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**Pacific Research Institute Study Asks:
Are Texas Middle-Class Public Schools Performing Well?
*Many May Not Be As Good As Parents Think***

San Francisco—The Pacific Research Institute (PRI), a non-partisan think tank, today announced the release of a ground-breaking study on the performance of students in predominantly middle-class/non-low-income public schools in Texas. *“Not as Good as You Think: Why Texas Parents Should Be Concerned about Their Local Public Schools,”* found that among 1,115 regular public schools that qualify as predominantly middle-class/non-low-income, in 672, or 60 percent, of the schools, more than half of the students in at least one grade level failed to meet or exceed proficiency on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), based on the final Recommended Level II benchmark of proficiency. The study was authored by Lance T. Izumi, Senior Director of Education Studies at PRI with Alicia Chang.

The number of questions that a student must answer correctly in order to be deemed proficient on the STAAR is a moving target, with higher benchmarks for proficiency being phased in over time until a final “Recommended” level is set. Among the predominantly non-low-income 1,115 regular public schools in Texas, 758, or 68 percent, have at least one grade where students performed below the average performance of schools with students of the same income status on a STAAR subject-matter test, based on the Recommended Level II benchmark.

The study looks at regular public schools where one-third or fewer of the students are classified as low income. The study provides school-by-school data on the proficiency rates of students on the STAAR, emphasizing the performance of schools under the final Recommended Level II standards.

“The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that families in poor, urban neighborhoods aren’t the only ones who should be concerned about their children’s schools,” said Mr. Izumi. “The results should cause middle-class parents to rethink their views on the quality of their neighborhood public school, and, consequently, to open their minds to other education options, choices, and policy changes that would allow their children to escape underperforming schools and attend better-performing alternatives,” he added.

Recent polling by the Friedman Foundation and the Texas Public Policy Foundation shows that in Texas, a large majority of Texas voters, 66 percent, support school-choice vouchers. A large majority also agreed that education in Texas is on the ‘wrong track,’ and 54 percent labeled the state’s public school system as only ‘fair’ or ‘poor.’”

“Unfortunately, Texas lawmakers have failed to pass significant school-choice legislation that addresses the overwhelming preferences of state voters. It’s now time for Texas to provide such options.” said Mr. Izumi.

Not as Good as You Think: Why Texas Parents Should Be Concerned about Their Local Public Schools by Lance Izumi with Alicia Chang is available at www.pacificresearch.org. An interactive page allows visitors to view the results for a particular school. To arrange an interview with Lance Izumi, contact PRI’s Press Office at 415/955-6123 or ritchon@pacificresearch.org or ldannerbeck@pacificresearch.org.

About PRI

For 35 years, the Pacific Research Institute (PRI) has championed freedom, opportunity, and individual responsibility through free-market policy solutions. PRI is a non-profit, non-partisan organization. Visit its website at www.pacificresearch.org