



HOUSE PUB ED 4.6.21

The House Public Education Committee met Tuesday for its longest meeting of the session so far, hearing thirty-eight bills over 15 hours. TSTA supported several bills this week, three of which would increase the transparency of charter schools in Texas and one that would reduce the teacher-to-student ratio in prekindergarten classrooms,

The committee also met again behind closed doors the following day to vote on 12 bills left pending from last week, four of which TSTA supported and two of which we opposed. Of particular concern are HB 1468 and HB 3270.

HB 1468 is the bill that would codify and expand virtual learning across the state. TSTA opposed this bill because it would expand an unproven model that is in large part to blame for the learning loss students have suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic. [TSTA submitted written testimony](#) alongside the other statewide teacher groups asking that the bill at minimum clarify student eligibility requirements, offer program quality protections, and sunset the provision in order to allow time and space for review. The bills committee substitute included two of our recommendations that we argued would protect program quality: the requirement that there be a synchronous component, and the stipulation that teachers must be assigned to either in-person or remote, but never both. HB 1468 passed 12 to 1, with only Rep. Allen opposing.

HB 3270 would give the commissioner of education increased power to take over districts, which is an unproved method and in opposition to myriad research showing that suffering districts need more resources and wrap-around services. This bill passed 7 to 6, with Reps. Allen, Talarico, Allison, M. González, and Bernal all opposing.

TSTA registered support for fourteen bills this week:

- **HB 41 by Talarico** (D-Round Rock), which would establish a 22:1 teacher-to-student ratio in PK classrooms and an 11:1 adult-to-student ratio.
- **HB 81 by Rodriguez** (D-Austin), which would permit schools to adopt community schools model as a turnaround plan option
- **HB 97 by Hinojosa** (D-Austin), which would prohibit charter schools from excluding students admission based on discipline histories
- **HB 189 by Canales** (D-Edinburg), which would make school superintendent severance limits applicable to charter schools
- **HB 244 by M. González** (D-Clint), which would fund computer science professional development opportunities for teachers through grants to and in partnership with institutions of higher education and regional service centers
- **HB 450 by González** (D-Clint), which would require charter schools to provide written notice to affected independent school districts at least 18 months in advance of new campuses opening through the expansion process.

- **HB 1249 by Ramos** (D-Richardson), which would require charter schools to post the 3 most recent financial statements on an easily identifiable link on the school's website homepage. TSTA submitted written testimony on this bill.
- **HB 2256 by Guerra** (D-Mission), which would create a new teaching certificate for bilingual special education.
- **HB 2756 by Allen** (D-Houston), which would allow a school district to both donate and receive surplus food to and from a local nonprofit
- **HB 2802 by Dean** (D-Longview), which would require the Commissioner of Education to apply for a waiver from standardized assessments in a designated state of emergency, and if this waiver is not granted would prohibit the state from using assessment results in accountability
- **HB 2975 by Hull** (R-Hull), which would prohibit a school resource officer or peace officer from restraining a student under the age of 10 unless the child poses a serious risk of harm to self or others
- **HB 3256 by Harless** (R-Spring), which would permit teachers to use their school address instead of home address in certain government records and documents
- **HB 3298 by Allison** (R-San Antonio), would fund computer science professional development opportunities through grants to institutes of higher education, similar to HB 244. This bill would also create advisory committees tasked to increase computer science instruction in schools
- **HB 3804 by Lozano** (R-Kingsville), would streamline professional development requirements in statute and empower local school boards to made decisions that make the most sense for local communities. This is the House version of the bill that reflects the work of the Teacher Workforce Committee, a group in which TSTA actively participated.

TSTA opposed eight bills:

- **HB 622 by Gervin-Hawkins** (D-San Antonio), which would fast-track the teacher certification process and minimize requirements for teaching health sciences and marketing in high school CTE programs.
- **HB 3528 by Sandford** (R-McKinney), which would permit schools in the Virtual School Network to serve Kindergarten through 2nd grade. Current law requires students to be in 3rd grade or higher.
- **HB 3261 by Huberty** (R-Kingwood), which would permit the instructional materials allotment to be used to support increasing district capacity to assess online.
- **HB 3450 by White** (R-Hillister), which would permit corporal punishment and the use of force against a student to "control, train or educate"
- **HB 4545 by Dutton** (D-Houston), which would create accelerated learning committees for students and additional supports funded based on student outcomes rather than student need.
- **HB 4465 by Dutton** (D-Houston), which would grant the Commissioner of Education the authority to drive the flow of federal stimulus monies
- **HB 2554 by Gates** (R-Richmond), which would establish "vocational districts" that would operate separate from and outside of the foundation high school program.

