



October 6th, 2026

Chairwoman Campbell and Members
Senate Committee on Education
Texas Senate

RE: Written Testimony on House Bill 2 and Teacher Compensation

Chairwoman Campbell and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding teacher compensation and the implementation of House Bill 2 (HB 2).

Texas should be able to attract and retain capable teachers. But the effectiveness of HB 2 should not be measured by the size of its appropriation or by the number of employees receiving a state-funded increase. The relevant question is whether the legislation improved teacher recruitment, retention, and classroom quality in proportion to its continuing cost.

The teacher retention allotment directs larger increases to experienced classroom teachers and provides greater amounts in districts with 5,000 or fewer students. That structure reflects a legislative judgment that experience and rural recruitment difficulties deserve particular attention. Oversight should now test that judgment against actual results.

The Texas Education Agency should report teacher vacancies, turnover, years of experience, certification status, and departures from the profession before and after implementation. Results should be separated by district size, region, subject area, and campus need. Statewide averages could conceal substantial differences between rural districts, growing suburban systems, and large urban districts.

Lawmakers should also determine whether the experience thresholds create unintended consequences. Teachers with fewer than three years of experience do not qualify for the prescribed teacher retention increases. Yet those early years are often when teachers are most likely to leave the profession. The Legislature should examine whether the structure retains experienced teachers while making it more difficult for districts to recruit or retain newer ones.

The differential between small and large districts should receive similar scrutiny. Larger allotments may help rural and smaller districts compete, but they may also influence movement between neighboring districts or produce unequal compensation for educators performing similar work. Those possibilities do not prove the policy is misguided, but they demonstrate why implementation should be evaluated through outcomes rather than intentions.

Compensation should also be considered within the larger structure of public-school spending. Texas has repeatedly increased education funding, yet additional appropriations do not automatically reach classrooms or improve educational quality. Districts retain responsibility for prioritizing teachers over administrative growth, duplicative programs, and expenditures that do not advance instruction.

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State reporting should therefore place the new allotments alongside each district's total revenue, enrollment, classroom staffing, central-office employment, and administrative expenditures. The Legislature should be able to determine whether HB 2 supplemented genuine local prioritization or displaced compensation that districts otherwise could have provided from existing resources.

The same principle applies to the support staff retention allotment. School counselors, nurses, librarians, classroom assistants, bus drivers, custodial workers, and other non-administrative employees contribute to school operations. But lawmakers should examine how much of the allotment reached employees, how districts distributed it, and whether it improved retention. Creating a permanent funding stream without measuring its results would substitute continued spending for accountability.

Texas Policy Research remains concerned about addressing structural education problems primarily through additional state spending and increasingly prescriptive funding formulas. State-directed salary allotments may produce an immediate increase, but they also reduce local flexibility and create expectations of continuing appropriations regardless of performance.

The Legislature should resist treating the current funding level as an automatic baseline for future expansion. Any continuation or increase should be supported by evidence that the allotments improved recruitment and retention more effectively than alternative uses of public resources.

Teachers should be compensated according to the value of their work, local labor conditions, experience, responsibilities, and effectiveness. A durable compensation system should give districts sufficient flexibility to reward excellent educators while holding local officials accountable for how they prioritize existing funds.

HB 2 should therefore be evaluated as a policy intervention, not celebrated merely as a spending achievement. If its compensation provisions retain effective teachers and strengthen classrooms, the evidence should demonstrate that. If they primarily increase recurring costs without changing outcomes, lawmakers should be willing to reconsider the structure.

The objective should not be to spend more for its own sake. It should be to place resources closer to students, reward effective educators, and ensure that taxpayers receive measurable educational value.

Thank you for your consideration.

For Liberty, For Texas!

Jeremy D. Kitchen
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