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**Senator Bettencourt Files SB 933 To Create Office of Inspector General in the Texas Education Agency**  
*Office of Inspector General would be tasked with rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse*

**Austin** - Senator Bettencourt (R-Houston) filed Senate Bill 933 to create an office of Inspector General in the Texas Education Agency. SB 933 will have twenty-six joint authors of the Texas Senate. Similar legislation authored by Bettencourt, Senate Bill 1886, passed the Texas Senate unanimously in the 85th Legislative Session but did not get a vote in the full Texas House.

**"Nearly twenty-five percent of the current state budget goes towards public education,"** said Senator Bettencourt. **"The Texas Education Agency is one of the few major agencies that does not already have authority for an Office of Inspector General. This bill will ensure that taxpayer money is not being wasted and will give the agency the ability to root out fraud and abuse."**

*SB 933 would enact the following key change:*

- Establishes a Texas Education Agency Office of the Inspector General to carry out investigations of fraud, waste, and abuse on behalf of the Commissioner.
- The office may conduct criminal, civil, and administrative investigations and initiate reviews of a school district, open-enrollment charter school, regional education service center, or other local education agency as considered appropriate by the inspector general.
- Provides the OIG with subpoena power for the production of documents and relevant witnesses.
- Adds county departments of education to the list of entities that the OIG can investigate.
- Provides the OIG authorization to provide information and evidence relating to criminal acts to the State Auditor's Office and appropriate law enforcement officials.
- Gives the OIG authorization to refer matters for further civil, criminal, and administrative action to appropriate administrative and prosecutorial agencies, including the attorney general.

Currently, the following Texas agencies already have an Office of Inspector General within their own offices: Health and Human Services, Texas Juvenile Justice Department, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

In, at times, shocking testimony before the Senate Education Committee (during the 85th Legislative Session), Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath discussed several incidents which indicated the need for an Inspector General, such as pay-to play schemes, threats of violence, and even district procurement officials being murdered execution style.

**"Taxpayers deserve to know that their money is being spent properly and efficiently,"** concluded Senator Bettencourt. **"An agency that is responsible for monitoring \$60 billion of public money per year needs the accountability that an Office of Inspector General will bring."**

Senator Bettencourt plans to file additional legislation in the coming days on a variety of issues.

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