Other bills considered in this week's hearing:

- **HB 3864 by Murr** (R-Junction) would allow school districts to excuse absences for workplace shadowing.
- **HB 220 by Bernal** (D-San Antonio) would allow persistently low-performing campuses to apply for designation as a "resource campus" that would specify and fund certain programmatic and personnel requirements

- **HB 3445 by Huberty** (R-Kingwood) would impose various requirements on school districts that have excess fund balances.
- **HB 3597 by Metcalf** (R-Conroe) would remove the requirement that members appointed to school safety teams have training in counseling and mental health
- **HB 572 by Dutton** (D-Houston) would create a competency-based dropout recovery charter school pilot program with seat-time flexibility
- **HB 2874 by Anchia** (D-Dallas) would require school districts and charter schools to issue ID cards to all high school students including the student name, DOB and photo.
- **HB 998 by Dutton** (D-Houston) would lower the age of enrollment in a dropout recovery charter schools from 17 to 16 and would make changes to the ways dropout recovery schools are evaluated under the public school accountability system
- **HB 1014 by Bucy** (D-Cedar Park) would require suicide prevention information to be included on student IDs issued by schools in grades 6 through higher education
- **HB 1194 by Wu** (D-Houston) would require districts and charter schools to report to TEA on restraints, complaints, citations and arrests of students
- **HB 1144 by Ramos** (D-Richardson) would require suicide prevention training at least once every two years
- **HB 1207 by Guillen** (D-Rio Grande City) would require the SBOE to create a school turnaround specialist endorsement for principals
- **HB 1504 by Morales** (D-Houston) would include ethnic studies within social studies as one credit, allowing students to substitute ethnic studies for world geography or world history.
- **HB 1776 by K. Bell** (R-Forney) would require a school district to permit and encourage the posting of founding documents of the United States and to offer an elective course on the founding principles of the United States
- **HB 1942 by VanDeaver** (R-New Boston) would allow for the expansion of adult high school diploma and industry certification programs in charter schools. This bill was also voted out of committee this week.
- **HB 3846 by Krause** (R-Fort Worth) would change the school start date law and prohibit DOIs to claim exemption on first and last days of instruction.
- **HB 3932 by Bernal** (D-San Antonio) would establish an advisory council tasked with coordinating institutions with regard to the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission.

Twelve bills left pending in previous weeks were voted out of committee, including the contentious HB 3270 and HB 1468 that TSTA opposed. HB 3270 by Dutton is the bill written to undo the court findings in the legal battle between TEA and Houston ISD, although it would give the commissioner increased authority to take over school districts and remove due process and judicial review.

Bills opposed by TSTA that passed to the House floor:

- **HB 3270 by Dutton** (D-Houston) would fundamentally shift the balance of authority to the commissioner of education to be allowed to investigate a district for any reason, decide to take it over. Districts would be prohibited any act of recourse with the courts.
- **HB 1468 by K. Bell** (R-Forney) would extend the remote learning flexibilities afforded districts during the pandemic without limit. TSTA submitted written testimony alongside three other statewide teacher groups opposing this bill.

Bills supported by TSTA that passed to the House floor:

- **HB 256 by Cortez** (D-San Antonio) would formalize the complaint process for teachers who are being bullied in the workplace, including the bullying of teachers by parents.
- **HB 1068 by Allen** (D-Houston) would allow school district employees to use their personal leave for compensation on days designated as school holidays.
- **HB 3346 by Meza** (D-Irving) would add an indicator to the “student achievement” domain of the accountability system that would rate elementary schools on non-assessment-based aspects, to be determined by the commissioner, in equal weight to the STAAR performance component.
- **HB 3643 by K. King** (R-Hemphill) would create a “Texas Commission on Virtual Education” to study and make recommendations for virtual education, although we had hoped the passage of this bill would also put a hold on virtual expansion.

Other bills that passed to the House floor:

- **HB 1942 by VanDeaver** (R-New Boston) would create a new subchapter in the education code would allow for the expansion of adult high school diploma and industry certification programs in charter schools.
- **HB 3129 by Huberty** (R-Kingwood) would allow students access to bus service outside their district
- **HB 322 by Talarico** (D-RoundRock) would allow compensatory education funds to be used for creating new or expanding existing social emotional learning programs in schools
- **HB 1133 by Clardy** (R-Nacogdoches) would allow Rusk County to order an election to revoke its county equalization tax
- **HB 1496 by VanDeaver** (R-New Boston) would require districts to document management fees paid by or to the district regarding purchasing contracts or programs
- **HB 3557 by K. King** (R-Hemphill) would codify an option for parents to let their child repeat grades PK-8 or high school grades or credits.