



Letter to the Texas Commissioner of Education on Greater Transparency and Representation in Teacher Vacancy Task Force

March 18, 2022

Dear Commissioner Morath and TEA Staff:

The Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition (TLEEC) is a collaborative of over 20 organizations and individuals 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.

TLEEC members represent diverse voices for public education and write to express concern about the lack of transparency and representation from the Texas Education Agency in appointing members to the Teacher Vacancy Task Force. We appreciate the recent statement that more teachers and teaching experts will be added to the Task Force, and offer qualified individuals and organizations to consider for additional appointments below.

Across the state, in both rural and urban school districts, Texas' teacher shortage has come to a breaking point. The current spike in educators leaving the profession is exacerbating long-standing teacher diversity issues that have resulted in an educator workforce that does not reflect the make-up of Texas' public school students. Additionally, the state's struggle to staff teachers in critical areas for years, including in bilingual education, special education, science, mathematics, and technology, has been compounded by the current crisis of teacher recruitment and retention. Thus, the teacher shortage demands immediate attention and input from a broad, representative cross-section of our teachers, families and students, and organizations that work most closely with the students most impacted.

We respectfully ask that you consider appointing additional teachers and representatives of teacher groups to the Task Force from our Coalition membership. Our membership includes qualified teacher trainers and educational leaders, such as:

- Dr. Olivia Hernández, President of the Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE) and Consulting Partner for the Southwest Region for TNTP in Multilingual Education
- Dr. Lizdelia Piñon, Education Associate for Bilingual Education, IDRA (Intercultural Development Research Association)
- Members from the Texas American Federation of Teachers (Texas AFT)
- Members from the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA)

Please reach out to TLEEC or the named organizations directly for further information on recommended candidates for the Teacher Vacancy Task Force. Additionally, many of our members have expertise in areas that are relevant to teacher recruitment and retention and the impact of teacher shortages. These experts would be pleased to present research, data, and recommendations during Task Force meetings.

In addition, we urge the TEA to provide opportunities for additional stakeholder input so that students, families, community members and organizations that are dedicated to equitable approaches to address the teacher shortage may contribute recommendations to this urgent issue. Public opportunities for input should include live broadcasts of Task Force meetings with public comment periods, an online portal for public comment to be submitted apart from Task Force meetings, and scheduled stakeholder meetings with non-Task Force members.

TLEEC looks forward to collaborating with the Task Force to develop robust, actionable, and timely recommendations to meet the needs of our teacher workforce and our classroom students in these high-need subject areas.

Respectfully,

Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition

For questions and more information, please contact TLEEC either through Michelle Castillo, Ed.M. (michelle.castillo@idra.org), or Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes at IDRA (chloe.sikes@idra.org), or Fátima Menéndez 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 and Partners

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

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