



For Immediate Distribution

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**STATEMENT BY CREEED BOARD CHAIR RICHARD A. CASTRO ON
STATE PLANS TO REFORM EDUCATION FUNDING**

Texas legislature's proposals would provide critical investment in El Paso schools, especially for English Learners, low-income students, and teachers

El Paso, TX -- Texas State Representative Dan Huberty and Texas Senator Larry Taylor recently unveiled their legislative plans (HB 3 and SB 4) to address school finance reform in this legislative session. Both proposals increase the state's per-student contribution to school districts, include funds to support Texas teachers, and funding for programs to ensure all students learn how to read by third grade and for some school districts to pay for pre-kindergarten education.

Richard A. Castro, Chair of the Board for the Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development ([CREEED](#)), an education advocacy group based in El Paso working to close educational inequities and improve postsecondary attainment for all students, issued the following statement on the proposed bills:

“Investing in our students and their education is the only way we will remain economically competitive and ensure the next generation of Texans has a path towards economic prosperity. School finance reform is a necessary step towards this goal. Done right, it will give all our children the resources they need to be successful.

Education funding is especially critical in places like El Paso, where 25 percent of students are English Language Learners and 75 percent are classified as low-income. The proposed provisions to direct more state dollars for districts to address the needs of these student populations is a critical investment if all our students are to be college and career ready.

The legislature's decision to include resources to support our teachers with increased pay, and resources to help our school districts recruit and retain effective teachers is equally important and noteworthy. Educators play a critical role in preparing our students to be good students, productive workers, and engaged citizens. Locally, CREEED has launched several initiatives to help our teachers gain the credentials and requirements they need to be successful in the classroom and advance the postsecondary preparatory success necessary for the students they teach. We know districts like El Paso have a harder time recruiting teachers from other parts of Texas and realize this investment could help us bring the brightest rising teachers to the region to match the talent being cultivated locally.

As important as these provisions are, so is the opportunity to develop outcome-based funding to increase literacy and postsecondary access as the Public School Finance Commission recommended. This is a critical time where the momentum towards comprehensive school finance reform can include investment practices that will sustain the intent and impact of this legislation for years to come.

We will be monitoring the school finance discussions closely to ensure that the needs of El Paso's students and teachers continue to be considered as the bill moves through the legislative process."

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About the Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development

(CREEED): CREEED is a not-for-profit education policy and advocacy group focused on creating measurable outcomes and dedicated to closing the achievement gap for El Paso County students. We accomplish this goal by investing in policies, programs, and metrics that prepare students to succeed in college and our future workforce.