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To: House Public Education Committee, Chairman Huberty and Vice Chairman Bernal
Re: Request for Information, Interim Charge 1, Question 1

Chairman Huberty, Vice Chairman Bernal, and members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a response to your request for information on Interim Charge 1: *Can the state delay implementation of the teacher incentive pay program to push it out to the next biennium? If so, what would be the impact on the current budget, as well as budget implications for the 2022- 23 biennium?*

My name is Eric Hale, and I am a Kindergarten and First grade teacher at David G. Burnet Elementary School in Dallas ISD, where I have taught for the past 10 years. I am an Exemplary Level 2 rated Distinguished Teacher in Dallas ISD and a Texas Master educator.

As a child who grew up in an abusive home gripped by poverty, I became all too familiar with shame, hunger, anger, despair, and hopelessness. My school community lacked the financial resources and compassion to ensure I got a fair education. I could only dream of a great education. So, like many children living in poverty and in trauma across the state, I was failed forward each year until the third grade.

A teacher changed my life when he took a child who was reading two grade levels behind and turned him into an Honor Roll student. My underpaid teacher valued me and my lived experiences, so he emphasized the importance of reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills to make sure I avoided the school to prison pipeline and, ultimately, rose to my potential to become a college graduate.

My hope is that my story and those of many of my students who mirror mine will let you know how valuable it is that you've chosen to prioritize strategic investments in Texas public school education with the passing of House Bill 3 and implementation of TIA. I wholeheartedly support allocating funds for districts to develop strategic compensation systems like the Texas Excellence Initiative that Dallas ISD uses to increase the salaries of the most effective educators. The investment TEA has made in its teachers is unmatched by any state in America. **Through TIA, student achievement will increase simultaneously with the increase in teachers'**

salary, and the retention of effective teachers in Texas will continue to grow. Since the inception of TEI, students are doing better and Dallas teachers are staying in the profession, while quality educators from around the country are choosing to work in Dallas. TIA will have the same effect if given an opportunity. The stability TIA creates benefits all educational communities across Texas as a whole. Our school communities in Texas need us now more than ever and the historic House Bill 3 passage and implementation of TIA will be instrumental in providing the best educational experience for Texas students. TIA and the resources provided by HB3 will be the single most important factor in Texas education thriving in this pandemic versus just surviving it like many other States.

Strategic compensation has allowed me to stay in the classroom by almost doubling my salary over a four-year period. I earned my master's degree with the intent of pursuing an administrative job for financial reasons, despite my passion for the classroom. **Strategic compensation increased my salary from \$48,000 to \$86,000 in four years and changed my life. This year because of My TEA Master educator rating I will receive an additional stipend of an additional \$8,000.**

TIA financially rewards the most impactful teachers for their performance in the classroom and has provided a pathway for the district's most effective teachers to continue to save and change lives in the classroom. Because of TIA Texas will now offer the most competitive salaries nationally, incentivizing the best teachers across the nation to teach Texas students. Deferring payments for the first 3,900 teachers -- or any future TIA cohort -- sends the wrong message to educators. **The Legislature must honor the commitment made to Texas teachers, students, and school systems by maintaining full funding for the Teacher Incentive Allotment.** Our students' success depends on it.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

In gratitude,

Eric Hale

Elementary Teacher of the Year for Texas

TEA Master Educator

National Urban School Teacher of the Year