

May 17, 2017

RE: Senate Bill 1278

Dear Chairman Huberty and Members of the House Committee on Public Education,

We are jointly writing to express our opposition to Senate Bill 1278 relating to educator preparation programs. Collectively, our organizations represent teachers, principals, superintendents, and higher education faculty. Our members are responsible for educating students in rural, suburban, and urban districts, many of whom are receiving services in ELL, bilingual, or special education. Our groups are united in support of the accountability rules for educator preparation programs recently adopted after a two-year time period in which all stakeholders had the opportunity to provide public comment to the SBEC, the SBOE, and through the *Texas Register*.

Our organizations respectfully oppose SB 1278 for the following reasons:

- Weakening rules that hold programs accountable for the performance of their candidates on content certification exams in shortage areas, such as bilingual education, will only exacerbate the number of unprepared teachers who eventually quit or are terminated, doing nothing to help shortage areas in the long run.
- Limiting in-person visits to teacher candidates during their clinical training does nothing to ensure immediate feedback and support that is critical for teacher development. Virtual observations are appropriate for supplementary purposes, in addition to current in-person observations required by SBEC rule.
- Allowing field experience hours to be satisfied by substitute teaching up to two years prior to the candidate entering a preparation program does not expose teacher candidates to strong instructional strategies, or allow them to learn from best practices which requires guidance by an experienced educator/mentor.
- Students receiving special education services are the most vulnerable and most in need of competent teachers who have passed certification exams and had the maximum number of in-person vs. virtual observations. These students need teachers with field experience in special education vs. substitute teaching hours in a field unrelated to special education.
- *ESSA requires states and districts to determine whether low-income students and students of color in Title I schools are served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and take steps to address any identified disproportionalities (i.e., gaps in equity).
- According to the TEA "Probationary Abandonment" handout (attached), campuses with teachers assigned probationary certificates who abandoned their campus the first year of teaching (quit, terminated, etc.) 80% were non-white campuses, 70% were economically disadvantaged, and 61% were at-risk. Campuses who most needed continuity in capable teachers did not have it. Lowering accountability standards for preparation programs will only worsen these numbers.
- Per TEA data in 2015-16 (see attached) **47% of all cancelled certifications come from one educator preparation program (EPP), which produced less than 24% of new certificates.** This is in stark contrast to the other EPPs on the TEA list.

Texas can and should do better when it comes to preparing and supporting our next generation of teachers and students. Therefore, we respectfully encourage you to oppose Senate Bill 1278.

Sincerely,

Shari Albright,	Trinity University, Department of Education
David Anthony,	Former Cypress Fairbanks Superintendent
Portia Bosse,	Texas State Teachers Association
Marcelo Cavazos,	Texas School Alliance
David Chard,	Wheelock College, & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Ana Coca,	Texas Association for Bilingual Education
Jessica Conlon,	TNTP, & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Harley Eckhart,	Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association
Barry Haenish,	Texas Association of Community Schools
Frank Hernandez,	SMU Simmons School of Education and Human Development
Kate Kuhlmann,	Association of Texas Professional Educators
Stephanie Hirsh,	Learning Forward, & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Diane Huber,	iTeachTEXAS, & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Janna Lilly,	Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education
Casey McCreary,	Texas Association of School Administrators
Patty Quinzi,	TX-American Federation of Teachers
Jim Nelson,	Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Colby Nichols,	Texas Rural Education Association
Scott Ridley,	Texas Tech University, Dean of Education, & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Mike Savage,	Principal, Audelia Creek Elementary, & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Lindsay Sobel,	Teach Plus Texas
Kevin Sevin,	Teacher, iSchoolHigh@UniversityPark, & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Seth Rue,	San Antonio ISD
Jenna Watts,	Deans for Impact
Rodney Watson,	Superintendent, Spring ISD, & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative
Sandra West,	Science Teachers Association of Texas
Paige Williams,	Texas Classroom Teachers Association
Randall Woods,	Principal, Burgess High School & Texas Teacher Preparation Collaborative

cc: Andrea Sheridan, Office of the Speaker
Amy Peterson, House Committee on Public Education

***Texas Equitable Access Roadmap: A Toolkit to Support Texas Districts to Develop Local Equitable Access Plans Introduction**

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education launched the Excellent Educators for All initiative to support states and districts in ensuring that students of color and low-income students have equitable access to excellent educators. All 50 states submitted equitable access plans, documenting the equity gaps that students in their state faced, the results of a root cause analysis conducted to better understand the causes of these equity gaps, and plans to implement strategies to close equity gaps and monitor progress of implementation. In December 2015, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),¹ which requires states and districts to determine whether low-income students and students of color in Title I schools are served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and take steps to address any identified disproportionalities (i.e., gaps in equity).

