

Amber Welsh

Testifying in support of SB 4& HB 1587

Senate Education Committee and House Public Education Committee

Good afternoon

My name is Amber Welsh and I am a teacher. I support SB 4 and HB 1587. I am here on behalf of my daughter, my students and myself. I live and work in East Austin. As an East Austin resident, I want to be able to send my daughter to our neighborhood schools with confidence. Unfortunately, right now, not all schools in AISD provide the same high quality education. I want her to have the opportunity of a great public education at our home school and not have to transfer somewhere else. Knowing that teachers and administrators are accountable for my daughter's educational progress would be a huge step in the right direction. I want the best for her. I want all schools in our community to have high quality teachers.

My students, also in East Austin, will benefit from this legislation. Too often they have had teachers that did not set the bar high enough for them and left them unprepared for the next level. If teachers' primary goal is student achievement they should be able to get specific feedback on how to improve their student's performance so that all kids are progressing.

As a teacher in a high need school, I am constantly reaching out for support to improve my teaching skills and ensure all of my students are successful. I was disappointed to find my principal was rarely in the classroom and almost never provided me with meaningful feedback on my instruction. When I had to switch grade levels 5 weeks after school had started because another teacher quit, I could have benefited from increased observations and support. I remember being sent to a half day guided reading training that semester because the principal sent everyone, but I didn't teach reading. I was a math and science teacher. There were many areas where I could have improved and it would have been helpful to have the flexibility to attend a training more suited to my needs and the needs of my students. As a teacher who wants to constantly improve their skills, I am excited by the prospect of more feedback and better professional development.

I am here testifying in support of Senate Bill 4 and House Bill 1587 because kids need us to step up and do what is right and teachers need us to support them in improving their craft. As adults we have a responsibility to do what's best for kids and provide them the opportunity of a high quality education.

Thank you for your time. I am willing to answer any questions you may have?