

Written Testimony ON Senate Bill 1 – Texas Education Agency
Senate Finance Committee
February 10, 2025

Honorable Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Hinojosa, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on Senate Bill 1. Philanthropy Advocates brings together almost 60 private, community, and corporate foundations working across Texas to improve outcomes for Texas students and equip them for economic mobility.

Thank you for providing full funding for current school district entitlements as well as funding for enrollment growth in the introduced version of Senate Bill 1. Texas is the largest educator of rural students in the country and the majority of the state's public-school students are considered economically disadvantaged. Effective investments in schools that ensure operating dollars (such as the Basic Allotment), mixed with targeted resources (such as the Early Education Allotment, the Compensatory Education Allotment, and the Teacher Incentive Allotment) are important for ensuring student learning.

Research consistently shows that the **classroom teacher is the most important in-school factor affecting student growth**¹, and we appreciate the introduced bill's prioritization of retaining current teachers through the salary increases and particularly the increase in funding for the **Teacher Incentive Allotment, which has proven to have a positive effect on teacher retention as well as student achievement**.² The Teacher Incentive Allotment has helped propel innovation and modernization of district compensation systems. Similar efforts are needed to modernize how we **prepare and attract** our next generation of educators.

By 2031, 63% of Texas jobs will require a credential beyond a high school diploma, and yet only 25% of our eight graders earn these credentials within six years after graduation.³ Although our need for educational attainment beyond high school is increasing, our supply of well-prepared teachers is plummeting.⁴ Just last year, **56% of new teachers had no certification or preparation** statewide.⁵ The number was 75% in rural districts.⁶

The impacts of these underprepared teachers have been detrimental to the learning of Texas students. **Students taught by an uncertified teacher lose up to four months of learning in math and six months of learning in English/Reading**.⁷ With outcomes like this and the dramatic

¹ Hattie, J. (2017). [Hattie Ranking: 252 Influences and Effect Sizes Related to Student Achievement](#).

² Kirksey, J. J., Lansford, T., Crevar, A. R., & Mansell, K. E. (2024). [From incentive to impact: The Texas Teacher Incentive Allotment's path to improved retention and achievement](#).

³ Carnevale, A.P et al. (2023). After Everything: Projections of Jobs, Education, and Training Requirements through 2031. Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. [After Everything Projections 2031 National Report](#); Texas Talent Trajectory (T3). 8th Grade Cohort Data: 2013 (2024). [The Texas Talent Trajectory \(T3\)](#).

⁴ [Texas Education Agency Annual Report](#) (2024).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Van Overschelde, J.P., and Lopez, M. (2024). [Unlicensed teachers now dominate new teacher hires in rural Texas schools](#).

⁷ Kirksey, J. (2024). [Amid Rising Number of Uncertified Teachers, Previous Classroom Experience Proves Vital in Texas](#); Marder, M., Torres, L.G., Martinez, C., (2024). [Beyond the Tipping Point: The Rise of the Uncertified Teachers in Texas](#).

expansion of underprepared teachers, we shouldn't be surprised to see that Texas students are at a competitive disadvantage nationally on the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results for 4th and 8th grade reading and 8th grade math.⁸

Fortunately, we know what works. Texas has bright spots of hands-on teacher preparation helping students learn. A recent analysis of paid teacher residents in Texas found that **first-year teachers** who completed a **paid residency** in Texas were **as effective as fifth-year teachers** in reading.⁹ Unfortunately, **teachers who have completed residencies make up only 1% of new teachers**. Another analysis found that every year, from fourth through ninth grade, students gain the equivalent of **one to two extra months of learning in mathematics if they have university-certified teachers**.¹⁰ Unfortunately, **traditionally prepared teachers make up only 20% of newly hired teachers**.¹¹

Last session, the Senate advanced **Senate Bill 9 by Chairman Creighton**, which would have fostered the same kind of innovation with teacher preparation that the Teacher Incentive Allotment has fostered with teacher compensation. We appreciate the vision and leadership in this area that you had last session.

As SB 1 moves forward, we hope that you will also prioritize creating incentives for districts and educator preparation programs to develop stronger preparation pathways and for candidates to pursue hands-on preparation while also supporting mentorship and other comprehensive approaches to increase the supply of effective educators.

Texas philanthropy has long supported innovation to strengthen the teacher workforce. From funding technical assistance to ensure the effective implementation of the Teacher Incentive Allotment to supporting hand-on teacher preparation models across rural, urban, and suburban districts across the state, philanthropy has invested deeply in identifying promising models.

We appreciate your consideration and support in helping to scale those innovations and ensuring that all Texas students can benefit from an effective educator. Evidence-driven investments in the teacher workforce coupled with other strategic investments in our public education system can go a long way in changing our trends in educational performance and in increasing the future earning potential for Texas students.

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⁸ [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) (2024).

⁹ Bastian, K.C., Fuller, S.C., & Otte, A. (2024). [Paid Residency Programs in Texas: Initial Impacts on Student Achievement and Teacher Retention](#).

¹⁰ [Texas Educator Preparation Pathways Study](#) (2022). Report and Recommendations from the University of Texas at Austin and Educate Texas Study of Educator Preparation Pathways in Texas.

¹¹ [Texas Education Agency Annual Report](#) (2024).