

Written Testimony FOR House Bill 2
House Public Education Committee
March 6, 2025

Honorable Chair Buckley, Vice Chair Bernal, and Members of the House Public Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 2. 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.

HB 2 takes a thoughtful approach to tackle some of our most urgent challenges in supporting our students and educators. By balancing investments in schools that ensure operating dollars, such as the Basic Allotment, with more targeted resources, such as the Compensatory Education Allotment and the Teacher Incentive Allotment, the bill takes a holistic approach to supporting stronger outcomes. We appreciate the bill's expansive impact ranging from early childhood education – by increasing access to high-quality Pre-K classrooms by funding full-day Pre-K in eligible partnerships – to expanding opportunities for college and career success – by investing in a high school advising allotment. We know the Committee will be working hard over the next few weeks to strengthen the bill, but we hope you'll continue to emphasize the framework the bill has for increasing the Basic Allotment coupled with the systemic approach to addressing the surge of unprepared teachers.

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. House Bill 2 proposes to do that.

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 expansion of underprepared teachers, we shouldn't be surprised to see that Texas students are at a competitive

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](#).

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

Two specific questions arose during the Committee's initial deliberations on HB 2 that we wanted to address.

1. Are there some preparation routes that get better outcomes than others?

Yes. Whether we look at student outcomes or teacher outcomes, such as how long they stay in the classroom, programs that ensure teacher candidates have more hands-on practice before becoming the teacher of record (residency and traditional university-based models) yield better outcomes than programs that require less practice (alternative certification models). While there are differences within each preparation route and with the experiences of individual teacher candidates, on the whole, we know that practice-based models produce better results.

Student Outcomes:

- 2022 research found that for every grade level and in every subject, students learned more from university-certified teachers (including residency-prepared teachers) than alternatively certified teachers.¹²
- Students taught by fully online alternative certification programs perform worse in reading and math than students taught through other preparation routes with an achievement gap equal to that between economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students.¹³

Teacher Retention:

- 76% of teachers prepared through a standard/university route (including teacher residencies) stayed in the classroom after five years while only 54% of teachers from other routes remained in the classroom after five years.¹⁴
- Research found that residency teachers had better retention rates than traditional university-based preparation programs but that both residency and traditional university programs outperformed online alternative certification programs and uncertified teachers.¹⁵

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).

¹² [Texas Educator Preparation Pathways Study](#) (2022).

¹³ Kirksey, J. and Gottlieb, J. (2023). [Teacher Preparation in the Wild West: The Impact of Fully Online Teacher Preparation and Uncertified Teachers in Texas](#).

¹⁴ Marder, M., Torres, L.G., Martinez, C., (2024). [Beyond the Tipping Point: The Rise of the Uncertified Teachers in Texas](#).

¹⁵ Kirksey, J. (2024). [Building a Stronger Teacher Workforce: Insights from Studies on Texas Teacher Preparation](#).

- A recent study of teacher residency programs in Texas found that if all first-year teachers had the same retention rates as paid residents, 3,600 fewer first-year teachers would have left Texas public schools between 2022-23 and 2023-24.¹⁶

HB 2 recognizes the differences across programs and the importance of hands-on practice for new teachers and provides more funding for more intensive and effective models while still providing resources for all routes that provide practice before becoming the teacher of record. **The funding levels in HB 2 differentiate based on research about program effectiveness.**

2. What is HB 2 doing to address the increase in underprepared or uncertified teachers?

There were many underlying issues that led to the rapid increase in underprepared and uncertified teachers in Texas, and HB 2 is taking a holistic approach to tackling the issue by addressing teacher preparation and retention. The following are among the targeted approaches in HB 2:

- Closing the loophole that allowed the rapid expansion of uncertified teachers through districts of innovation (Texas Education Code 12A.004).
- Providing targeted funding to support teacher candidates, districts, and educator preparation programs in pursuing effective preparation routes yielding higher teacher retention and student outcomes.
- Providing a \$1,000 incentive for districts to ensure current uncertified teachers get certified by the end of the 2025-26 school year.
- Providing allotment funding to support districts with “Grow Your Own” models to get more paraprofessionals and other uncertified school staff certified. Research has identified the benefits on student learning of getting individuals with prior work experience in schools certified.¹⁷
- Increasing funding for mentor teachers to better support new teachers and reduce turnover.
- Increasing base teacher compensation through the Basic Allotment increase as well as funding for the Teacher Incentive Allotment, which has proven to reduce attrition while improving student outcomes.
- Providing funding to cover the additional costs for districts to hire retired teachers.

In total, the changes proposed in HB 2 will help slow the attrition of current teachers while increasing the supply of well-prepared teachers through incentives to pursue more effective preparation routes.

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 hands-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 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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¹⁶ Bastian, K.C., Fuller, S.C., & Otte, A. (2024). [Paid Residency Programs in Texas: Initial Impacts on Student Achievement and Teacher Retention.](#)

¹⁷ Kirksey, J. (2024). [Amid Rising Number of Uncertified Teachers, Previous Classroom Experience Proves Vital in Texas.](#)