

# TEXAS EDUCATION TODAY

SEPTEMBER 2011

News from the Texas Education Agency

COLLEGE READY

## ACT math score hits record high in Texas

The Class of 2011 posted a record-high math score on the ACT college entrance exam, a clear sign that Texas' rigorous graduation requirements are producing results.

This class was the first group of students to follow the so-called four-by-four graduation plan, which requires four years of high school study in mathematics, English, science and social studies. They were also required to earn a total of 26 course credits in order to graduate.

The Texas average score on the ACT mathematics exam reached 21.5 out of a possible score of 36, according to results released by ACT on Aug. 17. That 0.7 point increase since 2007 is considered a phenomenal increase in scores, and is higher than the national score of 21.1. In comparison, the national average math score increased 0.1 points over the same time period.

This increase occurred even as the state's number of test takers rose from 92,612 in 2010 to 101,569 in 2011. Since 2009, the number of Texas students taking the ACT increased by 18,929 examinees, a significant number given that the typical increase is about 3,000 per year.

"The state's four-by-four graduation requirement is clearly beginning to pay off for students in the area of math. Most students take the ACT in their senior year so they have completed Algebra II and are well into a rigorous fourth year math class by the time they take this test," said Commissioner of Education Robert Scott. The state's emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education as well as professional development aimed at improving Algebra I instruction also contributed to the increase on both the math and science tests over the five-year period, he said.

Results from 2007 to 2011 show Texas scores increasing

for each of the four subjects tested by the ACT – mathematics, reading, English and science – which are used to produce the composite score.

The Class of 2011 in Texas earned a science score of 20.8, a 0.4 point increase over the past five years. The national score fell from 21.0 to 20.9 during this period.

Texas' English score of 19.6 was an increase of 0.1 points over the past five years while the national score fell 0.1 points to 20.6 during this period.

The state's reading score increased 0.1 to 20.7 over the five years, while the national score fell 0.2 to 21.3.

Overall, the composite score for Texas held steady for the third straight year at 20.8, even as the number of test takers increased 10 percent from the previous year and 23 percent since 2009. Normally, when the number of test takers goes up, scores fall.

Nationwide during the past five years, the national composite score fell from 21.2 in 2007 to 21.1 this year. The Texas score rose from 20.5 in 2007 to 20.8 in 2011.

Even with the increased participation in the ACT, the dominant test in Texas remains the SAT. Thirty-six percent of the 2011 Texas graduates took the ACT. Nineteen states plus the District of Columbia have lower ACT participation rates and 29 states have higher ACT participation levels. Eighteen states have lower composite scores than does Texas.

ACT estimates that 24 percent of Texas examinees have a 50 percent chance or better of earning a grade of B on core subject area college courses. That is up from 19 percent of examinees in the Class of 2007 who were predicted to succeed in these classes.

The top 10 Texas universities being sent scores by ACT test takers are, in order:

1. The University of Texas at Austin
2. Texas A&M University in College Station
3. Texas Tech University
4. Texas State University
5. Baylor University
6. University of Texas at San Antonio
7. University of Texas – Pan American
8. University of North Texas
9. University of Houston (Main Campus)
10. Texas Christian University

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### **IN OTHER ACTION**

#### Summaries of State Board actions can be found online

The State Board of Education met Sept. 14-16. Summaries of actions taken by the State Board of Education can be found on the Texas Education Agency's website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=5161>

## COLLEGE CREDIT

## Advanced Placement program growing

Texas experienced an almost 11 percent increase in the number of public school students taking an Advanced Placement (AP) test in 2011, and participation gains for the state's Asian, African-American, American Indian, Hispanic and white students outpaced the growth rate for their peer groups nationally.

The College Board, which oversees the AP program, reported recently that 186,576 Texas public school students took 339,406 AP exams last school year.

Of those, 149,091 earned scores of three, four or five out of a possible score range of one to five. Many colleges and universities will award course credit for scores of three, four or five, which saves Texans time and money as they pursue a college education.

The 2011 participation rate represents a 6.9 percent increase over the number of exams earning high scores in 2010.

