



PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1605  
HOUSE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE INTERIM HEARING  
KELLE KIESCHNICK, VICE PRESIDENT OF POLICY | AUGUST 12, 2024

Chair Buckley, Vice Chair Allen and members of the committee,

My name is Kelle Kieschnick and I am the Vice President of Policy at the Texas Business Leadership Council, a non-partisan association of CEOs focused on public policies that support a more globally competitive Texas.

Studies of the curriculum teachers use in classrooms found that more than 80% of Texas public school children are taught below grade level which is setting students up to fail. We see this reflected in the 2024 STAAR results - across all grades and subjects, 53% of Texas students performed below grade level. And once students fall behind it is difficult to get them caught up - historical STAAR data show that only 5% of Texas 3rd graders who are academically behind catch up within two years.

Why does this matter to business leaders? Texas businesses are experiencing the downstream impacts of challenging student outcomes. Texas Talent Trajectory data reflects that only 1 in 4 students complete a certificate, associate or bachelor's degree by the age of 24. One of our most important resources that draw businesses to locate in Texas is our workforce, yet we currently do not have enough workers with the right skills to fill open positions. In order to improve postsecondary outcomes and better meet workforce needs, the Texas public education system must better equip students for future success.

The 88th Legislature made strategic investments to do just that with the passage of House Bill 1605. Robust implementation will ensure Texas school districts have access to rigorous and on-grade-level instructional materials, reduce the burden on teachers, and provide parents increased visibility into what their students are learning.

We commend the State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency for the significant work done to develop the Instructional Materials Review and Approval process that provides a systemic approach to ensure instructional materials are aligned with Texas standards and pedagogically sound to better serve Texas students.

We encourage the Board and Agency to stay the course with the current timeline to provide districts with access to high-quality instructional materials in core subjects for the 2025-26 school year and to evolve this process to include more grades and subjects going forward.

Improving student outcomes today through evidence-based best practices including high quality instructional materials is critical to seeding the state's education pipeline for the skilled workforce of the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and I am happy to take any questions.