



TLEC Urges Texas Senate to Maintain College Preparation Opportunities for All Texans – Testimony Opposing HB 2614

Presented Before the Texas Senate Education Committee, May 18, 2017

Chairman Taylor and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing the Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEC) the opportunity to provide written and oral testimony on the importance of maintaining college assessment and preparation opportunities for all Texans. TLEC is a collaborative of organizations and individuals organized to focus specifically on critical educational issues in Texas and to improve the state of education for Latina/o students in public schools.

HB 2614 makes the administration of college preparation assessments, such as the PSAT, optional to school districts instead of mandatory. College preparation assessments administered in the eighth and 10th grades are critical for college recruitment efforts – including diversity-enhancing efforts toward recruiting students of color – and are used to identify students qualifying for national merit scholar status.

Administering the early college preparation assessment tests also helps prepare *all* students for college entrance exams later in high school and facilitates building a college-ready culture for students beginning in middle school. Clear understandings of college readiness and preparation are necessary for students to be able to select their high school endorsements and college preparatory courses in high school.

Allowing these assessments to be administered at the discretion of a school district presents several serious concerns:

1. Many lower-performing, high-minority, low-funded schools will likely opt out because of a precedence placed on STAAR testing requirements.
2. Districts may decide to selectively administer the tests to certain campuses deemed “college ready” or “high achieving,” therefore excluding students at other schools.
3. Schools may be left with the option of only administering the test to advanced-track students, despite college interests and potential of students in other classes. This would result in tracking students’ college preparation opportunities.

4. Funding must be restored for the program to ensure all Texas students access these exams.

The legislature should be exploring ways to better support the college pipeline, not taking it apart. All Texas students deserve the opportunity to gain early college knowledge and preparation for future college success. TLEC thanks you for the opportunity to present testimony on this important issue and urges this committee to oppose HB 2614.

For questions or more information, please contact David Hinojosa, National Director of Policy for the Intercultural Development Research Association, at david.hinojosa@idra.org.