The growth in participation has been particularly strong among the state's minority groups enrolled in public schools. There was a 17.3 percent increase in the number of African-American students who took the test this year, compared to a 9.1

percent increase for African-American students nationally.

In Texas, 14.7 percent more Hispanic students took AP tests in 2011 than did the previous year. Nationally, the growth rate for Hispanics was 12.8 percent. The number of Asian Texans taking AP exams grew 13 percent, compared to 9.6 percent nationally. White Texans enrolled in public schools experienced a growth in the participation rate of 6.4 percent, slightly higher than the national participation increase for whites of 6.1 percent.

The five AP exams taken most frequently by Texas public school students are:

1. English Language & Composition: 48,441
2. United States History: 38,529
3. English Literature & Composition: 30,470
4. World History: 30,130
5. Spanish Language: 21,613

Students may take an AP exam without being enrolled in an AP class in high school but most students do take the corresponding class.

### AP: Performance and Participation Overview

	Texas - Public Schools				Total Group - Public Schools			
	# of Test-Takers	% of Total	# of Exams Taken	# of Grades 3-5	# of Test-Takers	% of Total	# of Exams Taken	# of Grades 3-5
All	186,576	100.0%	339,406	149,091	1,701,934	100.0%	2,959,895	1,650,966
Change from last year	+10.9%		+11.1%	+6.9%	+7.4%		+7.8%	+7.9%
American Indian	975	0.5%	1,746	787	8,826	0.5%	13,916	5,989
Change from last year	+14.4%		+11.6%	+20.0%	+8.3%		+8.1%	+8.5%
Asian	18,460	9.9%	42,646	26,314	202,497	11.9%	425,399	281,043
Change from last year	+13.0%		+12.5%	+11.2%	+9.6%		+10.7%	+12.0%
Black	15,320	8.2%	25,235	5,599	141,259	8.3%	217,486	55,499
Change from last year	+17.3%		+17.9%	+13.6%	+9.1%		+10.2%	+12.9%
Hispanic Overall	73,164	39.2%	121,686	35,739	284,387	16.7%	468,222	184,195
Change from last year	+14.7%		+17.4%	+7.1%	+12.8%		+14.6%	+11.4%
White	69,942	37.5%	133,554	74,556	954,229	56.1%	1,652,964	1,029,223
Change from last year	+6.4%		+7.3%	+6.7%	+6.1%		+7.2%	+8.1%
Other	3,552	1.9%	6,596	3,055	53,583	3.1%	94,662	51,614
Change from last year	+16.1%		+14.7%	+13.8%	+2.2%		+3.1%	+4.1%
No Response	5,163	2.8%	7,943	3,041	57,153	3.4%	87,246	43,403
Change from last year	-5.4%		-26.5%	-29.4%	-2.3%		-19.6%	-23.9%

Note: Scores are reported when there are five or more exams taken by five or more test-takers.

## AWARD OF DISTINCTION

## 26 Texas schools win the 2011 Blue Ribbon Schools award

Twenty-six Texas schools won the prestigious 2011 Blue Ribbon Schools award from the U.S. Department of Education in September.

This program has recognized more than 6,500 of America's most successful schools, including about 500 Texas schools, since its creation in 1982. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools. The schools are selected based on one of two criteria:

- schools that dramatically improve student performance to high levels on state tests;
- schools whose students achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests.

The nominated public schools were recommended by a Texas

Education Agency committee that examined student achievement statistics for the more than 8,000 public school and charter campuses in the state. The schools selected have demonstrated success in closing the achievement gap and each school has an economically disadvantaged population of 40 percent or greater.

Schools nominated by TEA for the award serve as models of best practices for schools across the state.

The award-winning schools will be recognized at the Blue Ribbon School conference Nov. 14-15 at the Washington, D.C. Omni Shoreham Hotel.

Additional information about the program and past award winners can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html>.

