making.

Key data available:
- High School students directly entering higher education institutions in Texas
- Information on dual-credit and college readiness data
- High school to college linkage data is available down to the county, ISD, and individual school levels.

The Texas Accountability System for public higher education provides data for thirty-five public universities, nine health-related institutions, the four Texas State Technical Colleges and three two-year Lamar State Colleges.

Key data available:
- Data on Closing the Gaps goals: participation, success, excellence, and research, as well as, institutional effectiveness
- Both statewide and by-institution data that is meaningful to policy makers, parents, and students alike.

Additionally, the Coordinating Board website has interactive features that provide different categories of data online. This information is available online at: http://www.txhighereddata.org. The database currently supplies information on each student in a public school, community college, public and private universities, and health-science centers. The system is able to follow students as they move between schools and institutions, although the system cannot follow students into other states. Data collected from Texas public higher education institutions are summarized into management information system database tables for query access. These summaries of certified data are accessible through the PREP system. The PREP-Online system provides interactive, query access to data such as enrollment, degrees awarded, and declared majors. [35]

Project IQ at the University of Texas at Austin
The University of Texas at Austin created Project IQ (Information Quest) in 2002. The system converts data into a usable form of information which is dispersed throughout the university. UT-Austin, prior to Project IQ, did a good job of collecting and storing data, but was not able to

properly use it. The Project IQ data warehouse brings together disparate pieces of information to make it available in a functional manner. Project IQ data now extends across the entire university, and the success of the program has reduced the cost incurred by the need for employees who formerly compiled such data.[36]

As a large institution, UT-Austin had an excess of data, but was information starved. In addition, the university had reliable transactional systems but did not always handle the information properly, and programmers were needed to extract meaning. Coded data, which was frequent, also required interpretation.

Realizing that data warehousing is a slower process was important to the success of this project. It was also imperative to assess existing data systems before investing in additional reporting mechanisms. In addition, the success of Project IQ stems from the other personnel trusting the staff; using a fair process which takes into consideration the knowledge of different individuals; ownership and stewardship of the data; and ensuring that measurements are uniform across all data units.

Project IQ collects data from the following areas: students, financial, alumni and donor, research, faculty and PBIS, human resources, and facilities. With data from different perspectives, there are a number of ways to analyze the information. The information can also be directly transmitted via e-mail through the program. Additionally, Project IQ brings together information from the individual colleges within the university and puts it in the same form. This allows the different colleges to share data in the same format.

There were many absolute necessities for the project. Building successful and trusting relationships between groups is key, and tied to identifying the primary sources the data would serve. Managing expectations of what the project can achieve is important in not overestimating capabilities, and prioritizing critical questions over interesting ones must occur to ensure efficiency. More importantly, data stewards must make certain that the data collected is accurate. Successful training is another vital part of guaranteeing that data is correct. Also important is ensuring that the colleges' needs are met prior to those of the central administration. Furthermore, it is imperative that the project be funded centrally, and that it begins with data that is readily prepared. Furthermore, meeting grassroots needs, or those of the colleges, should be done before considering central administration needs. Because Project IQ is centrally funded, it is possible to prioritize what data is collected. Moreover, such a project must make use of existing data that is available and can be entered into the system. For UT-Austin, financial data was readily available.

Project IQ has, since its inception, been able to provide clearer, more useful data that spans the needs of all sections of the university. It has also facilitated a more close-knit community, and has made the process of acquiring data much faster and more efficient.[37]

TEA Data Initiatives
The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has developed three efforts regarding data systems and collection as a result of actions of the Legislature. These are the PEIMS redesign effort, the Agency website renovation effort, and the invention of TREx (Texas Records Exchange System). These programs were funded during the 79th and 80th Legislative Sessions.

The 80th Legislature funded a $4.8 million systematic rewrite of the PEIMS system, a data collection system that is roughly twenty years old and is only updated with information around three times per year. PEIMS will move to a server environment where simplified information can be more easily accessed. This will eliminate the need for any mainframe applications at TEA.

