

March 21, 2023

House Public Education Committee

RE: House Bill 2162 by Rep. Harold Dutton

Dear Chairman Buckley and Members of the Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2162 relating to reading instruction, assessment instruments and interventions provided to public school students. While our organizations appreciate Rep. Dutton's efforts to support the reading skills of our youngest students, the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA), the Texas Association of Schools Boards (TASB), the Texas Association of Community Schools (TACS), the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA) and Raise Your Hand Texas (RYHT) must respectfully offer this written testimony in opposition to the bill. Our rationale is as follows:

**Issue: HB 2162 mandates that a district contract with and pay a private, third party tutoring service with taxpayer dollars without any accompanying eligibility requirements for the outside entity or accountability measures following the contract.** Our organizations have grave concerns with this provision. Texas teachers have been through the state's rigorous reading academy training and earned certifications for the Science of Teaching Reading (STR) by passing the state-developed exam. Outside entities whose tutors have not demonstrated proficiency through these scrupulous training requirements or demonstrated achievement on the STR exam do not have the same high-level qualifications that Texas K-3 teachers and principals have through these state programs. The Legislature requires reading academy training in statute, the Texas Education Agency has designed the content and implementation of the training, and the State Board for Educator Certification has approved the STR examinations. Entrusting our youngest children with personnel in outside entities who do not have the same qualifications or experiences as the teachers in our public schools is counter to all state expectations regarding reading skills. The lack of any accountability provisions after a district contracts with an outside entity is equally worrisome.

**Issue: High-stakes testing for students in grades K-2.** Texas early reading instruments were established as progress monitoring tools, to inform instruction by alerting a teacher to a student's areas of strength and weakness in reading skills. The early reading instruments are not designed for the same purpose as STAAR tests and to use a student's performance on these diagnostic tools as a rationale for contracting with a third party outside of the public school system leads to a high-stake environment which is not the intended use of early reading instruments.

**Issue: HB 2162 dictates methodology.** The Legislature has long recognized that the state should not dictate methodology used by a teacher or the time spent by a teacher or a student on a particular task or subject. For example, TEC Section 28.002(i) restricts the State Board of Education from adopting rules that designate methodology or time. By forbidding Texas teachers from using a particular methodology a precedent is set that could be to the disadvantage of students e.g., a student who is hard of hearing or deaf may benefit from elements of the three-cueing methodology and a teacher would be prohibited from using this instructional practice.

Thank you for considering our input on HB 2162. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us with questions.

Respectfully,

Dr. Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators



Whitney Broughton, Texas Association of School Boards



Dr. Crystal Dockery, Texas Association of Community Schools



Mark Terry, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association



Bob Popinski, Raise Your Hand Texas