The schools selected for the Improvement category are:

**Alpine ISD\***: Wayne Mitchell, interim superintendent ♦ *Alpine High School*: Verl L. O'Bryant, principal

**Beaumont ISD**: Carrol Thomas, superintendent ♦ *Martin Elementary School* (formerly Lucas Elementary): Martha Fowler, principal

**Breckenridge ISD\***: Jennings Teel, superintendent ♦ *Breckenridge Junior High School*: Jessica Stapp, principal

**Corrigan-Camden ISD\***: Thomas Bowman, superintendent ♦ *Corrigan-Camden High School*: Elisha Bell, principal

**Corpus Christi ISD**: D. Scott Elliff, superintendent ♦ *Blanche Moore Elementary School*: Janie Vela, principal

**El Paso ISD**: Terri Jordan, interim superintendent ♦ *Coldwell Elementary School*: Jason Yturalde, principal

**Mount Pleasant ISD\***: Lynn Dehart, superintendent ♦ *Annie Sims Elementary School*: Pam McCollum, principal

**Richardson ISD**: Kay E. Waggoner, superintendent ♦ *Westwood Junior High Math, Science, Leadership Magnet School*: Troy Gray, principal

**Sharyland ISD\***: Scott B. Owings, superintendent ♦ *B. L. Gray Junior High School*: Cynthia Wilson, principal ♦ *Sharyland North Junior High School*: Leticia Leal, principal

**Socorro ISD\***: Xavier de la Torre, superintendent ♦ *Escontrias Elementary School*: Magdalena Aguilar, principal

**Stamford ISD\***: Arthur Casey, superintendent ♦ *Oliver Elementary School*: Susan Mueller, principal

The schools that were selected to receive the award in the High Performing Schools category are:

**Dallas ISD**: Alan King, interim superintendent ♦ *Dallas Environmental Science Academy*: Angela West, principal ♦ *Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School*: Vivian Taylor, principal ♦ *Rosie Sorrells School of Education and Social Services*: Alice Black, principal ♦ *School of Science and Engineering*: Jovan Wells, principal

**El Paso ISD**: Terri Jordan, interim superintendent ♦ *Silva Magnet School for Health Professions*: Fred Rojas, principal

**Galveston ISD\***: Larry Nichols, superintendent ♦ *Austin Middle School*: Cathy Vanness, principal

**Houston ISD**: Terry B. Grier, superintendent ♦ *E. A. "Squatty" Lyons Elementary School*: Cecilia Gonzales, principal ♦ *Eastwood Academy High School*: Paula Fendley, principal ♦ *Challenge Early College High School*: Tonya Miller, principal

**La Porte ISD\***: Lloyd W. Graham, superintendent ♦ *Lomax Elementary School*: Vickie Gentile, principal

**Nederland ISD\***: Robert Madding, superintendent ♦ *Hillcrest Elementary School*: Karen Noble, principal

**Rising Star ISD\***: Max Thompson, superintendent ♦ *Rising Star Elementary School*: Barbara Long, principal

**Spring Branch ISD**: Duncan Klussmann, superintendent ♦ *Westchester Academy for International Studies*: Natalie Blasingame, principal

**YES Public Schools**: Jason Bernal, chief executive officer ♦ *YES Prep Southwest Campus*: Christopher Claflin, school director

\* This is the first Blue Ribbon School nomination for the district.

## HEROES FOR CHILDREN

## School volunteers lauded at State Board of Education meeting

The State Board of Education honored 15 outstanding school volunteers from districts across Texas with the Heroes for Children award at the September meeting.

The 15 Heroes were honored for their hard work and contributions to the public schoolchildren of Texas. One Hero from each of the 15 SBOE districts was recognized and presented with a plaque and resolution recognizing their accomplishments.

A video archive of the recognition ceremony is posted at <http://www.texasadmin.com/tea.shtml>.

A description of the contributions each Hero for Children has made to Texas schoolchildren appears below.

**HILDA GRANADOS**, SBOE District 1. Granados, a volunteer in the Laredo Independent School District, was the very first parent volunteer at J.C. Martin Elementary School when it opened in 1974. Granados tutors students in reading and math, assists teachers, monitors the lunchroom and is an advocate for the children. She is a constant fixture at all the school functions, including the Open House and Progress Report Nights; and she is part of a program called SCAN – Serving Children and Adolescents in Need, providing input for program improvements.

