

## Texas Classroom Teachers Association



PO Box 1489 | Austin, Texas 78767  
888-879-8282 | 512-477-9415 | Fax: 512-469-9527  
tcta.org

### **Testimony of the Texas Classroom Teachers Association to the House Public Education Committee on H.B. 100 April 4, 2023 By Paige Williams, Director of Legislation**

We appreciate the work of Chairman King and the committee on the issues of school district funding and teacher compensation. We support the change in funding from average daily attendance to enrollment and hope that this change will be retained.

Regarding teacher compensation issues, we continue to advocate for a salary increase that will guarantee a significant increase to all employees currently subject to the state minimum salary schedule. This can be accomplished through an increase in the basic allotment with a supplemental allotment as was initially done in 1999 through the passage of S.B. 4 by the 76<sup>th</sup> Legislature. A similar mechanism was used to fund health insurance in 2001 and teacher salary increases in 2006 and 2009. This mechanism has been successfully used to equitably increase school funding and teacher salaries while also reducing property taxes, and there is no reason not to use a similar mechanism to accomplish these goals this session.

While the proposed changes to the minimum salaries payable and other mechanisms in H.B. 100 will increase salaries for some teachers, it is unclear how much salaries will be increased, and there is no specific guarantee for all teachers. We are also very concerned about the elimination of the current minimum teacher salary schedule for several reasons. While minimum salaries are not eliminated entirely, they are replaced with minimum salaries at zero, five, and ten years of experience with four lanes for each of these steps. Under the current system, many teachers find themselves maxed out at step 20, as districts have little incentive to continue to pay above that step. We are concerned that the proposal would have teachers maxed out at ten years instead.

The current system raises minimum salaries in direct proportion to increases in the basic allotment. It was this mechanism that created the bulk of the raises that resulted from the passage of H.B. 3. The current proposal would eliminate the linkage between the basic allotment and teacher salaries. We also have concerns about the proposal that would eliminate any minimum salary payable for teachers with unsatisfactory performance ratings. The bill does not define what is considered to be unsatisfactory, and this provision would leave salary decisions subject to the decision of a single appraiser in many situations.

We continue to have concerns about the teacher incentive allotment and would prefer that it not be tied to the minimum salaries payable. While the residency program for teachers is intriguing and worth

pursuing, we do not know enough about the program to tie passage from a teacher residency program to a higher teacher minimum salary. We also do not know how uncertified and probationary certificate teachers will fit on the proposed minimum salaries payable as presumably these teachers would not remain uncertified or probationary, and it is unclear how they would transition to the base certification amount.

As mentioned, the main reason that H.B. 3 increased salaries was due to the increase in the basic allotment and its linkage to the minimum salary schedule. The requirement in H.B. 3 that districts use 22.5% of increased funding to increase salaries is insufficient to drive teacher salary increases. For that reason, we appreciate the proposed increase in H.B. 100 to increase this percentage to 50%. We still have some concerns about this mechanism, however, due to the lack of enforceability for districts that do not comply. Districts do not know exactly how much their funding per student has increased over the previous year until final settle up in the fall after the school year is over. While the bill allows districts to make up any payments to employees the following year that should have been made pursuant to the 50% requirement, it does not require them to do so. Districts typically require employees to file salary grievances within 15 days of the date a compensation system is adopted as a prerequisite to appealing salary decision. If the employees fail to do so, they lose any chance to appeal. Unless TEA enforces the 50% requirement, which it won't, the requirement is not enforceable.

TCTA continues to believe that the Legislature can afford to fund a significant increase in salaries for all educators subject to the state minimum salary schedule while also increasing funding to schools so that the salaries of other school employees can be increased, and we respectfully ask this committee to consider such an approach.