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The Honorable Greg Abbott, Governor
P.O. Box 12428
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April 21, 2020

Dear Governor Abbott:

On behalf of the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) and the 100,000 members we represent, we write to thank you for your attention to a unique situation affecting Master Teachers as a result of last year's House Bill (HB) 3.

Under HB 3, the authorizing statutes for Master Teacher (MT) Certificates were repealed, and those existing certificates now designated by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) as "legacy" certificates will expire without options for renewal. Some Master Teachers are in a teaching assignment by virtue of their MT certificate and will be unable to continue in these assignments once their legacy certificates expire. Such teachers will be forced to seek approval to teach a course for which they are uncertified, pay to acquire a new certification, or find a new job. ATPE has asked SBEC to address this situation, and we have been engaged in creating solutions with the Texas Education Agency.

The 4,997 Master Teachers across Texas completed time-intensive, rigorous, and often costly certification programs to gain this credential above and beyond their initial certification. Most of them (82%) are Master Reading Teachers who are instrumental in supporting student literacy and mentoring other teachers in pursuit of the literacy goals core to HB 3. Texas has high expectations for students and teachers, which is why we should honor and preserve the expertise of these highly skilled and motivated teachers.

ATPE thanks you for your attention to this problem and welcomes your support in efforts to protect Master Teachers from unintended consequences of HB 3.

Sincerely,

Shannon Holmes, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Jennifer Mitchell, CAE
Governmental Relations Director

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