



HB 1605 and SB 2565 would remove the people's voices and centralize curriculum control with unelected bureaucrats, affect teachers' lesson-planning process, establish a way to deny parents the right to see their own child's school information

- **Please oppose HB 1605 and its cousin SB 2565.**
- **We request these be removed from consideration and for their authors to withdraw support for these (seemingly TEA-written) bills.** Question for legislators: Where did the Commissioner of Education derive the authority to expend ~\$50 million on the Open Educational Resource "Amplify"?

Problem:

Children's classroom experience has been rapidly shifting away from classical teaching to a facilitation model of "instruction." Teaching without teaching. The STAAR is overemphasized, and the teacher is more and more burned out and shoved away from what being an educator once meant. We are not creating lifelong learners, and teaching is no longer fun, for many reasons. We are seeing classic teachers leave the profession in droves, and politicians scratch their heads, as if it is a mystery why. Parents and experienced teachers know that the schools of today are not like they were ten or twenty years ago.

This bill is not addressing any of the problems parents (and teachers) identify. Fewer and fewer Texas students have mastery over the basics they need to help ensure our free society, as Chapter 4 of Education Code states. Parents want a return to the basics and desire a return to textbooks in certain subjects. **We see the dangers of Open Education Resource material combined with lack of transparency with the taxpaying public. Our schools are being managed as data-centers and our children treated as commodities,** and we call upon brave legislators to block legislation that is perpetuating the problems in Texas education.

The Texas Education Agency has not been a friend to parents – failing to investigate serious and documented violations of law, harming countless families. These bills would grab even more power away from voters, silence parents, weaken teachers, school boards and the SBOE, and continue the transfer of power, influence, and our children's data to the TEA and its big money allies.

Texas Education 911 Position: **DANGER BILLS**

We oppose these bills and believe them to be dangerous. HB 1605 and SB 2565 will have harmful effects on parental rights in education in the areas of transparency, teacher relationships, right to redress government, and curriculum; major aspects which concern Texas K-12 families. **And, there is NO FISCAL NOTE, even while extensive per pupil spending is included in the bill.**

These bills reduce the statutory authority of the SBOE and locally elected school board trustees over the curriculum selection, and in ISDs, over their own employees. Rather than the TEA reviewing curriculum and giving the SBOE only a few months to review a minimum of 200 curricula as these would have it, we would like to see SBOE properly budgeted and staffed to do this work. The TEA must leave the primary responsibility for curriculum selection to the elected officials. We see a grab by a state agency that has been unfriendly to parents and overseen a serious decline in academic achievement, student behavior and teacher satisfaction. We do not want education to be one-size fits all for the entire state by the use of Open Educational Resources and a TEA-chosen "book" and vocabulary words for each grade. These bills will go far to eliminate the I in ISDs and turn the SBOE into some modicum of a rubber-stamp committee of the TEA.

Transparency is at risk. Parents will be painted into a corner and be one slip-up away from losing all access to their own children's school instructional material or work.

All who believe the education experience should be one that is rich, classical, effective and flexible according to the needs of the individual students in a teacher's care, and that ISDs maintain some independence should oppose this bill. Charter schools should, too, as this may soon obliterate any uniqueness of a charter's character, mission and teaching approach. The Legislature could solve many real problems by eliminating the STAAR and using the savings to give teachers raises.

WE FULLY OPPOSE A STATEWIDE CURRICULUM.

Texas Education 911 is a statewide grassroots network of parents who are constructively addressing the educational emergency in Texas public schools. As parents, we have identified the problems in our schools and school system, and provide positive policy solutions for their remedy. Disclaimer: The contents of this document are the opinions of volunteer parents and community members. Research – Parental Rights Advocacy – Policy Proposals – Legislative Analysis – Informing Conferences.

Want a bill analyzed by Texas parents? Contact: Melissa Beckett at TexasEd911@gmail.com

Bill Analysis:

This bill threatens transparency to parents regarding their own children.

Section 46 establishes a trap that can strip involved parents of their rights to access instructional material. A parent who discovers a problem with the instructional materials cannot discuss it with the board of trustees or show proof of any copyright materials that may be obscene or sexualizing (as parents have reported with Mike Morath's "Amplify" OER), violate parent rights, the law, or the constitutions. If the parents do, they violate TEA standards, triggering the publisher to work with district staff to permanently deny the parent access to instructional materials. (DO PUBLIC LIBRARIES HAVE SUCH ENFORCEMENT!?)

If parents don't show "copyrighted" proof, their complaint is meritless and dismissed. This handcuffing of parents is dangerous to our children and to good and caring teachers. An argument can be made that it may violate the constitution and a person's right to redress their local government without retaliation.

For the parent who takes the risk and shares evidence, Section 11 explains exactly how they may be punished. No access to:

- material used by a teacher, principal or instructional leader
- lesson plans, unit plans, modules
- their child's books, workbooks**, online services or media, digital media, **their child's email or Google classroom**, other applications used as part of instruction, videos, and more.

Inexplicably, Section 5 can affirmatively deny a parent the right to see their own child's graded assignments. It can require a working parent to come physically to the school during work hours, even if all instruction is in digital format, which dissuades parents from seeing what is being taught, a form of obfuscation.

We want more transparency, not less.

Red flag regarding unidentified religion being pushed into lessons

Section 4: A teacher cannot face any professional consequences for pushing a particular controversial issue of public policy or social affair on our children. Or, for pushing a religious viewpoint on our children as long as it is in the curriculum. Political ideologies aside, parents are finding out about New Age mindfulness and Eastern religions' yoga being aggressively pumped into our schools under "mental health" and "SEL." To the extent religious practices and prayer forms are being incorporated into the classroom and counseling curricula, there already exist statewide violations of the Establishment Clause. Discernment demands a full and transparent explanation from supporters of these bills as to what religious practices, experiments and belief systems the TEA is and will be curricularizing to make passage of Section 4 of these bills necessary for teachers to be able to teach it.

With OER, teachers are undermined and turned into facilitators. Elected officials' authority transfers, for all intents and purposes, to unelected bureaucrats.

These bills give the commissioner of the TEA the authority to edit curriculum. We get moved toward state-mandated curriculum, just without the overt mandate. TEA is already saying their products will prepare students for the STAAR better than anything else because they wrote the STAAR. "Pick our products, they're free." Most schools will voluntarily go with "free," denying any parent- or local-control which is so critical to our diverse state.

Regarding OER "Amplify," a teacher said: *"I wouldn't want my children taught this way. I don't know the rationale behind adopting it. The curriculum doesn't light up the eyes of kids. It removes the autonomy from the teacher. I guess if people have come through an alternate route and don't have a teaching degree, you can teach it without much experience."* -

<https://nancybailey.com/2020/01/24/problems-surrounding-amplifys-core-knowledge-language-arts-to-teach-reading/>

"One teacher said that her principal was 'very disappointed that there wasn't a lot of neat stuff in the hall, but [this] doesn't allow for much creative-type work. I didn't want to hang worksheets in the hall,'" - ibid

Bill Improvement:

We find this bill unsalvageable and not solving a problem that exists except for the TEA which used tax-dollars to "pre-purchase" a statewide curriculum it now needs the legal structure to implement. This bill weakens parental rights, moves away from local control, and **shifts the teaching profession further away from what makes teachers special**, into replaceable facilitators of (likely monetized) **two-way data flow**.

The adopted 2022 Republican Party Platform, **which is the will of the voters for Republican legislators**, has multiple planks that these bills directly work against: 3, 6, 103, 109, 114, 116, 119, and 122.



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