

**JUNE 1, 2026**

**House Committee on Public Education Interim Hearing Written Testimony**

Dear Chairman Buckley, Vice-Chair Bernal, and Members of the House Public Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the Committee's interim charge on HB 2 Monitoring. HB 2 was a monumental, historic investment in Texas public schools, providing more than \$8.5B in funding for early childhood, college and career programming, the teacher workforce, special education, and more. We were proud to advocate for HB 2's passage and have been dutifully monitoring its implementation in the interim so that school systems can promptly access its many reforms. We respectfully provide the following comments on HB 2's progress:

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

In 2024, less than half of third graders across the state were reading and doing math on grade level.<sup>1</sup> Since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade achievement is a critical indicator for long-term outcomes, such as high school graduation, postsecondary completion, and self-sustaining wage attainment,<sup>2</sup> the early childhood reforms in HB 2 met an urgent need to correct this trend once and for all. HB 2's holistic reforms - universal K-3 screening, interventions for struggling students, professional development for educators, and investments in Pre-K - have been proven to transform outcomes in neighboring states and remain a promising solution for addressing the state's early literacy and numeracy crisis.<sup>3</sup>

However, implementation so far has been slower than anticipated. So far, the Texas Education Agency has released the following:

- Call for [K-3 Literacy and Numeracy Instruments](#) (to be adopted for the 27-28 SY);
- Informal guidance for the 1-3<sup>rd</sup> grade tutoring grants ([PASS Accounts](#), to be implemented for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders beginning 26-27 SY and 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> graders in 27-28 SY);
- Guidance for the [Reading and Math Academies](#) stipends (began implementation with the 25-26 SY); and
- Guidance for the [required Math Academies training](#) (to be rolled out for compliance by the 30-31 SY).

### **The following components of HB 2's early childhood reforms have yet to be implemented:**

- Guidance and agency rulemaking for the required K-3 interventions, particularly guidance on the timing and implementation of interventions after districts start receiving their early intervention allotments in the 26-27 SY prior to adoption of the commissioner's list of instruments;
- Official guidance and agency rulemaking for the 1-3<sup>rd</sup> grade tutoring grants;
- Guidance for Pre-K Partnerships and the regional intermediaries.

Additionally, the impact of HB 2's changes to the Early Education Allotment (EEA) remain to be seen. The changes in HB 2 now require the portion of the EEA that is generated by K-3 economically disadvantaged or emergent bilingual students to first fund the second half of full-day Pre-K before proportional distribution of the remaining amount. While we appreciate the Legislature's attempt to fund full-day Pre-K, this change in HB 2 may have some unintended consequences that may cause some districts to lose money for their early education programming. Additionally, the new portion of the EEA that is generated by all K-3 students may not be enough to fund required programming, such as the Math Academies training and Reading/Math Academies stipends.

If implementation continues to delay, Texas risks further falling behind its peers in the wake of a national movement to transform 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading and math outcomes. Considering that less than half of Texas 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are still not reading or doing math on grade level, **we urge the Committee to protect HB 2's early literacy/numeracy policies, investigate the timeline for release of outstanding guidance, and reflect on the changes made to the EEA** so that districts can begin implementation and ensure that our youngest learners are set up for lifelong success sooner rather than later.

## INNOVATIVE SCHOOL MODELS

One of HB 2's bright spots is its investment in innovative school models that have been piloted and proven to improve student outcomes. By adjusting qualifications and/or funding for ADSY, Resource Campuses, Rural Pathways in Excellence Partnership (R-PEP) Programs, and charter schools, the Legislature sent a clear signal that districts who utilize evidence-based innovation in their school design as a strategy to improve student outcomes will be rewarded.

TEA quickly has released guidance related to many of these programs:

- In the 25-26 SY, districts were able to draw down the [additional ADSY funding](#) and apply for the ADSY Planning and Execution Grant Program;
- [The inaugural list of Resource Campuses](#) were announced, along with a list of eligible campuses who may participate in the coming years;
- [The R-PEP Planning and Expansion grants](#) have been released and TEA anticipates awarding up to 15 applicants;
- [The additional allotment dollars for P-TECH and R-PEP](#) students have begun flowing;
- Charter school facilities funding immediately began to flow through the Foundation School Program.

We're excited by these investments and the progress towards implementation for these programs. **We encourage the Committee to find ways to continue supporting these programs throughout the interim and heading into next session**, particularly as it relates to school improvement and school transformation.

## COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS

The Texas economy is highly dependent on the quality of its workforce. In 2025, only 37% of Texas students earned some sort of postsecondary credential within six years after high school graduation.<sup>4</sup> To make Texas a prosperous state to work and live, the Legislature recognized the need to ensure Texas students graduate high school ready for college, career, or the military. HB 2 strengthened access and funding for career and technical education, dual credit coursework, and industry-based certifications while improving workforce data reporting and postsecondary advising materials.

Between the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the TEA, the following guidance has been released:

- Guidance and rulemaking for the [industry-based certification reimbursements](#) and [FAST students in P-TECH and R-PEP](#) programs;
- Guidance around inclusion of [JROTC courses into CTE funding](#).

However, some guidance is still missing from the agencies. **The following components of HB 2's college, career, and military (CCMR) reforms have yet to be implemented:**

- Required reporting of certain workforce data, and its subsequent inclusion into My Texas Future and Texas OnCourse;
- The selection of the career readiness assessment for reimbursement;
- Guidance related to CCMR board goals.

**We encourage the Committee to evaluate the status of implementation for the remaining components of HB 2's CCMR policies.** Additionally, we encourage the Committee research additional opportunities to support students' postsecondary readiness, including access to career-connected learning and work-based learning.

## CLOSING

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Overall, we are excited about HB 2's progress and look forward to assessing its more long-term impact as the districts continue to respond. We look forward to the Committee's discussion on HB 2's progress and initial impact.

1 TEA. 2024 STAAR Results.

2 Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010). *EARLY WARNING! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*.

3 Hess, F. (2025, August). "The Southern Surge in Education." *National Review*.

4 TEA. 2025 Annual Report.

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