



May 14, 2009

The Honorable David Dewhurst
Lieutenant Governor
State Capitol
Room 2E.13
Austin, Texas 78701

The Honorable Joe Straus III, Speaker
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

Dear Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst and Speaker Straus:

Our organization applauds Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott for sounding the alarm regarding a proposed reduction of 25 percent from the requested \$547 million for English Language Arts and Reading materials, which is being considered by the conference committee working on SB 1. Commissioner Robert Scott is right – if Proclamation 2010 is cut, over one million fewer books will be delivered to Texas classrooms and inevitably, those students will be deeply affected.

We urge you to communicate the urgency of the situation to your members who are working so hard to craft the education budget. Texas schools, teachers, students and parents are expecting new K-12 Reading materials to be delivered in fall 2010, to replace decade-old materials currently being used in classrooms. Unfortunately, all Texas school children may not receive these new reading instructional materials if the amount of funding for Proclamation 2010 is reduced by 25 percent, which is under consideration by SB 1.

It is our membership, the Textbook Coordinators' Association of Texas, that is expected to deliver these new instructional materials to classrooms, and we are very concerned about potential problems in 2010. Please remember that \$547 million is not the figure originally sought for this reading adoption – it is the result of negotiations that took place over a year to reduce costs for the state.

Please instruct your conferees to give much greater consideration to the proposed Senate version, which fully funds Proclamation 2010.

Our members have additional concerns about a proposed rider discussed during the deliberations of the conference committee on S.B. 1 which, if incorporated in the appropriations bill, would direct the State Board of Education to cancel Proclamation 2011, which contains provisions for the purchase of instructional materials directed at K-8 English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

If Proclamation 2011 is cancelled, the impact on the fastest growing population in our public schools could be devastating.

It is time to break this cycle of chaos surrounding the funding of instructional materials.

Since 2003, we have faced uncertainty over the textbooks and other instructional materials we are required to provide the schoolchildren of Texas. There have been repeated attempts to underfund the materials needed for our almost five million public school students.

In recent sessions, it has been very difficult to persuade the Legislature to fully fund instructional materials in a timely manner, and on one occasion, forced our public schools to utilize out-of-date textbooks while our children wait for the Legislature to authorize payment for instructional materials they sorely need. This endless cycle of uncertainty is a disservice to our school children.

I would urge both of you to consider some interim studies that look at how we provide instructional materials to our students. They deserve to be equipped with the best educational tools available – not subject to a biennial guessing game over whether or not they'll get new materials.

Today it's reading materials – promised for a decade – that are at-risk. There is no reason for this crisis. The content of the new instructional materials includes the new Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, College Readiness Standards, and English Language Proficiency Standards. The materials will not only help our youngest students learn to read, but they will also help all students meet state standards for learning.

The Legislature has to address this issue head on and decide that the education of our children is a priority and our students should be provided with these new instructional materials.

With best regards,



Cliff Avery
Executive Director
Textbook Coordinators' Association of Texas