During the 79th 3rd Called Special Session, the Legislature appropriated roughly $950,000 to renovate Texas Education Agency's website. This was intended to increase public access to PEIMS and generally improve availability. The TEA website was difficult to navigate and the search function was complicated. A new TEA website, more geared to public constituents and with an easier search engine, was to have been launched March 29, 2008. However, as of the writing of this report, the new site appears to still be in development, many links still refer back to the old site, and much data appears to not yet be in the search engine or menus. It is not clear what the timeline is toward completion of this project.

Another project, the TREx system, was also created and appropriated $2.025 million during the 79th 3rd Called Special Session. It is an electronic records transfer system created to make record transfers between educational entities both easier and more transparent. It is primarily used to transfer student data such as transcripts. This web program was brought about in September 2007 and facilitates information trading from K through 12 through institutions of higher education. Usage will continue to grow, as it is a new program.[38]

Public school districts also use student data to improve student and teacher performance. Austin Independent School District (ISD) has a data system, the Austin Instructional Management System (AIMS), which allows teachers and advisors, initiative managers, principals, district administrators, and the school board to access data. Austin ISD is currently developing a data warehouse to streamline access and use of the information. Reports can be compiled to show any level of individual a set of data applicable to their position and needs. Such systems can be used among school districts to facilitate partnerships in data collection across the state.

Using data should require a structure and process to decide what is needed and how to build an initiative to meet such needs, and how to measure changes in behavior of students. Legislators and educators alike can use such data collection to see if the changes they have implemented, whether in the law or the classroom, have had the desired effect. The AIMS system also allows information to be presented to a target group in a clear, concise manner. Information from the system can be adapted to fit any applicable group in need of data. This data, again, reflects behavioral patterns. Streamlining data collection and reporting, and creating easier access to data, will allow districts to focus on the critical work of looking at data in the most meaningful ways to support students education.[39]

The Dallas ISD is also initiating a data warehouse program. The Performance Management and Accountability System is in place currently at the Dallas ISD. According to Dr. Michael Hinojosa, Superintendent, there are a number of barriers to ideal data collection. One of the largest of these barriers is the Federal Education Privacy Rights Act or the FERPA. The existence of multiple systems also proves difficult in collecting data because each system is different and the systems do not interact with each other. Data collection and processing is not

always reliable. However, the biggest challenge is obtaining the level of resources needed for efficient and effective collection, especially funding. The system that Dallas ISD is creating is intended to individualize the type of information available for parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, and so on. These individuals can then measure the students' progress through the data collected.[40]

Historically, PEIMS has served primarily state-level regulatory functions with little focus on using data for performance management at the classroom or campus level. During a subcommittee hearing on July 16, 2008 teachers identified several tools that would improve their teaching and their students' learning if included in a state educational data system.

- Student Educational History Report
Currently, teachers are only provided minimal academic information about students entering their classroom, often only the previous year's TAKS results. Teachers suggested the state create an educational history report than included longitudinal data on grades, TAKS scores broken down by objective and strand, as well as record of interventions. [41]

- Teacher-Friendly Online Tracking Tools
Teachers reported that they were either provided access to tracking tools that are difficult to use or simply left to create their own tools using spreadsheets. A teacher-friendly tracking system that all teachers could access for use in their classroom to help inform instruction would allow teachers to spend more time on actually differentiating instruction instead of building tools and entering data to assess the academic level of their students. Teachers need feedback on a daily basis and an easy-to-use tool would allow them to respond to the data by modifying instruction. Further, the ability for teachers to be able to share data about students among teachers in different disciplines would help teachers to better understand the educational needs of their students. The tool should also allow teachers to produce student-friendly reports. This allows students to invest in their own academic progress, remind them of their big goals, and empower them to strive for success. [42]

- Access at Home to the System
Teachers agreed that if the information about the performance of their students could be made available to them outside of school there would be much more opportunity to effectively use the data when planning lessons.[43]

