



Texas AFT

*A Union of Professionals*

[www.texasaft.org](http://www.texasaft.org)

912 Hwy 183 South  
Suite 100-A  
Austin, TX 78741  
512-448-0130  
f: 512-448-0678

May 29, 2025

Rep. Brad Buckley  
Room E2.510  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768

Rep. Diego Bernal  
Room 4N.6  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768

Rep. Trent Ashby  
Room E2.806  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768

Rep. Will Metcalf  
Room 1N.12  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768

Rep. Brooks Landgraf  
Room E2.602  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Chairman Buckley and House Bill 4 Conferees:

I want to thank you for taking up the important issue of overhauling the state's flawed and unwieldy assessment and accountability regime. This remains a priority for our members, as well as Texas parents, and we are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate on legislation with such monumental impact on our schools, educators, and students.

We are glad the House refused to concur with Senate changes. Now, we hope you will work expeditiously in the conference committee to produce a final version of HB 4 that is closely aligned with the version that passed the House.

On several occasions – most recently, May 22 – we have asked our members for feedback on legislative proposals, including HB 4. The following items arose from those conversations with classroom educators, many of them parents themselves, and we urge you to ensure any final bill language reflects this positive feedback on HB 4 as engrossed:



**Texas AFT**

*A Union of Professionals*

[www.texasaft.org](http://www.texasaft.org)

912 Hwy 183 South  
Suite 100-A  
Austin, TX 78741  
512-448-0130  
f: 512-448-0678

- **Replace STAAR with a through-year assessment:** For Texas educators and for most Texas parents, there is no real reform of our system without nixing the STAAR test in its entirety. While our members are always wary of state mandates that create a “teach to the test environment,” we also want to do everything in our power to help students grow. The high-stakes, time-intensive STAAR assessment should be replaced with shorter, summative through-year testing that maximizes instructional time and provides rapid feedback to instructors.
- **Restore Student Engagement and Workforce Development Indicators:** This provision from the House version was stripped by the Senate, but it is vital to any reform of our accountability measures. I think we all agree that our children are more than their test scores. By extension, “grading” their schools solely on standardized testing does not paint a wholly accurate picture of the learning environment. We ask that you restore this provision, which ensured elementary and middle school campus A-F ratings could also be based on participation in extracurriculars, career and technical education (CTE), and pre-Kindergarten participation, among other things. If our belief is that we measure what we value, then how can we not measure a topic that has been declared an emergency item by our Legislature like career training?
- **Preserve safeguards against commissioner overreach:** Our union was initially opposed to HB 4 when it granted the commissioner of education and the Texas Education Agency broader powers over the makeup of assessments, the assessment schedule, and the A-F rating criteria for schools and districts. The version that passed the House corrected course and addressed many of those concerns. It is vital these guardrails remain in place to rebuild trust between the state and our local communities that have felt under siege as TEA moved goalposts retroactively. Our members ask that you prioritize the requirements for the commissioner to set standards by July 15, limit changes to a schedule determined by statute, and preserve the authority of the Legislature to approve major changes to A-F.

With respect,

Zeph Capo  
President, Texas AFT