Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition

Letter to Texas House Speaker on Importance of Racial Representation among Committee Leadership
February 2, 2021

Dear Speaker Phelan,

The Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition (TLEEC) is a collaborative of over 25 organizations with the mission to improve the quality of public education for all children, with a focus on racial equity. We advocate at the local, state, and national levels for high-quality teaching, curriculum and instructional practices and bilingual education for emergent bilingual students (i.e., English learners), as well as fair funding and enhanced college access and success.

To accurately represent and reflect our racially diverse state, we encourage you to consider racial diversity in your decisions for House committee chair positions, vice-chair positions, and member appointments. Unfortunately, the Senate committee assignments did not include a single chairperson of color.

Yet, Texans of color—Black, Latino/a, Asian American, and Native residents—comprise nearly 60% of Texans,¹ the majority constituency for the most critical policy decisions during this session. Our public schools serve a majority of students of color: 73% of Texas public school students are Black, Latino/a, Asian, Native or two or more races.² 55% of Texans who have contracted COVID-19 are Black or Latino/a.³

In order to reflect the diverse values and priorities of Texas, House committee leadership must represent the diverse population of Texas. While racial representation among committee leadership is important in every legislative consideration, it will be even more so during a largely virtual legislative session with limited opportunities for in-person advocacy. Racially diverse committee leaders will be able to offer important perspectives and amplify the voices of their communities during the legislative session. Since drafted House rules indicate that invited and public testimony protocols will largely be at the discretion of the committee chairs, ensuring racial representation among committee chairpersons would also ensure more of the Texas public is able to engage in the democratic process.

We thank you for your consideration of how to sustain a robust democratic process throughout this historic state legislative session.

For questions, please contact TLEEC either through Ana Ramón (ana.ramon@idra.org), or Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., at IDRA (chloe.sikes@idra.org), or Fátima Menéndez, J.D., at MALDEF (fmenendez@maldef.org).

Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition
The Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition (TLEEC) is a collaborative of organizations and individuals with the mission to improve the quality of public education for all children, with a focus on racial equity. The coalition convenes organizations and individuals who advocate in the interest of public school students at the local, state and national levels.

**TLEEC Member Organizations**

ARISE Adelante  
Breakthrough Central Texas  
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD)  
Dr. Hector P. García G.I. Forum  
Easterseals Central Texas  
Every Texan  
Houston Community Voices for Public Education  
Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)  
McNeil Educational Foundation for Ecumenical Leadership  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)  
Mexican American School Board Members Association (MASBA)  
National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) – Tejas Foco  
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
Texas American Federation of Teachers  
Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE)  
Texas Association for Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE)  
Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC)  
Texas Center for Education Policy, University of Texas – Austin  
Texas Hispanics Organized for Political Education (HOPE)  
Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
Texas NAACP  
The Education Trust in Texas  
UnidosUS (formerly known as NCLR)

**Additional Supporting Organizations**

Educate Texas  
Texans Care for Children  
Philanthropy Advocates - A Collaboration with Educate Texas  
Young Invincibles

---

1. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2019, 1-year estimates  
3. Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas COVID-19 Case Counts, as of Jan. 24, 2021