

**March 26, 2015 Testimony of the Texas Latino Education Coalition for
Hearing Before the Texas Senate Education Committee**



Dear Chairman Taylor and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

The Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEC) supports “brick and mortar” public education settings based on proven methodology, not on unethical experimentation schemes that do not top traditional public schools. Furthermore, TLEC opposes agendas that seek to privatize schools or advance policies in favor of school vouchers, corporate charter schools, home-rule districts, or full-time virtual schools. These agendas result in a diversion of funds away from the very public schools that educate the majority of the state’s 5 million students, 52 percent of which are Latino. Vouchers would only magnify the existing funding inequities without doing anything to proactively repair Texas’ unconstitutional system. In addition, vouchers pose a significant threat to the academic and financial accountability of our school system.

While some have attempted to frame vouchers and other privatization schemes as “school choice,” we are not lured. Voucher proponents fail to acknowledge how these policies serve the political interests of corporate charters and educational entrepreneurs. These empowered “alternative management” entities would trample on the rights of students and teachers alike, while benefiting from taxpayer money to fund their private businesses. None of these voucher-funded schemes have consistently outperformed traditional public schools in states where they have been implemented, such as California, Arizona and Florida where, at best, they were temporary “Band-Aids.”

Schools are economic engines in their respective communities and vital to the continued maintenance of our civil society as custodians of the basic ideas that, as Americans, we hold most dearly. It is the inherent responsibility of the State of Texas and its legislators to ensure that a fully funded and equitable system of efficient public schools is accessible to all of Texas’ school age students, regardless of wealth, geography, or social status.

We demand excellent schools managed by elected bodies accountable to the public. Vouchers are not the answer and, in fact, are a distraction from true school reform. We invite legislators and educators interested in fundamental reform to review The Intercultural Development Research Association’s “Quality Schools Action Framework,” which outlines key components needed to expand the capacity and holding power of schools and communities

and serve the needs of *all* students. For more information, visit:
<http://budurl.com/IDRAQSAF>.

In sum, TLEC stands firmly in support of quality public schools and will hold our elected representatives accountable toward that end. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

The Texas Latino Education Coalition

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Texas
Mexican American School Board Members Association (MASBA)
Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC)
Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)
Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE)
Texas Association for Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE)
Dr. Hector P. Garcia American G.I. Forum Organization of Texas, Inc.
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
PRESENTE!
The McNeil Foundation
Texas Hispanics Organized for Political Education (HOPE)

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