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**Senator Bettencourt Passes Bill to Create An 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 Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) passed an important piece of bi-partisan legislation unanimously through the full 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. Senate Bill 933 would create an Office of Inspector General at the Texas Education Agency which is currently one of few major state agencies that do not have a OIG office in place. Education is 38.9% of the general revenue monies in the budget. The legislation has 26 Senate co-authors at passage.

**"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 investigate fraud and abuse,"** said Senator Bettencourt. **"With nearly 39% of the current states budget uncovered by an OIG, SB933 will make a difference for taxpayers,"** he added.

Senate Bill 933 would allow the Office of Inspector General to investigate 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. This legislation is vital due to the lack of explicit statutory authority the Commissioner of Education has on these types of investigations relating to fraud, waste, and abuse by different entities. Senator Bettencourt accepted bi-partisan amendments from Senator West, Johnson and Paxton.

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."**

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.

This is apart of a numerous education reform bills that Senator Bettencourt has worked on and pass this year.

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