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**Communications & Public Affairs**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**House Dems Oppose Major School Transfer and Funding Bills Passed Today**

OKLAHOMA CITY -- House Minority Leader Emily Virgin, D-Norman, released the following statement after two major school transfer and funding bills passed off the House floor on Wednesday.

“While the stated rationale for House Bill 2074, which radically changes public school transfer policy, and House Bill 2078, which calls for reducing the three-year average funding formulation, is to reform public education for better outcomes, the unfortunate reality is that it will only further hurt schools and the students they serve.

“Both bills focus on pulling funding and students from schools who are struggling so as to incentivize them to ‘perform better.’ The problem is this -- it fundamentally does nothing to address what is truly needed to help the students in those schools.

“There are three major reasons that schools who are not performing well are struggling.

1. All the schools that are struggling and not performing well have some of the poorest districts in the state. That brings students who are food insecure, who have high adverse childhood experiences, whose families move often and are in general living in very stressful circumstances that affect the students’ academic performance.
2. The challenging school environment created when serving poverty-stricken districts places extraordinary pressures on teachers in the classroom on top of not having adequate classroom resources or acceptable student-teacher ratios.
3. We currently have an extremely low number of counselors in our schools. In fact, our counselor-student ratio is more than 2 times the national recommended level. Teachers can’t handle this kind of student population alone and without resources.

“If we want to improve student opportunities and academic success, then we should not ‘punish’

these schools but rather put forth more substantive policies that address these fundamental issues, such as what we have recommended in our legislative education policy platform.

"House Democrats proposed 11 different education-specific proposals to help improve our education system as well as several pieces of legislation designed to create opportunity and put more investment into struggling Oklahoma communities. Unfortunately, none of these bills have been heard on the House floor.

"If we want a better public education system, we need to acknowledge the source of the challenges our system faces and develop a long-term solution that truly tackles these difficult problems and helps our schools be successful."

For more on the proposals that House Democrats have put forward to help address struggling schools, visit [www.oklahomafocused.com](http://www.oklahomafocused.com).

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