**MARCO CASTILLO**, SBOE District 2. Castillo has been a mentor in the Corpus Christi ISD's Guidance + Partnership=Success Mentoring Program since its inception in the 2010-11 school year. The program helps at-risk students persist in attaining the grades, behavior and attendance to successfully complete the ninth grade. Castillo, described as "super hero-like," has filled the role of parent, brother, teacher, counselor, as well as mentor and uses the mantra of "failure is not an option."

**ANTONIA REYES**, SBOE District 3. Reyes is a volunteer at the Airport Elementary School in the Weslaco ISD. She volunteers at the parent center, preparing class materials, binding notebooks, decorating bulletin boards, doors and much more. In addition, she has worked with the district's migrant department, the M.A.N.O.S. tutoring program, and the Gear Up program, a dropout prevention initiative. She is also an advocate for higher education and travels with students around the state visiting universities in Austin, San Marcos, Kingsville and San Antonio.

**ALLISON LOUIS**, SBOE District 4. Louis is described as "invaluable" to the staff at Westbrook Intermediate School in the Clear Creek ISD. According to her nomination form: "Louis goes above and beyond to support the gifted and talented community." Louis has been a volunteer for 10 years and in addition to doing the usual volunteer things – cutting, pasting, folding, collating, assembling and organizing – she also reads to the students; tutors math and spelling; and works with small groups on class projects. She also volunteers with the Ecology Club, Orchestra Booster Club and theatre production classes.

**CARROLL POLK WILSON**, SBOE District 5. Wilson has been a volunteer in three Texas school districts since the mid-1980s.

Wilson started volunteering in the Temple ISD in 2007 and in 2009 established the Temple ISD Wildcat Mentor program – a mentoring program providing at-risk students with a positive role model. Wilson served as president of the organization for two years and conducted the recruitment, screening, and interview process for all mentors, as well as scheduling all the mentee-mentor events. Wilson was previously a school volunteer in the Canyon and Wichita Falls ISDs.

**TOMMIE W. FRIDAY**, SBOE District 6. Friday has been a volunteer at the Krahn Elementary School in the Klein ISD for three years. Motivated by his own struggles in reading, Friday uses his personal equipment and materials to work with six groups of students who have reading-related problems in grades one through four. As a certified Neuhaus Reading Instructor, he matches his instruction to the differing ability levels of each student. He says his own reading struggles help him relate to the challenges he sees the children face every day – and he gets great pleasure from giving these children the gift of reading.

**BARNEY 'POP' BENNETT**, SBOE District 7. Bennett, or "Pop" as he called by the children and staff at Winship Elementary in the Spring ISD, has been a volunteer since 1997. He says the greatest thrill he ever had was seeing a struggling child have the light bulb come on and "get it." Over the years Bennett recalls that he has worked with about 750-800 students, encouraging them to learn through humor, stories (some are true, and some tall tales) and his grandfatherly wisdom. In honor of his volunteer work, the staff at Winship named a hallway after him, the "Passageway of Possibilities – POP."

**DENISE SHEFFIELD**, SBOE District 8. Sheffield, a volunteer in the Lumberton ISD, is described as someone who has successfully combined being Parent-Teacher Organization president, volunteer, substitute school nurse, wife and mother. During the 2010-11 school year this mother of four worked to "re-establish" the PTO organization at the Lumberton Primary School. Under Sheffield's guidance, the Lumberton Primary PTO hosted homecoming, Christmas, Valentine's and track & field day events. The PTO honored teachers with birthday gifts, luncheons and a teacher appreciation week full of daily surprises.