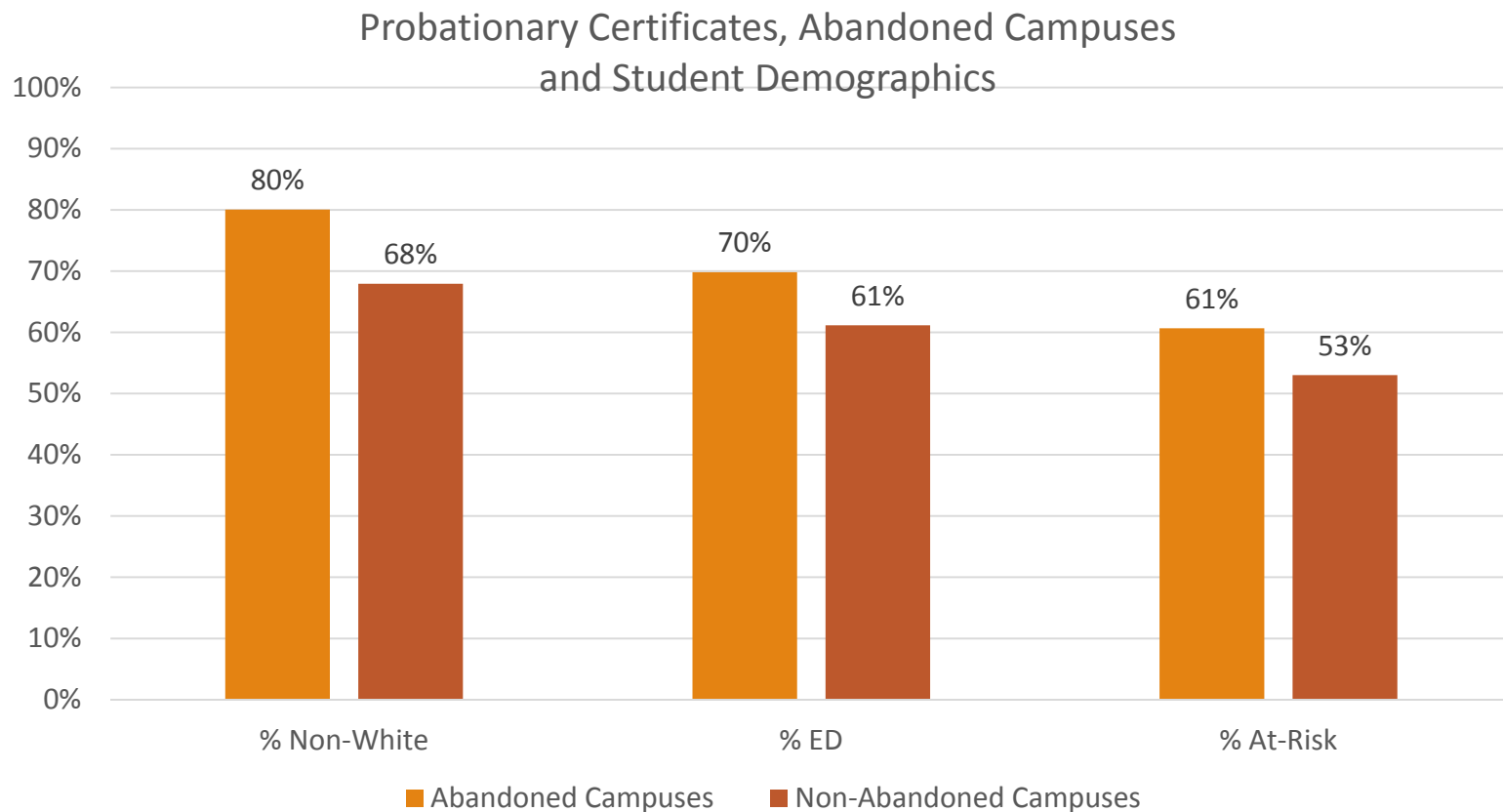
¹ For more information on the Every Student Succeeds Act, visit <http://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>. Information on equity as it relates to states is included in section (1111(g)(1)(B)). Information on equity as it relates to districts is included in section (1112(b)(2)).

Probationary Certificate Cancellations for the 2015-2016 School Year as of May 20, 2016

Program	Cancellations	Percentage of Cancellations
A+ Texas Teachers	339	47.0%
iteachtexas	45	6.2%
Web-Centric	25	3.5%
ACT Houston	23	3.2%
ECAP	22	3.1%
Houston ISD	21	2.9%
ACT San Antonio	19	2.6%
YesPrep	19	2.6%
Region 13 ESC	18	2.5%
Region 20 ESC	17	2.4%
Fort Worth Teaching Fellows	16	2.2%
Region 4 ESC	14	1.9%
Dallas ISD	12	1.7%
Region 4 ACP	11	1.5%
ACT Houston at Dallas	9	1.2%
ASTEP	9	1.2%
Lone Star College	7	1.0%
Pasadena ISD	7	1.0%
Texas A&M Commerce	7	1.0%
McLennan Comm College	6	0.8%
Quality Act	6	0.8%
ACT RGV	5	0.7%
Region 10 ESC	5	0.7%
Texas ACP	5	0.7%
Southern Methodist	4	0.6%
University of North Texas	4	0.6%
West Texas A&M University	4	0.6%
TeacherBuilder	3	0.4%
Texas A&M San Antonio	3	0.4%
Texas A&M Texarkana	3	0.4%
Angelo State University	2	0.3%
Region 1 ESC	2	0.3%
Region 11 ESC	2	0.3%
Region 18 ESC	2	0.3%
Region 2 ESC	2	0.3%
South Texas Transition	2	0.3%
Stephen F. Austin	2	0.3%
Sul Ross Alpine	2	0.3%
UT Dallas	2	0.3%
UT Permian Basin	2	0.3%
A Career in Teaching	1	0.1%
Educators of Excellence	1	0.1%
Harris Co DOE	1	0.1%
Houston Baptist	1	0.1%
Houston Community	1	0.1%
Huston Tillotson Univ	1	0.1%
Le Tourneau University	1	0.1%
McMurry Univ	1	0.1%
Region 12 ESC	1	0.1%
Region 3 ESC	1	0.1%
Region 5 ESC	1	0.1%
Texas Lutheran Univ	1	0.1%
TNTP Academy	1	0.1%
Total	721	

Cancellations due to withdrawal, resignation, termination, non-renewal, or other similar actions

Probationary Abandonment



*Based on 2014-2015 ECOS and PEIMS data