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## Texas Music Educators Association

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### **Senate Committee votes to rein in TAKS tutoring abuses**

AUSTIN -- The Senate Education Committee Tuesday approved Senate Bill 140 by Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano) that would curtail the practice of pulling students out of regular classes for special tutoring to prepare for the TAKS test.

“The practice of pulling students from fine arts and other enrichment classes for tutoring on the TAKS test has become increasingly widespread,” Sen. Shapiro told the committee. “I’ve heard increasingly that there are students who are being removed from any non-tested class, including foundation subjects like science and social studies, for TAKS remediation.

“This bill clarifies that students may not earn a credit or a grade for a class, in all grades from Kindergarten through 12th grade, unless they are in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. This will help us ensure that students are in attendance and that they have the opportunity to learn the state standards for all of their courses and not just some of them,” Sen. Shapiro said.

Robert Floyd, Chairman of the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education, testified that the practice of pulling students out of classes for test preparation has increased as more emphasis has been placed on test results.

“Without question, the number one plea that we receive from teachers is ‘please help us keep our kids in the classroom so we can teach them.’ Teachers and parents throughout the state are thrilled that Sen. Shapiro is taking the lead to put an end to this practice so students can receive the well-rounded education that they need and that is required by law,” Floyd said.

Floyd provided committee members with examples of abuses related in emails he has received from teachers, including:

- An elementary school where some students were taken out of every music class from October to March.
- A middle school where 25 to 35 percent of students were pulled out of every art class.
- A middle school where all non-TAKS tested courses were cancelled for the two weeks prior to the TAKS test.
- A music teacher who had to make up grades for students who had never been allowed to attend her class.

An identical bill passed the Senate in the regular session two years ago but did not pass the House. The bill now goes to the full Senate for consideration.

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