



My name is Brian Woods and I am superintendent in Northside ISD, and President of the Texas Association of School Administrators. Today I am testifying on behalf of TASA and in opposition of HB 3731.

As you know, we now have enough accountability data under the A-F system to see some trends.

There is a clear association between grades and socioeconomic status. This is true for districts and even truer for campuses. The data I will present comes from the 2019 administration of the STAAR.

Statewide, at the district level, 75% of districts that scored a D or F serve a population that is equal to or exceeds the state average for economic disadvantage.

Statewide, at the campus level, 87% of campuses that scored at D or F serve a population that is equal to or greater than the average percentage of economic disadvantage. The correlation is moderate at -0.42.

Looking at the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum, campuses that serve a population that is between 0 and 20% economically disadvantaged, 98.6% scored an A.

In my region of the state, where poverty is more acute than in some other areas, 92% of campuses that scored a D or F serve a population equal or greater than the state average. The correlation between SES and grades jumps to -0.57. That means that of all the hundreds of variables that impact student achievement – both outside and inside of the school house, fully one third of the overall model that awards grades to campuses is determined by one variable – family economic status.

We have campuses that are currently labeled a D where student growth far exceeds many C, B and A rated campuses. In other words, the “amount of learning” is greater at the D rated campus. However, even with one and, impressively, two years of growth, they can’t reach the cut point for a C or B grade.

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The move to make a D rating “unacceptable” is inconsistent with the desires of the legislature in the 85th session that emphasized that only “multiple” D ratings could be deemed worthy of “interventions and sanctions that apply to unacceptable campuses.”

Rather than simply label more campuses as unacceptable, we need to look at multiple methods of measurement and incorporate more elements into the state system or allow a locally developed system account for a portion of the overall result.

There are currently 703 D rated campuses and 43 D rated districts that would start down the path of TEA takeover / 1842 charter partnership / conservator / BOM by being labeled Year 1 AU rather than Needs Improvement.

The spectrum weights in HB 3 are designed to provide more resources to campuses and districts serving students of generational poverty. We have not had time (or frankly the dollars) to see the academic benefits of HB 3. Not to even mention the massive learning loss caused by the impact of COVID in the last 13 months. Why change the rules now?

Without any provision for multiple measures beyond the STAAR, labeling more campuses unacceptable simply puts more emphasis on the test that, outside of TEA, is wildly unpopular and generally considered a poor measurement, by itself, of either a child, a teacher or a school.

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