



Texas Association of Community Schools

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Texas Educators **Vote** Update

The Texas Senate Education Committee met on Monday of this week to discuss interim issues related to charter schools and inappropriate teacher-student relationships. Much of the day was spent discussing the number of state revocations of charter schools and hearing pleas for facilities funding from charter operators. Fortunately, there were a few Senators present who pointed out that traditional public schools are funded at too low of a level and are too heavily regulated and scrutinized. When charter school advocates mentioned the waiting lists for attending some charter schools, one Senator made the point that many public school magnets and other programs also have long waiting lists.

The interim charge regarding inappropriate teacher-student relationships had significant debate from the committee. Committee members discussed at length the convictions (or lack thereof), and the tracking and investigation of allegations, rather than talking about proactive approaches and methods to assure that students are safe. Proactive options might include additional training or fundamentally changing the way we recruit and compensate employees, but not much time was dedicated to this discussion. The reason for the interim study is correct: parents and students DO deserve to be confident that students will be safe while they are at school, and TACS will continue to work with the legislature to help find solutions to help reach the goal. Unfortunately, Monday's meeting did not do much to accomplish that end.

While these are important discussions, it is interesting that these two "interim issues" were chosen to be addressed first. As important as these are, there are countless other issues that may be of even greater importance. However, our elected officials (yes, I'm getting to the **voting** theme) get to decide what conversations we have and which laws are written and ultimately passed.

As educators, our weapon to ensure the legislature has (1.) the right priorities and then (2.) is looking for the best answers to solve problems, is **VOTING**. We get a **vote** in who runs the state, and who picks the conversations we have and the laws that are drafted. **THIS IS OUR CHANCE** to change the conversation to things that are important: our children, our jobs, and the future of public education in Texas.

We are encouraged by the ongoing stream of districts signing up to participate in our "creating a culture of **voting**" effort. We are also very proud of the three districts that have already reached over 75% participation through educators signing the Oath to **Vote**. Those districts are the Jacksboro ISD, the Huntington ISD, and the Fort Davis ISD. We are looking forward to adding more gold stars in the days and weeks to come!

Here is a link to the site: www.texaseducatorsvote.com

To join the effort, click here www.texaseducatorsvote.com/participating-districts and add your district to the list of participants.

Many thanks,

Laura Yeager
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