



Written Comments in Support of House Bill 3627

Senate Education K-16 Committee

May 20, 2025

Key Takeaways

1. The State Board of Education is doing more than ever with no dedicated staff.

Since the passage of HB 1605, the State Board of Education (SBOE) has taken on a dramatically expanded role in evaluating instructional materials, currently reviewing more than 300 curriculum products and overseeing a new, rigorous statewide review process—all without dedicated personnel or compensation.

2. HB 3627 provides essential infrastructure for successful implementation.

By authorizing the SBOE chair to hire staff, HB 3627 gives the board the administrative capacity it needs to carry out its statutory responsibilities effectively, professionally, and at scale.

3. Instructional quality is a significant driver of student achievement.

Research shows that access to high-quality, grade-level curriculum leads to significant learning gains—and offers one of the highest returns on investment among education reforms. Texas has set a high bar, now it must follow through.

Chairman Creighton and Members of the Committee,

The passage of HB 1605 by the 88th Legislature marked a major shift in the state's approach to instructional materials. By establishing a more transparent and rigorous review process, the Legislature signaled a strong commitment to ensuring every student and teacher has access to high-quality, standards-aligned, and research-based curriculum in Texas classrooms. This reform is significant and, if implemented well, has the potential to improve academic outcomes at scale and address long-standing gaps in student achievement.

The Responsibilities Of The State Board of Education Have Been Significantly Expanded

To support this policy vision, the SBOE is now responsible for reviewing instructional materials submitted by publishers against newly developed Quality and Suitability Rubrics—frameworks designed to assess Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) alignment, academic rigor, efficacy, and compliance with state law. These rubrics are central to the success of the new instructional materials system. They offer much-needed clarity to publishers and stakeholders, elevate expectations for curriculum developers, and empower school districts to make better-informed purchasing decisions.

This work is highly technical, time-intensive, and consequential. It demands sustained engagement with complex content across multiple grade levels and subject areas. Since the

passage of HB 1605, SBOE members have taken on the significant task of standing up and managing the new Instructional Material Review and Approval (IMRA) process: from developing and adopting the rubrics themselves to conducting in-depth curriculum reviews and determining which materials meet the state's standards. During the first cycle, Board members reviewed over 150 curricular products, IMRA reviewer reports for every product, and more than 1,000 publicly submitted comments on the products in order to inform their decisions.¹ In the current cycle, the number of products being reviewed exceeds 300.² As the process continues, we anticipate the number of products needing to be reviewed will only increase.

In parallel, the board has had to craft and adopt a new set of administrative rules to implement HB 1605 and provide clear procedural guidance to publishers and districts. These responsibilities mark a significant departure from the SBOE's historical role and represent a major expansion in both scope and workload. And yet, this entire body of work continues to be carried out by a board composed of uncompensated public officials who lack dedicated staff. Without adequate administrative capacity, the SBOE is being asked to fulfill an ambitious and essential statutory mandate using structures that were never designed to support work of this magnitude.

House Bill 3627 Provides A Practical, Targeted Solution

HB 3627 offers a practical and necessary solution. The bill authorizes the chair of the SBOE to employ staff, funded by legislative appropriation, to support board operations. These staff would be eligible for state benefits and receive administrative services through the Texas Education Agency. This is a modest but meaningful step to ensure that the board can carry out its duties effectively and meet the work demands this reform requires.

The success of HB 1605 depends on a review process that is consistent, timely, and grounded in quality. Without staff support, even the most well-intentioned efforts risk being delayed or unevenly applied. Dedicated personnel will allow the SBOE to manage the complexity of this work with the structure and responsiveness it requires. The ability to employ staff will help ensure that materials are reviewed thoroughly and transparently, and that members of the SBOE will be better prepared going into their quarterly meetings and when making decisions that impact the 5.5 million students in Texas public schools.

Why Instructional Quality Matters

Research consistently shows that one of the most effective ways to drive academic growth is by ensuring all students have access to rigorous, grade-level materials. A report by TNTP found that when students who started the year behind were given grade level appropriate assignments, these students closed the achievement gap by 7 months worth of learning.³

¹ Instructional Materials Review and Approval Process | IMRA 2024

² IMRA Cycle 2025 Instructional Materials Selection Dashboard

³ TNTP. (2018). The Opportunity Myth: What Students Can Show Us About How School Is Letting Them Down—and How to Fix It.

In terms of return on investment, curriculum quality also outpaces many other education interventions. Research from the Center for American Progress found that the ROI for adopting high-quality math curriculum is 39 times greater than reducing class size.⁴ High-quality materials offer both academic and economic value when implemented with fidelity.

States that have invested in these reforms are beginning to see results. Louisiana, for example, has improved its national rankings by 34 spots in 4th grade reading and 12 spots in 4th grade math since 2019, in part due to the adoption of high-quality instructional materials and aligned professional development.⁵ Texas has set a similarly ambitious course—and must now follow through on implementation.

Conclusion

HB 1605 established a bold and necessary vision for improving the quality of instruction in Texas. HB 3627 is a critical component of delivering on that vision. By providing the SBOE with the administrative capacity needed to execute its expanded responsibilities, this bill helps ensure the success of Texas's curriculum reform efforts.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support HB 3627 and continue advancing the state's commitment to educational excellence.

Sincerely,

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⁴ The Center for American Progress (2015) The Hidden Value of Curriculum Reform: Do States and Districts Receive the Most Bang for Their Curriculum Buck?

⁵ Louisiana Department of Education (Jan 29, 2025) Louisiana Students Achieve Their Highest National Rankings on the Nation's Report Card