



ATPE Input on SB 1173

Regarding public school accountability

April 27, 2017

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** appreciates this opportunity to offer input on Senate Bill (SB) 1173 by Sen. Charles Perry. ATPE appreciates Sen. Perry's focus on addressing Domain IV under the Texas public school accountability system as it relates to attendance rate concerns for elementary and middle schools. However, redistributing the weight currently tied to Domain IV to Domains I, II, and III will result in increased reliance on state standardized assessments.

ATPE agrees that the use of chronic absenteeism as the indicator for elementary and middle schools when determining college readiness is a flawed approach. The reasons the current Domain IV indicator for elementary and middle schools is problematic include the facts that differentiation among campuses and districts is almost negligible, certain reasonable circumstances for individual irregular attendance patterns exist but aren't accommodated for, and Texas law doesn't even require attendance in prekindergarten and kindergarten.

However, redistributing the entire 35% weight currently attributed to Domain IV for elementary and middle school schools evenly among Domains I, II, and III would result in 90% of accountability for elementary and middle schools being based on student standardized test scores. Domains I, II, and III use data from STAAR exams to determine student proficiency, student growth, and success at closing achievement gaps, respectively. The increased reliance on standardized assessments in determining the success of elementary and middle schools is a move in the wrong direction.

ATPE recommends that SB 1173 instead replace the attendance indicator under Domain IV with other indicators that could improve the college and career readiness of elementary and middle school students. For instance, a teacher quality indicator would be a valuable addition to the public school accountability system. Research, including research commissioned by ATPE, shows that access to an experienced, well-trained educator has a positive impact on student outcomes, which would, in the case of Domain IV, enhance their long-term preparedness for college and career.

We offer these comments on SB 1173 and ask for your support of the above recommendations prior to advancing this piece of legislation. 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 more than 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.