



Input on SB 2094

Regarding accelerated instruction and an elementary grant program

May 20, 2021

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** appreciates this opportunity to provide neutral written testimony on the Committee Substitute for Senate Bill (SB) 2094 by Chairman Taylor.

CSSB 2094 reflects the version of HB 4545 by Dutton that was approved by the full House. **ATPE applauds provisions in SB 2094 that would decouple student grade promotion requirements from state-mandated assessments and strongly supports the House's removal of outcomes-based funding.** Additionally, ATPE supports the bill's focus on remedial efforts for students through "accelerated learning committees." However, the bill does not ensure funding for the accelerated learning committees and allows parents of students receiving supplemental instruction to choose their child's teacher, which is impractical. ATPE implores the House to adhere to the positive changes made by the House and to make further improvements to the bill. These improvements include:

1. **Removing the teacher selection provision.**
2. **Funding accelerated learning committees through the school finance formula.**

ATPE supports efforts to separate grade promotion from student performance on state standardized assessments. Tying a high-stakes consequence such as moving to the next grade level to a student's performance on a standardized test is a flawed way of incentivizing improved student performance. SB 2094's emphasis on the accelerated learning committee as a remedial effort aligns with ATPE's position that testing should be used to direct resources to districts, campuses, and students who need assistance. However, the bill requires that accelerated instruction programs allow parents to choose their child's teacher for the next grade, which is not a realistic or practical mechanism for improving student performance. **ATPE recommends removing the teacher selection provision, 28.0211(a-5), in the bill.**

Although the accelerated learning committees may serve students well, they will undoubtedly require additional staffing and instructional resources if they are to achieve their intended purpose. Under the bill these staffing and instructional resources, and the cost of providing them, will become a permanent feature of the public school system. Thus, the bill adds this permanent cost to the system without adding a stable or predictable source of funding to cover these costs in the future. Accordingly, SB 2094 in its current form creates an unfunded mandate for the accelerated learning committees. **ATPE recommends funding the provisions and duties relating to accelerated learning committees within formula funding for public schools.**

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this input on HB 4545 and look forward to working with the committee on improving student outcomes. For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org.

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