

Written Testimony Submitted for Interim Charge re: Senate Bill 2124
Texas Public Education Committee
Submitted by E3 Alliance

Honorable Chair Buckley and Members of the Public Education Committee:

E3 Alliance and the 10 Texas organizations undersigned thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to share positive outcomes and reflections on the current implementation of Senate Bill 2124 that was passed during the 88th Texas Legislature. Thank you to Senator Creighton and Representative Howard for their leadership and continued support in our efforts to implement legislation that holds promise for improvements to our education system and has positively impacted students, teachers, and communities across the state.

SB 2124 created a consistent, statewide, opt-out policy for middle school advanced math to ensure high-performing students who score in the top 40% of our state standardized assessment (or a local measure that includes class score and/or demonstrated proficiency in classwork) are automatically enrolled into accelerated math in 6th grade, setting them on the path to take Algebra I in 8th grade and access higher level math courses in high school. As the legislature previously discussed last year, research shows a clear link between math course-taking and postsecondary education and program completion. E3 Alliance data shows that taking advanced math in middle and high school significantly increases students' postsecondary success and wages in the workforce.¹ Taking math all four years in high school doubles the likelihood of attaining a postsecondary credential, while students who take a college-aligned course in high school are six times more likely to complete a postsecondary credential than their peers that only take up to Algebra 2.

Prior to SB 2124, enrollment policies in advancement math varied district by district, and at times relied on subjective or inconsistent measures. Now, students in every district are enrolled in accelerated math based on an objective measure of students' demonstrated ability to succeed, thereby increasing the number of students on a pathway towards postsecondary readiness and success. SB 2124 has played a crucial role in enhancing the quality of education by focusing on appropriate student placement determined by student outcomes instead of subjective or varied perceptions of their math aptitude. Moreover, the emphasis on student outcomes has ensured that all students, regardless of background or circumstances, have access to the resources and assistance they need to thrive.

If SB 2124's policy had been in place during the 2021-2022 school year, 52,099 more 8th graders would have been automatically placed in advanced math pathways in 2024-2025 alone across the state. Several school districts in Texas have already demonstrated remarkable results by replacing their current opt-in policy with automatic enrollment for students who are ready. In conversations and work with districts across the state so far, we have seen a significant shift in the way students, parents, teachers, and administrators are communicating and thinking about mathematics.

¹ E3 Alliance analysis of TEA and THECB data at the UT Austin Education Research Center

SB 2124 has prompted school districts to adopt innovative strategies for professional learning and development, ensuring that teachers are well-prepared to deliver high-level math instruction in middle school. In discussions with district leaders, we have been excited to hear about the various local innovations being implemented to support both student and teacher success. For instance, some districts are reevaluating their early learning curriculum to place more students on a pathway to advanced math courses by middle school. Others are planning creative solutions like providing tutoring services during long bus rides or establishing shared service agreements across districts. These efforts ensure high-quality access to advanced math coursework not only in middle school but also in high school, creating a comprehensive support system for academic excellence.

The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) math department has played a crucial role in generating rules that ensure parents receive early information about the benefits of mathematics education, highlighting its impact on future readiness and increased postsecondary success. TEA has established clear resources for parents to understand the entry and exit points for their children's math education in middle school and beyond. Additionally, TEA has been responsive to rulemaking public comment indicating future collection of comprehensive data. This data will detail how many students are on an advanced math track, including the number of students enrolled in Algebra I in 8th grade and those who successfully completed the course. These efforts are part of an ongoing initiative to continually enhance educational outcomes for students.

In conclusion, the positive outcomes of SB 2124 are evident in the progress we are seeing and will continue to see in our schools and communities. This bill enhances teacher capacity and provides students with a more aligned curriculum, ensuring they are well prepared for the future workforce. We urge the committee to continue supporting and strengthening this legislation to ensure all students in Texas have access to a high-quality education that equips them for future success.

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Supporting Organizations

