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Education Reform Legislation Authored by Senator Bettencourt Headed to the Full Senate

Legislation to expand dual credit opportunities (SB 251) and to root out waste (SB 933) voted out of committee

Austin, Texas - Two major education bills by Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) have been voted out of the Senate Education Committee and will now head to the full Texas Senate. SB 251 would build upon the success of previous legislation for Harris County and expand dual credit opportunities for all Texas students. SB 933 would create an Office of Inspector General in the Texas Education Agency to root out waste, fraud, and abuse in one of the largest state agencies. SB 251 passed by a vote of 8-0 and SB 933 passed with an 8-0 vote.

"These common sense reforms will ensure Texas students have access to the same dual credit opportunities that have been so successful in Harris County," said Senator Bettencourt. **"It will also ensure that Texas taxpayers have an advocate working on their behalf to root out waste, fraud, and abuse at an agency which oversees roughly \$60 billion per year."**

Senate Bill 251 expands on bipartisan legislation authored by Senator Bettencourt in 2015, SB 1004, that created additional dual credit opportunities for Harris County students. This bill would allow a high school student enrolled in a district the ability to enroll in a course at any public junior college that has entered into an agreement with the district to offer the course. In Harris County since the passage of SB 1004, Houston Community College has seen a 45% increase in dual credit enrollment, Lee College has seen a 54% increase, Lone Star College has seen a 41% increase, and San Jacinto College has seen over a 70% increase. This enrollment growth success is over three years, from 2014-2015 to 2017-2018.

Senate Bill 933 is a refile from the 85th session, that passed unanimously through the Senate but did not get a vote in the full Texas house. This bill would create an office of Inspector General in the Texas Education Agency General to carry out investigations of fraud, waste, and abuse on behalf of the Commissioner. This bill has 26 joint authors in the Texas Senate, and helpful improvements from several committee members.

"Nothing says you are college ready like graduating high school with an associates degree," continued Senator Bettencourt. **"This saves money for taxpayers and SB 933 will also save money for taxpayers by ensuring transparency so that taxpayers know their money is being spent efficiently and properly."**

These two pieces of legislation are major steps for both students and taxpayers in Texas. Both bills now head to the full Senate for a vote.

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