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New Report and Symposium Open the Door to Understanding Texas Public School Finance

AUSTIN – A new publication from the TTARA Research Foundation opens the door on one of the most complex, and costly, parts of the state’s fiscal system—the financing of public schools.

“The public education system in Texas is one of the largest in the nation—educating 4.7 million students at a cost of approximately \$48 billion in the current school year—yet only a handful of ‘insiders’ have any real understanding of how it works. This report is designed to give the rest of us the basic knowledge we need in order to play informed roles in developing policies affecting this most important public service,” said Bill Allaway, the TTARA Research Foundation’s President.

The report, “An Introduction to School Finance in Texas,” authored by Sheryl Pace, describes the current “two-layered” system of formulas and target revenues in layman’s language, and explains why only 20 percent of Texas school districts now have their funding set by formula. The report shows how school funding responsibilities are divided between the state and local districts and how that split affects the tax bills that Texans pay to local school districts.

The report is being released in conjunction with a School Finance Symposium presented by the TTARA Research Foundation on May 12, 2010, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, in the Capitol Extension Auditorium in the State Capitol Building in Austin.

In addition to explaining the “nuts and bolts” of the school finance system, the symposium will deal with some of the most important questions on the horizon, such as whether schools need additional revenue and issues that may spark future litigation.

There is no charge for either the report or the symposium.

The TTARA Research Foundation is a non-profit educational entity organized to make factual analyses and studies related to economic, fiscal and public policy in Texas.