

Texas Classroom Teachers Association

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Testimony of Lonnie Hollingsworth, Jr. Director of Legal Services/ Governmental Relations Texas Classroom Teachers Association

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On behalf of the Texas Classroom Teachers Association, I would like to offer some preliminary comments on the items under consideration today, particularly Charge 4. We have been following, as you no doubt have as well, projections for the upcoming legislative session and the anticipated revenue shortfall, and we recognize that it is unlikely that there will be significant new revenue available to spend on the public schools in the next biennium.

However, we would ask that, as you review and hear testimony regarding cost drivers and school district budgets in the months ahead, you keep in mind several key points.

From our perspective, the primary cost driver in the Texas public schools is the student population. Not only is the number of students in our schools growing rapidly, but many of these new students are expensive to educate as a higher percentage are impoverished, are non-English speaking, or have special needs. Couple that growth in the student population with the rising expectations of our accountability system, and it is obvious that districts will not be able to continue to meet standards without new resources indefinitely.

Texas educators and schools have done a remarkable job of producing strong results with limited resources for years. Despite the fact that the state of Texas ranks between 44th and 48th in the nation in per pupil funding, depending upon whose data you use, and that Texas ranks 3rd in the nation for the percentage of students living in poverty, the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show the following:

- Texas' 8th grade African American students tied with those in Massachusetts for first place nationally; our 4th grade African American students were third in the nation.

A report released earlier this month by the College Board commends Texas for being among the twenty states with the highest percentages of students earning a score of 3 or better on the Advanced Placement exams. A higher percentage of Texas students (28.7%) participated in AP exams than the national average of 26.5% in accomplishing these results.

In short, the national data confirm that Texas educators and students are producing better than average results (in the top 10 among states) with lower than average resources (in the bottom 10 among states).

We ask that you continue to honor the hard work that is being done by Texas students and educators by not retreating from the current limitations on class-size caps in grades K-4 and the minimum teacher salary schedule for teachers, counselors, nurses and librarians.

In support of that request, I have attached a copy of a chart that I hope will be a point of reference throughout your conversations. Although it doesn't tell you where the money is going in the public schools, to some extent it tells you where it isn't going. **Teacher salaries have not risen proportionately with increases in public school funding over the past decade.**

Further, by adjusting for both the increases in the number of students over the years reported and the number of teachers, **the chart also indicates that it is not the class-size caps that have existed since 1984 for grades K-4 that are driving costs.** Given the easy availability of waivers, weakening or eliminating class-size caps is not going to meaningfully address the school finance issues.

We urge you to hold the line for students and for teachers by resisting any efforts to raise class-size caps while student expectations are rising, or to retreat from the only mechanism in law that ensures that the funding you provide or allow local districts to collect reaches those who are providing instruction.

We are asking our members to help us identify ways in which dollars currently available to public school districts could be better spent, though we do not anticipate that any potential savings identified are likely to be significant enough to avoid the need for enhanced funding in the upcoming biennium. We look forward to working with you in the months ahead as you address the challenges of school finance, and appreciate this opportunity to encourage you to build on the progress we have made through continuing to require that class sizes be limited and teachers be appropriately compensated.



Comparison of increases in teacher salaries to increases in state and local expenditures per pupil. Increases are aggregate percentage increases above the 1991-92 school year. Prepared by Texas Classroom Teachers Association.

School Year	Total Expenditures per Pupil	Percentage Increase from 1991-92	Operating Expenditures per Pupil	Percentage Increase from 1991-92	Average Teacher Salary ¹	Percentage Increase from 1991-92	Average Student/Teacher Ratio	Teacher Salary per Pupil	Percentage Increase from 1991-92
1991-92	\$4,452		\$3,939		\$29,041.00		16.3	\$1,782	
1992-93	\$4,774	7.2%	\$4,214	7.0%	\$29,935.00	3.1%	16.3	\$1,837	3.1%
1993-94	\$4,898	10.0%	\$4,360	10.7%	\$30,521.00	5.1%	16.1	\$1,896	6.4%
1994-95	\$5,057	13.6%	\$4,504	14.3%	\$31,223.00	7.5%	16	\$1,951	9.5%
1995-96	\$5,358	20.4%	\$4,756	20.7%	\$32,001.00	10.2%	15.7	\$2,038	14.4%
1996-97	\$5,282	18.6%	\$4,717	19.8%	\$33,038.00	13.8%	15.6	\$2,118	18.9%
1997-98	\$5,597	25.7%	\$5,002	27.0%	\$34,133.00	17.5%	15.5	\$2,202	23.6%
1998-99	\$5,853	31.5%	\$5,217	32.4%	\$34,949.00	20.3%	15.3	\$2,284	28.2%
1999-00	\$6,354	42.7%	\$5,668	43.9%	\$38,287.00	31.8%	15.2	\$2,519	41.4%
2000-01	\$6,638	49.1%	\$5,915	50.2%	\$39,122.00	34.7%	14.9	\$2,626	47.4%
2001-02	\$6,913	55.3%	\$6,167	56.6%	\$40,049.00	37.9%	14.8	\$2,706	51.9%
2002-03	\$7,088	59.2%	\$6,317	60.4%	\$41,479.00	42.8%	14.7	\$2,822	58.4%
2003-04	\$7,708	73.1%	\$6,861	74.2%	\$41,768.00	43.8%	14.9	\$2,803	57.3%
2004-05	\$8,916	100.3%	\$7,084	79.8%	\$42,645.00	46.8%	14.9	\$2,862	60.6%
2005-06	\$9,269	108.2%	\$7,229	83.5%	\$43,105.00	48.4%	14.9	\$2,893	62.4%
2006-07	\$9,629	116.3%	\$7,466	89.5%	\$45,971.00	58.3%	14.7	\$3,127	75.5%
2007-08	\$10,162	128.3%	\$7,826	98.7%	\$47,283.00	62.8%	14.5	\$3,261	83.0%
2008-09	\$11,024	147.6%	\$8,342	111.8%	\$48,334.00	66.4%	14.43	\$3,350	88.0%

Teacher salary if average teacher salary per pupil had kept up with increases in operating expenditures per pupil **\$54,452**

Difference (the amount by which teacher salaries have fallen behind due to insufficient dedication of revenues to teacher salary increases) **\$6,118**

Source, Snapshot and Pocket Edition, Texas Education Agency

¹ Average teacher salaries include pay for supplemental duties such as career ladder, extracurricular activities, etc.

Percentage Increase in Operating Expenditures vs. Teacher Salaries