**SHERRI HOCUTT**, SBOE District 9. Hocutt was nominated for this recognition by the fourth-grade teachers at the Chisum Elementary School in the Chisum ISD. Hocutt said she was motivated to be a volunteer because of the dedicated volunteers she saw at her school when she was a student. "There are several reasons why I volunteer," she says. "I enjoy being instrumental in the students' lives by helping a student read, learn math facts or take an Accelerated Reader test. Most children just want to feel special," she said. "I get the opportunity to make a child feel like they are somebody, that they are special, and that school can be fun and rewarding."



*The State Board of Education honored 15 volunteers at its Sept. 16 meeting. The volunteers honored as Heroes for Children are (back row l to r): Allison Louis, Sherri Hocutt, Jane Denbow, Melissa Mozer, Antonia Reyes, Elizabeth Chappell, Barney “Pop” Bennett, Marco Castillo, and Tommie Friday. Pictured on the front row (from l to r): Warren Adams, Cheryl Preece, Hilda Granados, Liz Melgar, and Carroll Polk Wilson. Not pictured is Denise Sheffield.*

**MELISSA MOZER**, SBOE District 10. Mozer has been a volunteer for 12 years at Cinco Ranch High School in the Katy ISD. She has served as an executive board member of the CRHS Athletic Booster Club and on the club’s scholarship committee. She is also a member of the choir booster club board, Parent-Teacher-Student Association board, the Katy PTA Council and has worked with Project Graduation and the Cougar Commitment/POWER program, the Katy ISD drug awareness program that benefits all the high schools.

**JANE DENBOW**, SBOE District 11. Denbow is a 30-plus year volunteer with the Weatherford ISD where she has been a board member, tutor, mentor, child advocate and a sponsor for needy children. Denbow served from 1985 to 2003 on the WISD board of trustees and on the local chamber of commerce where she was instrumental in starting their education committee to partner with the district and the annual Teacher of the Year recognition. She currently is a volunteer in the HOSTS/STARS reading program and on the Weatherford ISD Education Foundation.

**ELIZABETH CHAPPELL**, SBOE District 12. Chappell is president of the Coppell ISD Gifted Association and an advocate for a unique group of gifted students – those termed “twice exceptional students.” These are students that are academically gifted in an area, yet struggle with learning differences, such as dyslexia. She has organized special speakers for GT parent meetings; coordinated enrichment programs designed to bring students together with their intellectual peers; created a creative writing competition and serves on the district’s Strategic Planning Committee.

**WARREN ADAMS**, SBOE District 13. A retired firefighter,

Adams has worked for 11 years to provide library funds at Cockrell Hill Elementary School to help the librarian reach her goal of having 10 books for every student in the school. Adams provides assistance to students and families in need through donations for utilities, school uniforms and the Angel Tree. He is a positive role model and mentor; is involved with Big Brothers/Big Sisters; provides eye glasses and medical assistance; and provides school-wide incentives for any student that maintains an average of 75 percent or above in academics.

**CHERYL PREECE**, SBOE District 14. Preece is a volunteer at Troy Elementary School in the Troy ISD. She has tutored, mentored, donated, painted, cut and pasted for more than six years. Her many volunteer duties include tutoring math and reading; donating hundreds of books, school supplies, computer parts, Accelerated Reader prizes and clothing. She takes lessons and books to sick students at home so they can keep up with their studies; participates on campus improvement committees; and works at and supports school events such as the book fair, TAKS survivor games, reading and math nights, and the school carnival.

**LIZ MELGAR**, SBOE District 15. Melgar is a volunteer at the Texhoma Elementary School in the Texhoma ISD. Melgar spends her day monitoring the cafeteria and playground, listening to students read, coaching math and journal writing, and assisting in the library and computer lab. She also acts as a translator for parents at public hearings, at financial aid assistance meetings and for parent-teacher conferences.

Photos of each volunteer can be found on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/txedu/sets/72157627583335539/>.

## EXTRAORDINARY EDUCATORS

## Six educators named Teacher of the Year finalists

Six exceptional educators from across Texas have been chosen as finalists in the Texas Teacher of the Year program, Commissioner of Education Robert Scott recently announced.

Three elementary and three secondary school educators were selected from the 40 regional Teachers of the Year from each of the state's 20 education service center areas. The finalists will now vie for the honor of being named Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year and Texas Secondary Teacher of the Year.

