



Making History

Largest gathering of Texas philanthropy on any State Issue Held at the 3rd Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Convening

On February 24-25, 2015, the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium (TEGAC), a consortium of 29 philanthropic foundations with a focus on improving public education in the state, held its third event at the Stephen F. Austin Intercontinental Hotel as part of its biennial Advocacy Convening.

More than 120 philanthropists, most members of Philanthropy Southwest, representing 48 foundations from all parts of the state convened for two days to learn, exchange ideas and share information. Grantmakers heard from an impressive lineup of panelists, including the chiefs of staff from the Chairman of the House Public Education Committee, the Education Policy Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, and Representative Marsha Farney. Lunch keynote speakers included commissioners from Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Former Senator Florence Shapiro, the Board Chair of Texans for Education Reform, as well as national experts in the fields of education and grantmaking, including individuals representing Exponent Philanthropy, Alliance for Justice, and the Department of Education also spoke.

Panelists provided input on the most pressing and far-reaching public education issues, particularly as they relate to the Consortium's three priority areas for the 2015 Legislative Session: Pre-K, middle and high school counselor capacity in light of HB 5 implementation, and expanded learning opportunities. There was clear and broad consensus that the early work of the Consortium to: (1) identify critical education policy issues, (2) conduct research to answer important policy questions, and (3) disseminate research findings had significant impact in framing the education policy debates in 2015.

Members also visited high-ranking legislators and their staff at the Capitol, including Speaker Joe Straus, Chairman Jimmie Don Aycock, Representative Jason Villalba, and Senators Van Taylor and Eddie Lucio, to discuss the Consortium's recommendations. Subsequently they met with Governor Abbot's legislative director and education policy advisor.

Through their membership in the Consortium, philanthropists will be kept abreast of education bills as they make their way through the legislative process this session, and its consultants will also be traveling the state again post-session to talk about public education legislation from the 84th Session and how state policies impact local communities.

To learn about future Consortium convenings to be held across Texas or for inquiries on how to join TEGAC, contact Philanthropy Southwest or Jennifer Esterline, Project Consultant, at jennifermesterline@gmail.com.