



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701 • 877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org • Fax 512-486-7049

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 25, 2016

Contact: Clay Robison
512.476.5355, ext. 1233; clayr@tsta.org
Cell: 512.535.8994

TSTA: Districts of Innovation must justify their waivers from state educational standards

The Texas State Teachers Association today urged Education Commissioner Mike Morath to insist that school districts are fully transparent with parents, employees and taxpayers when they seek exemptions from important state educational standards.

The commissioner is considering rules to implement HB1842, enacted during the 2015 legislative session, which allows school districts to apply for recognition as Districts of Innovation, a status that would allow districts to exempt themselves from many requirements of state law. HB1842 requires a district seeking a District of Innovation designation to identify the specific state requirements from which it seeks exemptions and why those exemptions are necessary to improve the district's performance.

"When adopting District of Innovation plans, school districts are supposed to explain how exemptions from specific state requirements would benefit their students," said TSTA President Noel Candelaria. "Parents, teachers and taxpayers deserve to know exactly what their school board members are doing -- whether they are voting for a budget, considering local policy or adopting a District of Innovation plan."

"Districts of Innovation are not supposed to allow districts to simply cut corners on important educational and employee standards or keep their employees and the public in the dark about their plans," Candelaria added.

Some of the requirements from which a District of Innovation can be exempted include the teacher minimum salary schedule, teacher planning and preparation time, some student disciplinary rules and some parental rights, including access to teaching materials.