The elementary school finalists are:

- **KAREN MORMAN**, a reading specialist at J.W. Webb Elementary School in McKinney Independent School District (ISD);
- **ERIKA PIERSON**, a first-grade teacher at Live Oak Elementary in Round Rock ISD;
- **JUNE SHANAHAN**, a fifth-grade teacher at Scobee Elementary in San Antonio's Northside ISD.

The secondary education finalists are:

- **TRACY PIPPINS**, a chemistry and biology teacher at Graham High School in Graham ISD;
- **STEPHANIE STOEBE**, a reading teacher at Round Rock High School in Round Rock ISD;
- **STEVEN SINGLETON**, a biology teacher at Randall High School in Canyon ISD.

"I congratulate these six amazing teachers who inspire their students and colleagues to excel, both in and out of the classroom. These six finalists represent the many dedicated teachers throughout the state who strive to make a difference," said Scott.

In their Teacher of the Year applications, each educator offered insight into their teaching philosophy and style.

Morman, the elementary reading specialist at McKinney ISD, writes: "As I glance at the myriad of student notes that mark my journey as a teacher, it reinforces my belief that teachers are the most important factor to success in the classroom. One student's note pulls at my heartstrings when she shares that reading has been difficult for her in the past, and thanks me for helping her enjoy reading. It is a teacher's positive attitudes, high expectations, and the joy for learning that is modeled in the classroom that will make the difference in students' lives."

Pierson, who teaches at Live Oak Elementary, writes that she used to think she just had one year to impact the life of a child, but has since determined that she has a continuous stake in that child. We all do. "A child can have a wonderful year with a

wonderful teacher, but that is not enough. The memories of that experience will fade, the facts learned and field trips taken will be forgotten. But the truth is, most often, a child needs a stack of these experiences, a crowd of people who know their name, who hug them, discipline them, listen and love them and guide them on that journey to adulthood. A child needs all of us."

Shanahan, the Scobee Elementary School fifth-grade teacher, writes that meaningful connections are the heart and soul of effective teaching. "I view teaching as so much larger than the walls of the classroom and so much more important than curriculum and tests. It is about students fulfilling their potential as people and citizens of the world. It is about relationships, and love, and helping each other grow. When miracles happen in our Texas public schools, it is because of the compassion that teachers bring to each student."

Pippins, a high school science teacher in Graham ISD, said that her second grade teacher, Mrs. Woolum, was the reason she loved school. "I knew I could become someone great because Mrs. Woolum said I could and made me believe in myself." When Pippins learned that her family would be moving, she was worried about the first day at her new school. "I overheard the teacher whose class I was to be placed in say, 'Another new one? I got the last one.' Looking back, I know that teacher did not mean to make me feel insignificant. But she inadvertently taught me a valuable lesson about how I would teach. Every day I strive to show my students that if they will give me a few minutes every day, I can help them to learn something new."

Stoebe of Round Rock High School said in her application that she worked for the regional probation department in Texas and her job was to help defenders earn their high school diploma or GED. But she knew she could make a real difference if she were a teacher and could reach them when they were young. "My most significant contributions to education will be that I gave hope to children when they had none. I gave direction to students who were lost, both emotionally and academically. I taught kids to read; first the words, then the sentences, and then finally, they understood that education is the great equalizer in society today."

Singleton, who since his nomination has become an assistant principal at Canyon High School in Amarillo, believes that he would have never attended college if his high school principal,

◆ **TEACHER OF THE YEAR** *continued, page 7*



*Karen Morman*



*Erika Pierson*



*June Shanahan*



*Tracy Pippins*



*Stephanie Stoebe*



*Steven Singleton*

## PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND

## Proposition 6 on the November ballot could change PSF payout

Established under the Texas Constitution, Art. 7, sec. 5, the Permanent School Fund (PSF) is a trust fund that holds the proceeds from state land and mineral rights that have been invested. The PSF's investment returns are constitutionally dedicated to the benefit of Texas public education.

