

Association of Texas Professional Educators

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Supporting Your Freedom to TeachSM

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Teachers in best position to determine students' grades

The following is a statement from Sam Spurlock, the state president of the 112,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators, regarding the lawsuit filed by six Texas school districts over the Texas Education Agency's interpretation of the new minimum grading law created by the 81st Legislature:

“A teacher's ability to evaluate and reward a student's work is crucial in developing an effective classroom relationship where the teacher sets the objectives that must be met and the student works to meet those expectations.

“But as the state and school districts lock horns over who has the authority to determine local grading policies, both sides are overlooking the need of the classroom teacher to have the ability to determine a student's grade based on his or her understanding of the subject matter.

“The courts will now have to weigh in on who is best suited to determine the grades of each student: the teacher, the district or the state?

“This lawsuit speaks volumes about the lengths districts feel they need to go in order to stem the flow of dropouts and meet accountability requirements; however, by creating a minimum grading floor, districts have developed a new form of social promotion and diminished teachers' professional discretion and authority in classrooms which lawmakers understandably wish to end.”

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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