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Education Research Center Data & Expertise Integral in Comptroller's Resource Allocation Study

Richardson, Texas (Oct. 5, 2009) – In an effort to improve academic achievement and encourage more effective use of public education dollars, Texas Comptroller Susan Combs will conduct a study of school district resource allocation practices that contribute to high academic achievement and cost-effective operations. The study, required by House Bill 3 enacted by the 81st Legislature, will use the data and expertise of the UT Dallas Education Research Center.

"Public education spending will continue to grow as our population increases and as state policymakers recognize the important role our schools play in preparing the work force necessary for a strong economy," Combs said. "This study will be an analysis of what schools are spending and their academic outcomes."

HB3 requires the Comptroller to evaluate existing academic accountability and financial data by integrating the data; to rank the results of the evaluation to identify the relative performance of districts and campuses; and to identify potential areas for district and campus improvement. The legislation also requires the Comptroller to evaluate the operating cost for each student, the operating cost for each program and the staffing cost for each student.

The UT Dallas Education Research Center, which has significant expertise in education data integration and analysis, has been asked to provide technical advice for the study. Working with the Education Research Center will be a select group of national experts in school accountability, statistical methods, psychometrics, and finance. The Comptroller has also enlisted the advice of a group of Texas superintendents in the study's development and implementation.

"Developing new measures to determine which schools and school districts have achieved the highest performance in both academics and financial efficiency is far too important to be left to a single institution or a few experts," said Dan O'Brien, Director of Texas Schools Project, which oversees the UT Dallas Education Research Center. "Therefore, we are drawing from the best and most experienced researchers in school finance and student achievement to guide the Comptroller's resource allocation study."

The study, a ground-breaking state project serving the public interest, is expected to be completed in late 2010, before the next legislative session.

The UT Dallas Education Research Center is managed by Texas Schools Project, one of the premier education research institutions in the country, which is part of the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences.

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