



# The State Board of Education is failing Texas schoolchildren.

**It's time to reform a State Board of Education that is more interested in promoting the culture wars than in ensuring Texas students get an education that prepares them for college and the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

- State board members have repeatedly demonstrated their contempt for expertise. They have rejected – over and over again – recommendations from teachers and scholars on critical decisions about curriculum standards and textbooks.
- Educators and scholars – even from the conservative Fordham Institute – have sharply criticized state board members for their “politicized distortions of history” in new social studies standards.
- State board members have used their position to push personal and political agendas instead of focusing on educating Texas students.

## What Do Texans Want?

A 2010 poll showed that **72 percent of likely Texas voters** want teachers and scholars, not politicians on the State Board of Education, writing curriculum standards and textbook requirements.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Poll conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, May 4-12, 2010, 601 likely Texas voters, with a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points. <http://www.tfn.org/2010poll>

## **TFN supports the following House bills that would bring critically needed reform to the SBOE:**

[HB 3257](#) by Rep. Mark Strama, D-Austin, would require that any amendments to curriculum standards be made available for public review at least three business days prior to a vote. It also mandates that the final version of the complete standards be posted for at least 24 hours before the board votes on final adoption.

[HB 3263](#) by state Rep. Mark Strama, D-Austin, would create higher education curriculum review teams to ensure accuracy in the standards and make recommendations to the State Board of Education. The legislation would also set clear qualifications for team members.

[HB 3504](#) by Rep. Mike Villarreal, D-San Antonio, would require a two-thirds vote by the State Board of Education to reject the recommendations of curriculum and textbook review teams.

## **TFN also supports the following proposals to depoliticize the adoption of curriculum and textbooks or improve SBOE processes:**

[HB 553](#) by Rep. Donna Howard, D-Austin, would make elections for the State Board of Education nonpartisan.

[HB 862](#) by Rep. Diane Patrick, R-Arlington, would place the State Board of Education under periodic review by the Sunset Advisory Commission.

[HB 881](#) and [HJR 96](#) by Rep. Roberto Alonzo, D-Dallas, would abolish the State Board of Education and transfer its responsibilities to the Texas Education Agency and the state's commissioner of education.

[HB 1140](#) and [HJR 85](#) by Rep. Donna Howard, D-Austin, would transfer authority for management of the permanent school fund from the State Board of Education to the newly created Permanent School Fund Management Council.

[HB 1431](#) by Rep. Mark Strama, D-Austin, would provide for selection of State Board of Education candidates through a unitary primary election.

[HB 2217](#) by Rep. Trey Martinez Fischer, D-San Antonio, would nullify the social studies curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education in 2010 and direct the board to reopen the standards.

[HB 2302](#) by state Rep. Garnet Coleman, D-Houston, would transfer authority over textbook adoption from the State Board of Education to the Texas Education Agency and the state commissioner of education.

[HJR 91](#) by state Reps. Jose Menendez, D-San Antonio, Rafael Anchia, D-Dallas, and Eddie Rodriguez, D-Austin, proposes a state constitutional amendment dissolving the State Board of Education and creating the Texas Education Commission.



## Why Gail Lowe Should Not Be Confirmed as Chair of the State Board of Education

- Lowe has used her position as chair to promote the culture wars rather than focus the board on educating students. The embarrassing battle over social studies curriculum standards under her watch made Texas education a punch line in national jokes.
- Lowe voted against setting common-sense qualifications – even a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education – for people appointed to serve on an “expert” panel advising the board on curriculum standards.
- Lowe appointed as an “expert” adviser a partisan political activist who called for removing certain historical figures, such as Cesar Chavez, from the social studies standards because he opposed their political beliefs.

### **TFN supports the following Senate bills that would bring critically needed reform to the SBOE:**

[SB 1642](#) by Sen. Wendy Davis, D-Fort Worth, would require a two-thirds vote by the State Board of Education to reject the recommendations of curriculum and textbook review teams.

[SB 1326](#) by state Sen. Kirk Watson, D-Austin, would require that any amendments to curriculum standards be made available for public review at least three business days prior to a vote. It also mandates that the final version of the complete standards be posted for at least 24 hours before the board votes on final adoption.

[SB 1348](#) by Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, D-San Antonio, would create higher education curriculum review teams to ensure accuracy in the standards and make recommendations to the State Board of Education. The legislation would also set clear qualifications for team members.

[SB 1499](#) by Sen. Kirk Watson, D-Austin, would require the State Board of Education to incorporate recommendations for changes to curriculum standards from vertical teams composed of faculty members of institutions of higher education.

[SB 452](#) by state Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, would place the State Board of Education under periodic review by the Sunset Advisory Commission.