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Coalition to Invest in Texas Schools Stands with Texas Teachers, Principals and Parents A Response to House Bill 2 from the Education Community

HB 2 fails the school children of Texas.

“This bill fails students, teachers, parents and our communities because it does not provide a long-term solution to the funding crisis facing Texas public schools,” said Dawson Orr, Superintendent, Wichita Falls ISD. “In addition, this bill fails because it does not restore the program cuts from last session and institutes a host of new requirements without providing adequate dollars.”

Today the Coalition to Invest in Texas Schools joins with Texas teachers, principals and parents to speak up for the school children in Texas public schools. HB 2 does not provide the necessary resources to meet the fundamental needs facing today’s public education system.

As filed, HB 2 is said to provide \$3 billion new state dollars for public schools; however, there is no funding mechanism in the bill to raise this new money. According to the Texas Constitution, it is the duty of Texas legislators to create sustainable mechanisms for supporting the demands of public education. HB 2 is insufficient and fails to meet that duty.

“The money in HB 2 does not even make up for the cuts from last session. Schools across the state—rich and poor—are cutting programs and teachers left and right to the detriment and chagrin of parents and children. HB 2 is not an investment in public education,” said Rick Woolfolk, School Board Trustee, Denton ISD, member of Texas Association of School Boards.

One year ago when the Coalition to Invest in Texas Schools was formed we laid out a list of core principles for evaluating new school finance legislation. Those same principles remain. Any new system must:

- Be adequate to fund the diverse needs of districts throughout our big state;
- Provide at least 90% equity and a clear roadmap to bring 98 percent of Texas school children into an equalized system over time;

- Provide new capacity to allow the system to grow as we meet the challenges of tomorrow;
- Respect local control;
- Provide for adequate classroom facilities for our school children.

HB 2 does not sufficiently meet these principles.

The following elements of HB 2 highlight how the bill fails to meet these principles:

- **Inadequate operations funding**
- **New mandates effectively reduce or eliminate the benefits of new funds**
- **Inequity**
- **Inadequate facilities funding**

“Today the ENTIRE Texas education community stands united to urge the Texas Legislature to adopt a school finance plan that increases funding, prioritizes increased student achievement, and strengthens equity and adequacy,” said Dawson Orr. “We have grave concerns with the provisions of HB 2 and ask that these issues along with capacity be addressed with input from those engaged everyday in educating Texas children. We know the legislators can and will do their duty and we look forward to working with them to develop an equitable and adequate school finance system that benefits all Texas children and local communities.”

The Coalition to Invest in Texas Schools was created to ensure that increased education funding is the top priority of all Texas lawmakers. The Coalition is comprised of organizations that represent EVERY school district in the state of Texas. Further information can be found on the Coalition’s website, www.investintexasschools.org.

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