The subcommittee also heard from a group of researchers and users of school data discussing the challenges of using Texas data. The panelists identified several key areas that Texas could improve:

- Provide current and past data on student performance linked to schools and programs;
- Link individual student and teacher data, including teacher preparation data;
- Link elementary and secondary data with higher education;
- Link school data with outcomes observed outside of education such as workforce, criminal justice and military;
- Create a state web portal system to assist students with postsecondary planning including college test preparation, financial planning, transfer plans, and application completion with feedback to schools and counselors;

- Provide encouragement of outside analysis and evaluation;
- Include in the system measures that districts voluntarily adopt;
- Support the development of better data infrastructure.

Several panelists also mentioned the need to support and oversee the Educational Research Centers (ERC) that were established in HB 1, 79th Session, 3rd Called. The ERCs were established to oversee access to student-level data to foster a robust research effort focused on Texas. Concerns were raised about the ERCs not being fully functional because of delays in implementation.

Finally, the panelists stressed repeatedly that a robust, transparent and useable P-20 data and performance management system and support for the Education Research Centers could improve student performance and the future of Texas.[44]

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature should consider the following recommendations:

1. Require a means in the state educational data system by which the performance of teacher preparation programs can be assessed.

2. Require the new or updated state educational data system, especially any performance management pieces, to be built with input from educators at all levels, as well as education research centers and regional P-16 Councils, and to take advantage of information derived from national best practices, such as those captured by the Data Quality Campaign.

3. Closely monitor the implementation of the Educational Research Centers to ensure timely implementation and access to researchers of all relevant student performance data.

4. Explore all funding opportunities including private and federal to develop a better data infrastructure, and should monitor the use of such external funds to assure that state goals are met.

5. Consider solutions to ensure that the state educational data system contains information about students who attend public or private institutions of higher education outside the state of Texas.

6. Ensure appropriate capacity at the Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to support efforts directed toward timely implementation of publicly available public education data, higher education data, the Education Research Centers, and P-16 Initiatives.

ENDNOTES

[1] Partnership for 21st Century Skills (No date). Framework for 21st Century Learning. [Online] Available: http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=254&Itemid=120 (August 6, 2008)

[2] Long-Range Plan for Technology 2006-2020, A Report to the 80th Legislature from the Texas Education Agency

[3] http://www.txtip.info/

[4] http://www.tea.state.tx.us/technology/tip/TIPFall2005Brochure.doc

[5] Dr. K. Victoria Dimock, Program Director, SEDL. Written and oral testimony. House Committee on Public Education Subcommittee Hearing on Interim Charge 1, July 16, 2008.

[6] Tami Pipkin, Agile Mind, Program Director. Written and oral testimony. House Committee on Public Education Subcommittee Hearing on Interim Charge 1, July 16, 2008.

[7] Texas Education Code, Chapter 7.

[8] Texas Education Code, Chapter 7.

[9] Mr. Robert Scott, Texas Education Agency, Commissioner of Education. Testimony. House Committee on Public Education hearing , July 16, 2008.

[10] Texas Education Code, Chapter 7.

[11] Dr. Don McLeroy, State Board of Education, Board Chair. Written and oral testimony. House Committee on Public Education hearing, July 16, 2008.

[12] Mr. Bob Craig, Ms. Pat Hardy, Ms. Mavis Knight, State Board of Education, Board Members. Testimony. House Committee on Public Education hearing. July 16, 2008.

[13] Mr. Ken Mercer, State Board of Education, Board Member. Testimony. House Committee on Public Education hearing, July 16, 2008.

[14] Testimony of public witnesses, House Committee on Public Education hearing, July 16, 2008.

[15] Texas Education Code, Chapter 21.

[16] Texas Education Code, Chapter 8.

[17] Texas Education Agency. (April 2008). Fact Sheet, Texas Prekindergarten Program. T.E.A.

