



Testimony

Interim Charge 1 [B]

Testimony Submitted to Texas House Public Education Committee

by Emily Sass, Policy Director

Chairman Huberty and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the committee regarding Interim Charge 1[B]. The charge reads:

“Monitor...HB 1842 (84R), HB 22 (85R), SB 1882 (85R), and HB 3906, which relate to public school accountability, assessment, interventions, and district-charter partnerships. Monitor the ongoing progress of the TEA’s implementation and rulemaking of the A-F rating system, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), and public school sanctions and interventions.”

SB 1882 created Texas Partnerships, a framework and incentive package for traditional districts and charter schools to align together to create campus innovation and turnaround partnerships to serve Texas students. These partnerships help fulfill at least two of the goals recorded in [Texas Education Code § 12.001](#): to “increase the choice of learning opportunities within the public school system ... [and] encourage different and innovative learning methods.”

Texas Partnerships also offer an opportunity for local districts to proactively seek solutions for struggling campuses while retaining local control. After repeated years of underperformance from a campus, the state is [required to intervene](#) in a district. The turnaround option provides interested districts with a chance to retain local control of their district and campuses while instituting new management for a chronically struggling campus.

Texas Partnerships are unique for their [contract-based format](#), forcing both specific goal-setting conversations about a campus before a partnership is even finalized and, through agreed-upon consequences for failure to reach campus goals, a continued commitment to keeping those goals paramount throughout the partnership. The state has gone to great lengths to prioritize student outcomes as it crafted school finance reform; the structure of Texas Partnerships mirrors that commitment at the local level. They also forge something previously rare in Texas: cooperation and collaboration between traditional districts and charter schools to achieve student results and bring new value to their students and communities.

Though a relatively recent initiative, Texas Partnerships have helped bring [ACE turnaround strategies](#) to [new districts](#), consolidate rural district and higher education resources to [expand student CTE opportunities](#), offer new school models such as classical and [young women’s leadership](#) programs to [underserved students](#), build [college and career readiness](#) opportunities in West Texas schools, and [revitalize community interest](#) and parent involvement in previously failing campuses. We look forward to following their progress as these programs continue to develop.

Thank you for your service to Texas, and I look forward to future discussions. ★

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emily Sass is the policy director for Next Generation Texas at the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

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