

FOREWORD

In December 2003, at the invitation of Governor Rick Perry, along with Representative Kent Grusendorf and Senator Florence Shapiro, cochairs of the Joint Select Committee on School Finance of the Texas Legislature, the Hoover Institution's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education agreed to draft policy memoranda in answer to key education issues facing Texas policymakers in 2004.

Since convening in 1999 under the auspices of the Hoover Institution's Initiative on American Public Education and with the support of Tad Taube and the Koret Foundation, the Koret Task Force has contributed to the national debate on American education through research and scholarly writing.

Now, spurred by the invitation from Texas leaders and inspired by the commitment of Texas lawmakers to improve public education in the state, the Koret Task Force is pleased to add another dimension to its education reform efforts: concrete policy advice that draws on its expertise and national experience but focuses specifically on the education challenges of a single state.

The results that follow—in the form of ten memoranda from task force members, which were inspired by the Texas leadership and join together the task force's research and analysis with the policy acuity of public officials bent on effecting real and con-

structive change in their state's education system—represent a standard for other states to emulate.

With the submission of these memoranda, the Koret Task Force wishes to thank the governor and the cochairs of the Joint Select Committee on School Finance for their invitation.

The task force also gratefully acknowledges input from others in Texas. Indeed, many of the ideas contained in these memoranda came from, or were improved by, Governor Perry, Representative Grusendorf, Senator Shapiro, Commissioner of Education Shirley Neeley, members of the House Select Committee on School Finance, and others who take an interest in Texas education policy. The goal of the task force has been to listen to Texans' ideas and goals for their elementary and secondary schools; apply research-based expertise, sound policy principles, and national experience to them; and generate guidelines and concrete proposals that represent the consensus of ideas and expertise.

These memoranda are the cooperative product of the eleven scholars who make up the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education, each well regarded in her or his own right within the education community: John E. Chubb, Williamson M. Evers, Chester E. Finn Jr., Eric A. Hanushek, E. D. Hirsch Jr., Paul T. Hill, Caroline M. Hoxby, Terry M. Moe, Paul E. Peterson, Diane Ravitch, and Herbert J. Walberg.

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