



## In Support of SB 27

Relating to the rights of public school educators and assistance provided to public schools by the Texas Education Agency related to public school educators

**March 25, 2025**

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** offers the following input in support of **SB 27**. We deeply appreciate Chairman Creighton's willingness to incorporate feedback from ATPE to refine the bill to better reflect the needs and concerns of front-line educators. SB 27 is a necessary step forward for Texas public education, with thoughtful provisions that address time management, teacher retention, classroom safety, and pipeline development. Some key areas for us include:

### **Teacher Time Study (Amended Section 21.467)**

The revised language in this section is strongly supported by our members. By explicitly including "studying how to reduce and streamline the tasks a teacher is required to perform," the bill addresses one of the most common frustrations teachers face: being overwhelmed by administrative tasks that interfere with instruction. While we appreciate TEA's role in collecting statewide data on this issue, we are significantly less confident in the agency's ability to offer meaningful "technical assistance" considering the broad diversity of districts and the agency's lack of expertise in effectively operating a public school campus. The agency seems better positioned to simply report survey results to districts, the Legislature, and the public and then allow districts and perhaps legislators to focus on implementation.

### **Reimbursement for In-Demand Certifications (New Section 3)**

The addition of a grant or reimbursement mechanism for hiring teachers with in-demand certifications is a strategic and forward-thinking solution. It not only encourages teacher retention and targeted hiring in high-need areas such as STEM, bilingual education, and special education, but also it helps ensure all students have access to quality instruction in critical subjects.

### **Contract Abandonment Protections (Revised Sections 4–6)**

We strongly support the clarified language that now includes a teacher's relocation due to a spouse's or partner's change in employment location. This is a real-life situation that affects many of our members, and we appreciate the Legislature's recognition of the professional and personal challenges educators face.

### **Classroom Discipline and Student Removal Protections (Amended Section 11)**

We support strengthening educators' ability to manage the classroom learning environment and remove significant disruptions that prevent all students from having the opportunity to

*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 its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for more than 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school educators.*

learn. In particular, we appreciate your efforts to help ensure a plan is put in place to return a student who has been removed back to the classroom and that the creation of said plan be the campus behavior coordinator's responsibility and not add to the classroom educator's administrative burden. We do want to continue working with the author and the Legislature as a whole to ensure that removal measures best balance the needs of all students and that every student is provided with as much opportunity to learn as possible while minimizing situations that lead to a breakdown in the learning environment for all students.

### **Threat Assessments and Student Safety (New Section 12)**

We support the added section focused on threat assessment procedures. Ensuring individual notification when a threat assessment uncovers a threat made against or related to a specific educator is an important step in ensuring their safety and the safety of their students.

### **Retired Educator Reimbursement Grants**

As in the previous version of the bill, we remain firmly in favor of reimbursement grants for hiring retired teachers, which help address current shortages while welcoming experienced professionals back into classrooms. These grants are of particular importance as there are districts that responded to the statutory change preventing them from passing along the cost of the TRS surcharge by simply terminating the employment of any previously retired teachers.

### **Retention of Section 37.002(e) (PEIMS Repeal)**

We support the removal of the repeal of this subsection. Accurate data collection is critical, but it must not come at the expense of misrepresenting or inflating discipline data in a way that mischaracterizes school or educator effectiveness.

### **Educators Right to Documents in Grievance or Nonrenewal Hearing**

One right we are asking be added to SB 27 is the right to documents in grievance or nonrenewal hearing. Currently, districts are using an exemption to the Public Information Act to deny educators access to district documents in grievance and nonrenewal proceedings about the requesting educator. Were these district proceedings considered litigation, the documents in question would be subject to discovery and therefore available to the educator. because these proceedings, however, are not subject to discovery but the issues involved are the subject of potential future litigation, educators are caught in a catch 22.

SB 27—with these thoughtful amendments—continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting educators through policy that is both responsive and practical. We thank Chairman Creighton, committee members, and legislative staff for engaging with us throughout this process, and we remain eager partners in refining the educator policy landscape in Texas. For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or [government@atpe.org](mailto:government@atpe.org).