



To: Representative John Otto, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee,
Representative Jimmie Don Aycock, Chairman, House Public Education Committee, and members of the committees

From: Sheri Doss, President-elect, Texas PTA

Re: Testimony on Texas' System of Public School Funding

Date: September 29, 2016

My name is Sheri Doss. I am the mother of two daughters who attended public schools in San Antonio, and President-elect of Texas PTA.

Chairman Otto, Chairman Aycock, and members of the committees, the number one priority of Texas PTA is and has been for several years the adequate and equitable funding of our public schools.

While Texas PTA's Advocacy Committee and Board are not school finance experts, recently we have served as a convener for groups with an interest in finance reform in an effort to begin a dialogue to find a solution we can all embrace. We believe that to create a new funding system that benefits all students, one in which all students get the support they need to be successful, we must be willing to compromise, and we must be willing to give.

Texas PTA is committed to doing everything we can to support legislators who are willing to finally take the necessary, difficult steps to reform our funding system. We will continue to convene key stakeholders to work for consensus if you will take on this challenge.

In the past the state has benefitted from increase property values that have led to increased property tax collections, allowing the state to contribute less to the funding of public schools as local taxpayers contribute more.

We strongly and respectfully urge appropriators to put ALL excess property tax collections into the basic allotment for the benefit of all students. Parents are willing to pay property taxes to support our schools as long as they are fully utilized on our public schools.

The VAST majority of our future workers, scientists, teachers, soldiers, and doctors will emerge from Texas public schools. We must make Texas public schools as good as they can be. We cannot hope to continue to be a leading economic force in this country if we are unwilling to do this work.

As the largest grassroots child advocacy association in Texas, we pledge to you that this session the half million members of Texas PTA will support any and every legislator, and work with any group that is willing to do the hard work to create a system that is fair and that invests in ALL our students. Texas PTA WILL be a part of the solution.