



# Texas Association of Non-Public Schools

The Public Voice of Private Schools in Texas

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## School-Based Before and After School Childcare

- TANS fully endorses reasonable and effective efforts to ensure the safety and welfare of children in any setting, and especially in the context of our own schools.
- TANS opposes commercial interest efforts to force accredited private and public schools to be regulated by licensing requirements which will not improve the safety of children and which will make quality childcare less affordable for parents.

### **The Issue in Texas**

Before and after school childcare programs in Texas are regulated by the Human Resources code. The safety of children in commercial childcare facilities and non-accredited schools is ensured through licensing by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Under current law, public schools and accredited private schools which provide before and after school care are exempt from DFPS licensing. Curriculum for these programs in accredited private schools must be approved by a school's accrediting organization.

### **Challenges to the Current Law**

Over the past two Legislative Sessions, commercial childcare interests have lobbied to have the licensing exemption removed from both public and accredited private schools. These interests claim that the exemption is an unfair competitive advantage.

While it may be true that accredited private schools can often provide a lower cost childcare solution for working parents, this can only be seen as a benefit to average working families. The focus on operating costs also ignores the substantial benefits of school-based childcare programs:

- Children can spend the entire working and school day in the same social environment selected by their parents for their education.
- Children can be cared for under the supervision of the same professionals who competently supervise their schooling, day in and day out.
- The safety risk of transporting students from place to place is eliminated.

### **In Summary**

TANS maintains that the current system of private school accreditation has protected the safety and welfare of children effectively for 30 years. To limit the influence of accrediting organizations on the day-to-day operation of private schools would undermine the overall educational effect on students, while proving unnecessarily burdensome for parents.

October 1, 2010—82nd Legislature



## Texas Association of Non-Public Schools

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### Support HB 601

Contact: Charles Evans, Executive Director—512.289.1010

The Texas Association of Non-public Schools (TANS) has represented the interests of private schooling and educational quality in Texas since 1967. Together with the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission, TANS advocates for high educational and institutional standards in private schools, and we maintain a vital relationship with the Texas Education Agency through the coordination of accreditation standards and other common interests. There are 850 accredited private schools in Texas, serving more than 250,000 students and their families. Private schools provide variety and depth to the educational landscape of our state, they improve the quality of life in their communities, they provide jobs and commercial investment in local economies, and they save Texas taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

Since the establishment of TEA-approved, independent private school accreditation 25 years ago, accredited private schools have shared in the responsibilities and privileges of a highly accountable system of quality standards, including the safety and well-being of the children in our schools. During the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, HB 1385, a bill addressing employer-based childcare, contained an amendment removing a longstanding regulatory exemption which accredited private schools have shared with public schools. According to statute, accredited schools, public and private, have been exempt from licensing before and after school childcare activities with the Dept. of Family and Protective Services. HB 1385 forced the licensing of before and after-school childcare programs in approximately 500 private schools. During the ensuing effort for a veto, the bill's sponsor, Rep. Mike Villareal, and the amendment's author, Rep. Warren Chisum, both went on record explaining that the effect of the bill on accredited private schools was unintended. Governor Perry permitted the bill to become law, while issuing a written statement that acknowledged the harm that HB 1385's provisions may do to accredited private schools.

HB 601 reinstates this exemption, revising the statute to once again extend the same privileges of accreditation to both public and private schools. This bill is the top priority of private schools and the hundreds of thousands of families they serve. Without this correction to the statute, many schools, especially smaller schools in less affluent areas, will be forced to withdraw childcare services to single and working parents. DFPS licensing has its place, especially in profit-oriented enterprises, but in accredited private schools, this licensing is unnecessary and redundant, and it effectively taxes the parents of private school students who need these services.

Thank you for your support of HB 601 and accredited private schools.

**April 2009—Testimony before the House Human Services Committee**

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