



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Texas AFT President Zeph Capo & Houston Federation of Teachers President Jackie Anderson commented today on reports that Houston ISD's state-installed superintendent [will seek waivers from the Texas Education Agency to hire uncertified teachers](#):

“Educators have been told throughout the process of this TEA takeover of the state’s largest school district that we were overreacting — that we should give this reckless experiment in governance a chance.

We raised a flag when we discovered [Superintendent Mike Miles’ own certification was expired](#). We were told that we were making a mountain out of a molehill.

Well, the climb seems pretty steep this week.

Lowering the bar to fill vacancies in the classroom is never the answer, in any situation. But lowering the bar to fill vacancies in a district the state took over on the pretense it was not giving students an adequate learning experience? That’s truly astonishing.

Though, it’s no more astonishing, I suppose, than [turning libraries into detention centers](#) in a district where the alleged goal is to improve reading comprehension.

If this is a state-approved solution — as it must be, with the request coming from the state-installed superintendent — then I fear for the future of every public school in Texas.

If we let this happen in Houston ISD, it will not stop in Houston. We have already seen our state leaders refuse to implement real solutions to retain educators and recruit new ones. This legislative session ended without pay raises for school employees, funding increases for struggling school districts, and progress on the dire working conditions issues that plague educators.

This isn't a Houston ISD problem. It's just another installment of Texas' starve, shame, and shutter approach to public education. Every public school employee and every public school family needs to watch carefully and act accordingly."

— **Zeph Capo, president of Texas AFT**

"With one hand, TEA's chosen superintendent is trying to fill gaps with uncertified teachers, and with the other he's planning to implement [test score-based teacher pay](#). So let's just think through the consequences of these two decisions together. What happens when, a year or two from now, a certified teacher — and their paycheck — is held accountable for the scores of third graders who've never had a certified teacher before they set foot in that classroom?

Can you think of anything more demoralizing as an employee? Not to mention, the pressure ratcheting up on our students.

TEA's occupation isn't about accountability. It never has been. It's a shell game, but the stakes are educator's livelihoods and our children's futures.

Last year, this district was on the rise, in both students' learning conditions and employees' working conditions. This year, we're fighting to make sure there's a district left when TEA's done with it."

— **Jackie Anderson, president of the Houston Federation of Teachers**

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The Texas American Federation of Teachers represents 66,000 teachers, paraprofessionals, support personnel, and higher-education employees across the state. Texas AFT is affiliated with the 1.7-million-member American Federation of Teachers and the AFL-CIO.

The Houston Federation of Teachers is the largest education union in Houston ISD and represents teachers and certified staff. HFT is affiliated with the 1.7-million-member American Federation of Teachers and the AFL-CIO.