

SURVEY QUESTIONS

(1) From your agency's point of view, what regulations can be reduced to improve communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments within the Texas-Mexico border region? **N/A**

(2) What are the main trade issues between the United States and Mexico that you have identified as having an impact (both positive and negative) on your agency or your area of work? **N/A**

(3) Having studied the flow of commerce at ports of entry between this state and Mexico, including the movement of commercial vehicles across the border, what actions would you establish to aid that commerce and improve the movement of those vehicles? **N/A**

(4) How do you work with federal officials to resolve transportation issues involving infrastructure, including roads and bridges, to allow for the efficient movement of goods and people across the border between Texas and Mexico? **N/A**

(5) How does your agency work with federal officials to create a unified federal agency process to streamline border crossing needs? **N/A**

(6) Has your agency identified problems involved with border truck inspections and related trade and transportation infrastructure? What are those? What solutions/recommendations does your agency propose? **N/A**

(7) How do you work to increase funding for the North American Development Bank to assist in the financing of water and wastewater facilities? **N/A**

(8) Has your agency explored the sale of excess electric power from Texas to Mexico? What are your findings? **N/A**

(9) Has your agency identified any areas of environmental protection that need to be addressed cooperatively between Texas and the Mexican states? If so, which are those areas and what type of protective measures need to be taken? **N/A**

(10) Has your agency identified common challenges to health care on which all border states can collaborate? If so, what are those challenges and how can all border states collaborate to overcome them?

(11) Has your agency developed any recommendations to address border challenges in general? If so, what are them?

Through its involvement in the Border Education Commission, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has worked with representatives from all border states to make recommendations to the border Governor's that shall be addressed in the coming year. The recommendations for the August 2006-August 2007 year are to:

- 1. Identify and promote best practices in mathematics, science and technology instruction;**

2. Support the continuity of funds from the Mexican federal government for the growth of English as a Second Language in elementary schools along the Mexican Border States. The US Border;
3. Promote the use of the Migrant Student Transfer Document;
4. Identify, share and promote best practices for engaging businesses in their support of education in the Border States; and
5. Support the ongoing development and maintenance of the Education Commission's page in the Border

(12) What programs and services does your agency offer to border communities?

The TEA does not specifically target populations according to geographic region. Challenges related to the needs of special populations (e.g. Limited English Proficient, Migrant, etc.) and/or traditionally underrepresented populations are addressed through specialized programs that target the needs of those populations regardless of region. Specialized programs, although not specifically targeted to an area based on geographic region, nevertheless impact areas of in need such as the border where demographic concentrations of special needs populations may exist.

(13) What are some regulatory and/or legislative recommendations to eliminate duplication and combine programs and services?

The agency does not have any stated recommendations at this time.

(14) Please share any considerations from your agency regarding the effect of policies instituted by the federal government impacting the border region.

At this time, the agency does not have any formal considerations to share regarding the effect of policies, state and federal, that impact the border region.

(15) Please give a brief summary of all your agency's activities related to the Border and/or Mexico.

Border Education Commission

Dr. Nora Hancock, Associate Commissioner for Planning Grants and Evaluation for the TEA served as President of the Border Education Commission (EC) from August 2005 to August 2006 and as a representative from August 2006 to August 2007. (The Presidency changes annually.)

Accomplishments:

1.- A positive response was provided by Josefina Vásquez Mota, Esq., Secretary of Public Education in a letter submitted by Eduardo Bours Castelo, Governor of Sonora and President of the 25th Annual Border Governor's Conference. The letter requested 5 million pesos (for a total of 30 million pesos) for the ESL program for each Mexican border state. The request was approved.

2.- The state of Sonora designed and collected information for a webpage that highlights the Border Governor's Conference. The website includes a separate webpage for the Commission. This webpage will serve as a clearinghouse of information and allow Border States to distribute and promote the information relevant to the current Commission's activities and accomplishments.

3.- Statistics on the educational exchanges occurring among Border States and successful projects were developed.

Specialized Programs

The agency continues to respond to the changing structure of the student population with specialized programs (e.g., Bilingual/English as Second Language (ESL) programs, LEP programs, programs targeting economically disadvantaged students, and programs targeting students in at-risk situations) in elementary and secondary schools. Greater focus on these types of strategies will be even more critical over the next decade to meet the needs of this changing student population. Some educational initiatives and programs that may target populations that are highly-represented in the border area include:

- The Texas High School Project (THSP), a \$261 million public-private initiative committed to increasing graduation and college enrollment rates in every Texas community. The THSP seeks to create systemic and sustainable change to support high school improvement. Part of this project includes creating 35 Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (T-STEM) academies that will develop and document strategies for improving math and science education and creating five centers that will provide professional development for educators and will identify successful practices that can be duplicated in other schools. One of the centers, is Region 1-Edinburg.**
- To ensure that every Texas student is college-ready and prepared to compete in a global economy, the agency in collaboration with other stakeholders, is taking steps to: 1) incorporate more rigor in high school course work; 2) offer students the opportunity to acquire the equivalent of 12 hours of college coursework before exiting high school; 3) allow students at risk of dropping out of school the opportunity to learn in a more flexible learning environment; and 4) allow higher education institutions the opportunity to offer summer residential programs for high school students interested in focusing on math, science, humanities and public policy curricula. Further, provisions included in House Bill 1 of the 3rd Called Session of the 79th Legislature require the agency to develop standards for evaluating the success and cost effectiveness of high school completion and success and college readiness programs.**
- The Early Childhood School Readiness program provides scientific, research-based, pre-reading instruction, with the goal of directly improving the pre-reading skills of three- and four-year-old children and identifying cost-effective models for pre-reading interventions.**

- **The Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative (LEP-SSI), which continues to be key to providing intensive programs of instruction for students with limited proficiency in English. The program also provides training materials and other resources to assist teachers in developing the expertise required to enable LEP students to meet both state performance standards and local graduation requirements.**

- **Demand-driven Workplace Literacy and Basic Skills Curriculum for adults with limited English proficiency and adults performing below the postsecondary level is being developed out of federal WIA Title II funds (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act). Pilot implementation of the curriculum began in January 2007. In addition to the curriculum, the project development includes a workplace literacy resource center model to assist adult education programs across the state with resource identification, teacher training, a best practices guide, models of successful adult basic education (ABE) services for job seekers, and systems integration.**

- **The Migrant education program, which is intended to help migrant students overcome the challenges of mobility, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, and other difficulties associated with a migratory life, in order to succeed in school, and to successfully transition to postsecondary education or employment.**

- **The Pre-kindergarten – Early Start grant program provides opportunities for the acquisition of English, while supporting the child's first language including social services, appropriate training and modeling, and research-based curricula. Instruction is in both languages so children can learn concepts in the language they understand while developing their English skills.**

- **Certification for teaching bilingual and English as a Second Language program assists students enrolled at institutions of higher education in educator preparation programs to prepare for bilingual education, English as a second language, or Spanish by providing financial incentives, such as tuition assistance, to encourage those students to become certified to teach bilingual education, English as a second language, or Spanish.**

- **The 80th Legislature also provided a significant investment towards high school programs with \$25 million per year from HB 2237 for research-based instructional support and professional development to high schools serving students at-risk of dropping out of school, with the goals of improving high schools and reducing dropouts, pursuant to the provisions of the legislation.**