[18] Texas Education Agency. (No Date). Texas Education Code: Kindergarten and Prekindergarten Programs. T.E.A. [Online] Available: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/early/preklaws.doc (July 30, 2008)

[19] Texas Education Agency. (July 2008). Prekindergarten Grant Program. T.E.A. [Online] Available: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/formfund/prek/Cycle14forms/CYCLE14RFA_SASINFORMATION.pdf (July 30, 2008)

[20] Texas Education Agency. (April 2008) Fact Sheet, Early Childhood Education Initiatives. T.E.A.

[21] Texas Education Agency. (July 2008). Frequently Asked Questions, Texas Early Education Model. T.E.A. [Online] Available: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/teem/TEEM_faqs.doc (July 30, 2008)

[22] Texas Education Agency. (July 2008). Prekindergarten Grant Program. T.E.A. [Online] Available: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/formfund/prek/Cycle14forms/CYCLE14RFA_SASINFORMATION.pdf (July 30, 2008)

[23] Texas Education Agency. (April 2008). Fact Sheet, TEEM (Texas Early Education Model) and SRCS (School Readiness Certification System). T.E.A.

[24] Texas Education Agency. (April 2008). Fact Sheet, TEEM (Texas Early Education Model) and SRCS (School Readiness Certification System). T.E.A.

[25] Texas Education Agency. (April 2008). Fact Sheet, Early Childhood Education Initiatives. T.E.A.

[26] Edward J. Fuller, *Hard to Staff Positions and Schools in Texas (2008).* Education Research Center and University Council for Educational Administration.

[27] Jerel Booker, Director of Educator Initiatives and Performance in State Initiatives, Texas Education Agency. Written and oral testimony. House Committee on Public Education Hearing on Interim Charge 4, April 21, 2008.

[28] Jerel Booker, Director of Educator Initiatives and Performance in State Initiatives, Texas Education Agency. Written and oral testimony. House Committee on Public Education Hearing on Interim Charge 4, April 21, 2008.

[29] Texas Education Agency. (April 9, 2008). Education Initiatives and Performance - Teacher Preparation. Online available: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/edex/mentoring.html.

[30] *New Teacher Support Pays Off: A Return on Investment for Educators and Kids*, Policy Brief, New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz, fall 2007.

[31] *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top,* McKinsey&Company, September 2007.

[32] Dr. Nancy Smith, Data Quality Campaign. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008.

[33] Dr. Nancy Smith, Data Quality Campaign. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008.

[34] Susan Dawson, Director, E3 Alliance. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008

[35] David Gardner, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008.

[36] Kevin Haggerty, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, the University of Texas at Austin. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008.

[37] Fred Friedrich, Associate Vice President and Comptroller, the University of Texas at Austin. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008.

[38] Adam Jones, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer, Texas Education Agency. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008.

[39] Dr. Pat Forgione, Superintendent, Austin Independent School District. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008.

[40] Dr. Michael Hinojosa, Superintendent Dallas Independent School District. Testimony. House Committee on Higher Education Interim Hearing on Interim Charge 8. March 20, 2008.

[41] Ms. Dori Peterson, Math Coordinator, Stevens HS, Northside ISD. Written and oral testimony. House Committee on Public Education Subcommittee Hearing. July 16, 2008.

[42] Ms. Angie Brice, 5th Grade Science Teacher, Sherman Elementary, Houston ISD. Written and oral testimony. House Committee on Public Education Subcommittee Hearing. July16, 2008.

[43] Mr. David Journey, Science Teacher, LASA High School, Austin ISD. Testimony. House Committee on Public Education Subcommittee Hearing. July 16, 2008.

[44] Dr. Eric Hanushek, Professor and Researcher; Marina B. Walne, The University of Texas System, Institute for Public School Initiatives; Drew Scheberle, Austin Chamber of Commerce; Susan Dawson, E3 Alliance; Lori Taylor, Assistant Professor, Texas A&M; Zeynep Young, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. Testimony. House Committee of Public Education Subcommittee Hearing. July 16, 2008.