

## **Strengthen Public Education in Texas**

WHEREAS, only 16% of low income 4th graders in Texas are proficient in reading compared to 39% of non-poor students, only 16% of African-American 4th graders in Texas are proficient in reading compared to 39% of white students, only 17% of Latino 4th graders in Texas are proficient in reading compared to 39% of white students; and

WHEREAS only 15% of 3-year-old Texas children participate in state sponsored pre-kindergarten or the federal Head Start program; and

WHEREAS Texas' high school graduation rate is a woeful 68%; and

WHEREAS 53% of Texas high school graduates enroll in college but only 49% of college freshmen earn a bachelor's degree within 6 years; and

WHEREAS in Texas 21% of average family income is required to pay for annual community college expenses after accounting for financial aid and 26% of average family income is required to pay for expenses at a 4 year public university; and

WHEREAS 24% of Texas youth go unsupervised after school and only 10% participate in after school programs; and

WHEREAS 30% of middle and high school classes in core academic subjects as well as 36% of middle and high school classes in core academic subjects at high poverty schools are taught by instructors who lack at least a college minor in their subject; and

WHEREAS the increases for Title I and IDEA fall far short of the levels promised in the No Child Left Behind Act; and

WHEREAS the National Education Association 2005 report stated Texas teachers earned an average salary of \$41,009 for the 2004-05 school year which was approximately \$6,000 less than the national average of \$47,750; and

WHEREAS according to the Texas Public Policy Foundation, teachers cite student discipline, administrative problems, school district policies and the inability of teachers to participate in school decision making as the main reasons for lack of satisfaction in their chosen vocation; and

WHEREAS high stakes standardized testing harms children by reducing their worth to single test scores and penalizes under performing schools by closing them or turning them into for-profit charter schools, therefore be it

RESOLVED that we support the strengthening of public education in Texas by:

1. Providing access to universal high quality pre-kindergarten and full day kindergarten for all 3 and 4 year old children, beginning with low income and minority children who need it most, paid for with a combination of federal, state, local and private dollars
2. Calling for policy makers and educators to radically redesign high schools and their relationship with post secondary institutions, thereby assuring every student is fully prepared for college or vocational/technical school based upon his/her ability level

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### Strengthen Public Education in Texas (continued)

3. Working toward redirecting high school dropouts back into learning environments that lead to gainful employment
4. Restoring funding on a national level for college financial aid and increasing state aid for students based upon financial need as well as merit
5. Having the state provide incentives for all school districts to make better use of the school day by aligning school time with student learning and providing structured activities for after school hours
6. Encouraging the federal government to support the crafting, adoption and promotion of voluntary, rigorous national standards in core curriculum subjects as well as expanding national accountability measures and supporting and assisting low performing schools
7. Calling for the state of Texas and local school districts, with support from federal financial incentives, to restructure and upgrade preparation programs and on-the-job training opportunities for teachers, as well as redesigning teacher compensation based upon fair performance measures and guaranteeing the equitable distribution of high quality teachers to school districts
8. Demanding the repeal of the under funded No Child Left Behind Act
9. Allowing teachers more decision making authority in the classroom regarding curriculum
10. Significantly reducing the number of standardized tests given in a school year and instead focusing on teaching a solid core curriculum as opposed to merely “teaching to a test”

Submitted to and Adopted by Precinct Number \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County

Precinct Convention Secretary (signature) \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Submitted to and Adopted by State Sen. District \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County

Sen. District/Co. Secretary (signature) \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Resolutions online at <http://paa-tx.org/resolutions>

Provided courtesy of the Progressive Action Alliance