



September 25, 2020

The Honorable James Frank
Chairman
House Committee on Human Services

RE: Interim Charge 2.3

Chairman Frank & Members,

On behalf of more than 400,000 youth across Texas, Boys & Girls Clubs in Texas fill the gap between school and home. We provide welcoming, positive environments in which kids and teens have fun, participate in life-changing programs and experiences, and build supportive relationships with peers and caring adults.

Statistics show that 35% of Club youth live in single parent households, 71% qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and 85% represent minority populations. These are the youth most likely to experience opportunity gaps including inadequate academic supports, lost academic ground, food insecurity and lack of social supports. Boys & Girls Clubs in Texas help to fill that need to support youth and teens in their emotional and educational needs.

One of the goals of Boys & Girls Clubs in Texas is to equip our youth with the education to empower themselves to face one of our nation's most pressing health concerns – the opioid and substance abuse crisis. Boys & Girls Clubs in Texas can have a lasting impact and safeguard the health of an entire generation of kids. Weaving education, prevention, and intervention into a program where our youth and their parents meet to discuss issues gives kids and teens the important foundation for positive and healthy decision-making.

Positive Action is uniquely positioned to confront the challenges of substance use. The program teaches students the practical "how and why" they can be strong and live without drugs as they become aware of negative consequences of using illegal substances. Positive Action's supplemental drug prevention program further supports the prevention of substance abuse, including marijuana, methamphetamines, opiates, stimulants, steroids, hallucinogens, inhalants, and prescription drugs.

We believe Boys & Girls Clubs in Texas play a vital role in educating our state's young people about the dangers of opioid and substance abuse and our programs and services are effective in preparing Texas' most at risk youth to make positive decisions now and as they become adults.

Thank you,

Mitzi Stoute Faniola
Executive Director
Texas Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
Boys & Girls Clubs in Texas