



# TSTA NEWS

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## **TSTA opposes relaxation of charter expansion rules**

The Texas State Teachers Association opposes a new set of rules, proposed by Education Commissioner Mike Morath, that would significantly increase opportunities for charter school chains to expand in Texas, at a potential cost of hundreds of millions of additional dollars to taxpayers and public school districts.

Among other things, the proposed rules would give charter chains that the commissioner considers high-performing under a new “performance framework” almost carte blanche freedom to open new campuses without regard for the academic need for the new schools or the negative financial impact on the school districts in which the new campuses are located.

Representatives of TSTA and other public education groups are testifying against the proposed regulations in a Texas Education Agency hearing today.

“The education commissioner is supposed to be the state’s regulator of charters, not an advocate for charter chains,” TSTA President Noel Candelaria said. “The commissioner is supposed to act in the best interests of all Texas public school students and taxpayers, not give special breaks to charter operators. We believe these proposed rules violate the standards for charter expansion required by state law.”

Candelaria added: “Texas’ public schools have been historically underfunded, and the focus should be on improving our traditional neighborhood schools, where the vast majority of our students are educated. Taxpayers cannot afford to fund an unproven parallel school system at the expense of those neighborhood schools and their students.”

Under the commissioner’s new “performance framework,” a charter chain could be labeled “high-performing” and allowed to expand in Texas without meeting all the expectations or providing all the services, such as special education, required of public schools.

Charters are receiving almost \$3 billion in state revenue a year, and much of that goes to charters operated by for-profit management organizations. Every tax dollar they receive is a state tax dollar taken away from an under-funded, neighborhood public school.

If the commissioner’s proposed rules become final, several hundred additional charter campuses are likely to sprout up in Texas at the expense of neighborhood schools and the children who attend them. The expansion is likely to lead to a dramatic growth in the state budget because of fixed school district costs that can’t be automatically reduced as their enrollments decline in favor of charters.

Link to the proposed rules:

Published in Texas Register Nov. 22, 2019: [https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/19\\_11\\_100-1010.pdf](https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/19_11_100-1010.pdf)

Published in Texas Register Nov. 29, 2019: [https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/19\\_11\\_100-1033.pdf](https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/19_11_100-1033.pdf)

Link to the Performance Framework changes:

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/archive/November222019/tables-and-graphics/201904174-1.pdf>