



Parents Leading for Educational Equity  
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House Committee on Education  
From: Parents Leading for Educational Equity  
Re: RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS H7726  
Date: March 13, 2024

Dear Chairman McNamara and Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Joselyn Ramirez, I am the deputy director of [Parents Leading for Educational Equity](https://pleeri.org) (PLEE). We are a grassroots, family advocacy organization fighting for equitable systems of care for families and children. On behalf of PLEE and the parents we represent, I want to express my strong **support** for house bill H7726. As a concerned citizen and advocate for quality education, I believe this legislation is crucial for ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in the process of phasing out, merging, or closing public schools within our state.

Legislation H7726 sets guidelines and procedures for public school districts and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to follow when proposing such impacting changes to schools. By simply being required to announce the proposal of closing, merging or phasing out school, we can be transparent with our principal stakeholder and allow them to be part of the process. By mandating specific actions and protocols, this bill aims to safeguard the interests of students, parents, students, teachers, and the overall communities affected by such decisions.

One of the most commendable aspects of this legislation is its emphasis on inclusivity and community engagement. It requires public hearings and opportunities for input from various stakeholders before any decisions are made final. This ensures that the voices of those directly impacted by school closures or mergers are heard and taken into account. Not only students and their families but our educators and school staff as well.

Moreover, Bill H7726 establishes clear criteria and standards that must be met before any school phase-out, merger, or closure can proceed. These criteria include considerations such as academic performance, demographic trends, and the availability of alternative educational options. Such requirements help prevent unjustified actions that harm students and their families. Once again, providing the community affected with the data used to support the decision and providing space to suggest alternatives.

Furthermore, this bill prioritizes the well-being of students during times of transition. It mandates plans for accommodating displaced students and addressing their educational needs effectively. Additionally, it provides support for teachers and staff affected by school changes, recognizing the importance of maintaining a stable and supportive environment for educators.

In conclusion, Bill H7726 represents a significant step forward in ensuring responsible decision-making and equitable treatment in matters concerning the restructuring of public schools. By establishing clear procedures, promoting community involvement, and prioritizing student welfare, this legislation upholds the fundamental principles of fairness and accountability in our education system. I urge you to support this bill and take decisive action to advance the cause of quality education for all our state's children.

Sincerely,

Joselyn Ramirez  
Deputy Director  
Parents Leading for Educational Equity