

Written Testimony of David Anderson
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Raise Your Hand Texas

Before the Texas Senate Committee on Education
The Honorable Larry Taylor, Chair
May 6, 2021

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 2094 by Senator Larry Taylor
Position: Oppose

KEY POINTS

- The bill creates a program that funds students based on their performance on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR).
 - There is already an overemphasis on high-stakes testing in Texas, and outcomes-based funding would make that overemphasis worse.
 - The state's school finance system is not and should not be a punitive system.
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Raise Your Hand Texas respectfully opposes the Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 2094, a bill that inappropriately conditions school funding on standardized test scores.

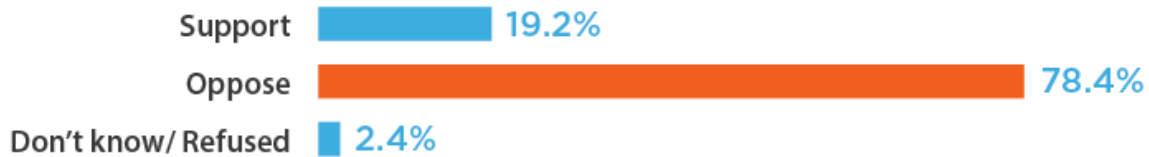
Section 6 of the bill creates the Accelerated Learning and Sustainment Outcomes Bonus for elementary and middle schools based on the STAAR test scores of third, fifth, and eighth graders that had previously failed to pass the assessment.

Raise Your Hand Texas believes basing any part of our school finance system on student performance on a test, or outcomes-based funding, would create inequities and unintended consequences. Even good tests drive dysfunctional behavior when the stakes are too high. Outcomes funding also dramatically increases the already high stakes of a single test on a single day.

The theory behind outcomes-based funding is that school leaders, teachers, and students will perform better under financial incentives to improve student performance. But while such an incentive may focus attention, research has not shown that using the allocation of resources to chase a single measure generates better outcomes.

Recent statewide polling has shown widespread dissatisfaction with an overreliance on standardized tests. A January 2019 statewide poll revealed almost 80 percent of Texans oppose tying increases in public school funding to student performance on state standardized tests.

Do you support or oppose increases in public school funding tied to student performance on state standardized tests, where higher test scores means more money for a school campus?



Raise Your Hand Texas urges policymakers to keep the state's school finance system separate from its accountability system and fund programs that are proven to work. The state has already developed a robust accountability system to evaluate student achievement, student progress, and college, career, and military readiness. The state's school finance system should not be turned into one that creates a culture of winners and losers.

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