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LT. GOV. DAVID DEWHURST AND SPEAKER JOE STRAUS ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENTS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE

Focus aligning funding with Texas' goal of post-secondary readiness

(AUSTIN) – Today, Lt. Governor David Dewhurst and Texas House Speaker Joe Straus (San Antonio) announced appointments to the Select Committee on Public School Finance Weights, Allotments and Adjustments. The state's goal of post-secondary readiness and a continued focus on accountability and closing the achievement gap between socioeconomic groups are important to the future of Texas students and the state's economic health. The committee will review the 20-year-old funding formulas to ensure alignment moving forward.

Lt. Governor Dewhurst's legislative appointees are: committee co-chair Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano), Sen. Robert Duncan (R-Lubbock), Sen. Dan Patrick (R-Houston), and Sen. Royce West (D-Dallas). Dr. Leonard Culwell (Garland), superintendent of schools, Garland Independent School District, will serve as the public school community member. Dr. Harrison Keller, Vice Provost for Higher Education Policy and Research, will serve as a representative from the business community.

"Few issues are more critical to the future of Texas than the quality of our public schools and the education they provide to our young people. I expect the members of this committee to engage the public and come up with the best ideas to ensure that Texas is using taxpayers funds responsibly to provide our students with a world-class education," said Lt. Gov. Dewhurst.

The legislative appointees from the Texas House of Representatives are Representatives Jimmie Don Aycok (R-Killeen), Rob Eissler (R-The Woodlands), Scott Hochberg (D-Houston) and Mike Villarreal (D-San Antonio). Representative Rob Eissler will serve as co-chair of the Select Committee. Dr. Richard Middleton (San Antonio), superintendent of schools, North East Independent School District and adjunct professor of public school finance at Trinity University, will serve as the public school community member. Larry Kellner (Houston), President of Emerald Creek, a private investment firm and former CEO, Continental Airlines, will serve as the member from the business community.

Speaker Straus said, "I am confident the work of the Select Committee on Public School Finance will help the legislature align funding formulas with the goals of innovation and post secondary readiness. Every child in Texas public schools deserves a quality education. While we fund important priorities, we must also ensure that we use each taxpayer dollar wisely."

The Select Committee on Public School Finance Weights, Allotments and Adjustments will engage the public in thoughtful discussions on topics that touch every Texan – public education and appropriate stewardship of taxpayer resources. These important discussions during this legislative interim will lay the groundwork for funding decisions during the 2011 session.

During the 2009 legislative session, the Select Committee on Public School Finance Weights, Allotments and Adjustments was established to conduct a comprehensive review of funding formulas under the public school finance system. The committee will conduct a series of public hearings throughout the state and solicit information from parents of public school children and other community members. At least one public hearing will also be held at a public school to include students in the discussion. The Select Committee will release a report to the Legislature by December 1, 2010.

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