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**Texas education commissioner announces intent to step down**

**AUSTIN, Texas** — This morning, the Commissioner of Education formally advised Governor Abbott of his intent to step down effective January 1, 2016. The following is a statement from the Association of Texas Professional Educators—the state’s largest educator association.

“We did not always agree with Commissioner Williams on all decisions, but we valued his willingness to solicit input from the greater education community during his tenure in the office,” ATPE Executive Director Gary Godsey said. “In particular, we have appreciated his tenacity in upholding Texas’s tradition of local control over education decisions such as the use of resources and how to evaluate teachers, as well as his willingness to stand up to unrealistic mandates from the federal government. We wish Commissioner Williams all the best in his future endeavors, and we hope that his successor will similarly commit to inviting educator groups and other diverse stakeholders to the table for productive discussions about moving Texas public schools forward.”

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The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators’ association in Texas with more than 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school education.