



Oppose HB 3270 & HB 3731

April 7, 2021

ATPE Opposes HB 3270 Related to a School District Takeover by TEA

What the Bill Does: HB 3270 would change state law to vastly increase the appointed Commissioner of Education's authority to take over any Texas school district. The proposed new authority lacks transparency, and the commissioner's actions would be final and unappealable.

Background: This bill is the result of a failed attempt by TEA to take over Houston ISD and oust its school board that has long since been replaced at the will of local voters. After accountability sanctions were triggered by persistent low performance of a single campus under the previous HISD board, the commissioner was unsuccessful in a long legal battle to replace the local board, even at the Texas Supreme Court level. The current HISD board has put in place new programs and funding that significantly brought up the performance of a number of struggling campuses including the campus at issue, which missed moving up in the accountability rating system by only a few points.

Why ATPE Opposes the Bill: ATPE's number one priority is the success of the state's 5.4 million students and the educators who serve them. HB 3270 seeks to dramatically expand TEA's authority to take over school districts based on a flawed test-based accountability system does not support this goal. It is already troubling that current law can trigger a state agency's takeover of a district and its elected school board due to the performance of a single struggling campus. HB 3270 seeks to circumvent a court ruling that the agency failed to follow the law in its prior takeover attempts; expanding the agency's ability to take over schools to avoid the same outcome is not something we can support.

ATPE Opposes HB 3731 Related to A - F Accountability Ratings and Sanctions

What the Bill Does: HB 3731 proposes changes to the public school accountability system that would in many cases treat a "D" rating as an "F" rating for purposes of interventions, sanctions, and more.

Background: ATPE opposes the unpopular and damaging test-based "A through F" rating system. Since its adoption, the Texas Legislature has attempted to "fix" the system every session, resulting in increased instability of the system. Though "A-F" is ineffective at discriminating between environmental factors and system failures, it applies strict sanctions rather than resources to try to improve campuses and districts.

Why ATPE Opposes the Bill: ATPE opposes efforts to continue altering the accountability system in ways that do not improve it. HB 3731 does not improve the accountability system in ways that help educators meet students' needs or improve the quality of information being received by policymakers or the public. Instead, it continues to tinker on the edges of a system that is not working.