



Public Testimony FOR Senate Bill 26

Senate Education K-16 Committee

February 20, 2025

Chairman Creighton, Vice Chair Campbell, and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

We are a non-partisan network of business leaders advancing policies to support a globally competitive Texas. We currently have a skills gap due to low postsecondary attainment that is putting a strain on our workforce and leading Texas employers to hire skilled workers from out of state.

Less than 25% of students earn a postsecondary credential by the age of 24 yet it is estimated that 63% of Texas jobs will require a credential beyond high school by 2031.¹ College and career readiness starts with a strong early education, however, the increase in uncertified, underprepared teachers is negatively impacting student outcomes and this is becoming an economic issue for the state. Research shows that **students taught by an unqualified teacher experience learning loss** and this is linked to lower annual wages impacting Texas students' lifetime earning potential, reflecting these students are less prepared for workplace success.²

Just as Texas business leaders experience, new employees get better with more time on the job and so do teachers. The new **Teacher Retention Allotment** created by SB 26 will incentivize teachers with a pay raise if they stay for at least 3 years, with the ability to double their raise if they stay for 5 years.

Additionally, we support the steps that SB 26 takes to increase utilization of the **Teacher Incentive Allotment** which has a proven record of both improving student outcomes and improving teacher retention. Creation of a new designation category

¹ Texas Talent Trajectory (T3). 8th Grade Cohort Data: 2013 (2024). [The Texas Talent Trajectory \(T3\)](#); Carnevale, A.P et al. (2023). After Everything: Projections of Jobs, Education, and Training Requirements through 2031. Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. [After Everything Projections 2031 National Report](#).

² Kirksey, J. (2024). [Amid Rising Number of Uncertified Teachers, Previous Classroom Experience Proves Vital in Texas.](#); Marder, M., Torres, L.G., Martinez, C., (2024). [Beyond the Tipping Point: The Rise of the Uncertified Teachers in Texas.](#)

and expanding the cap allows districts to identify and retain more effective teachers and more teachers will be rewarded for their strong performance.

Beyond pay, the added **benefit of providing free Pre-K for 3- and 4-year old children of teachers** will help to maximize workforce participation, as well as support the future success of those children.

We commend Chairman Creighton and the committee for the historic pay raise that SB 26 provides and look forward to seeing how forthcoming bills address the high number of uncertified teachers in our schools.

- We encourage state investment in **high-quality educator prep pathways** and **reducing or waiving certification costs**.
- We also encourage the committee to consider **differentiated compensation** - it is demoralizing for a new teacher who invested time and money in a high-quality educator prep program to be paid the same as someone who is uncertified, has no classroom experience, and may not even have a bachelor's degree.

By taking on our teacher workforce challenges from multiple angles with Chairman Creighton's teacher bill package, we are confident that the 89th Legislature will make major strides to improve outcomes so Texas students can ultimately be more competitive in the workforce.

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

Respectfully,

Kelle Kieschnick
Vice President of Policy
Texas Business Leadership Council
kkieschnick@txblc.org
Cell: 952-818-5189