



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).

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

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

² Texas Education Agency, [2019-2020 Pocket Edition](#)

³ Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas COVID-19 Case Counts, as of Jan. 24, 2021