

Association of Texas Professional Educators

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Supporting Your Freedom to TeachSM

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Important changes still needed in accountability bills

The following is a statement by Jerry Bonham, a teacher with the Mesquite Independent School District and state president of the 112,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators, regarding Senate Bill 3 by Sen. Florence Shapiro (R–Plano) and House Bill 3 by Rep. Rob Eissler (R–The Woodlands):

“Educators appreciate that our lawmakers have taken the time to focus on the problems with our accountability system, but there are a few issues the Legislature must address to ensure that these bills will benefit students and schools in the long run.

“Although the two accountability bills allow some options for schools to report student progress on standardized tests, they don’t bring any concrete reduction to the reliance on standardized testing Texas students face today.

“Preparing students for post-secondary success is a positive step, but the standards-setting process is still unclear. It also fails to hold schools accountable for making sure that each child is guaranteed the benefit of teachers who are certified in the subjects to which they are assigned.

“The bills also continue the practice of sanctioning struggling schools rather than providing adequate resources to improve student performance. We encourage lawmakers to consider alternatives other than threatening to close schools down, such as ensuring that classrooms in struggling schools are staffed by experienced, fully certified teachers.”

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The 112,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators is the largest educators’ group in Texas and the largest nonunion educators’ group nationwide. Its membership consists of classroom teachers, para-educators, administrators, college students and retired educators. ATPE is committed to advocating for better benefits for all educators, promoting a collaborative work environment and the right of educators to choose the association they feel represents their interests, and providing the best education possible for all Texas school children.