### HOW DOES THE PSF WORK?

The elected 15-member State Board of Education (SBOE) manages the investment of the PSF, and, if the fund's investment performance permits, the SBOE makes distributions to the Available School Fund (ASF). The ASF consists of distributions from the PSF and revenue from one-fourth of motor fuels taxes. Distributions to the ASF are used to fund instructional materials and technology for schools and also provide funding to school districts on a per-student basis in a distribution known as the per-capita distribution.

To preserve the principal of the PSF, the constitution not only caps the percentage of PSF investment returns that may be distributed to the ASF, but also prohibits any distribution in years when doing so would result in paying out more than all of the return on the fund over a ten-year period.

The School Land Board, staffed by the General Land Office (GLO), supervises the management, leasing, and sale of the public school lands. A provision in state law permits the School Land Board to release investment funds directly to the Available School Fund or to the SBOE to be included in the PSF. However, a 2008 attorney general's opinion determined that sending School Land Board property proceeds directly to the ASF was not authorized by the Texas Constitution.

The Texas Legislature in the 82<sup>nd</sup> regular session approved HJR 109 that would amend Art. 7, sec. 5 of the Texas Constitution to authorize the Legislature to enact a law to allow the GLO or an entity other than the SBOE responsible for the management of PSF real properties to distribute to the ASF each year

up to \$300 million of the net revenue derived during that year from the real properties.

### PROPOSITION 6

HJR 109 will be presented to Texas voters as Proposition 6 on the November ballot. The ballot proposal will read: "The constitutional amendment clarifying references to the permanent school fund, allowing the General Land Office to distribute revenue from permanent school fund land or other properties to the available school fund to provide additional funding for public education, and providing for an increase in the market value of the permanent school fund for the purpose of allowing increased distributions from the available school fund."

If Proposition 6 is approved by Texas voters, distributions from the PSF to the Available School Fund is estimated to increase by approximately \$73.7 million per year, based on the current distribution rate set by the SBOE of 4.2 percent for fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

According to the legislative bill analysis, supporters of the proposition say the School Land Board should have the authority to ensure that public schools benefit directly from the investment returns realized by the board.

However, opponents say that HJR 109 would effectively allow the Legislature to tap the corpus of the constitutionally-dedicated PSF and that the amendment is neither necessary nor appropriate. They say the School Land Board can already transfer funds to the SBOE investment assets, and then the SBOE can ensure that the proceeds directly benefit public schools through the annual distributions to the ASF. Therefore, the ability to transfer proceeds from PSF land and property directly to the ASF is not necessary.

Texas voters will determine the fate of Proposition 6 at the polls on Nov. 8. For more information about HJR 109, go to <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=82R&Bill=HJR109>

### ◆TEACHER OF THE YEAR *continued*

Mr. Johnson, hadn't shown him that he could succeed. A child of divorced parents who lived with different relatives and attended many different schools, never really believed in himself. "I actually decided to become a teacher during college while on a visit to a local inter-city school district with the baseball team where we read to the students. You see, I remember what it was like to live on 'that side of the tracks' and understand what 'poor' really meant. I understood what it feels like to not believe in 'you.' Most importantly, I understood the power and influence an individual can have on someone, just like Mr. Johnson had done for me."

The finalists were selected by a panel of judges representing the state's four teacher organizations. The judges were: Noel Candelaria of the Texas State Teachers Association; Holly Eaton

of the Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Ana Pomar of the Texas AFT; and Cheryl Buchanan of the Association of Texas Professional Educators.

The six finalists were interviewed on Sept. 10 before a larger judging panel, which will select the top elementary and secondary teacher. One of the winners will also be selected to go forward to be considered for National Teacher of the Year honors.

The state Teachers of the Year, as well as all of the regional recipients will be honored at an awards ceremony and luncheon on Oct. 14 at the AT&T Education Conference Center in Austin.

The Texas Teacher of the Year program is a joint project of the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Association of School Administrators this year.

## COLLEGE-BOUND

## Texas has experienced a huge increase in SAT participation

Data released Sept. 14 by the College Board shows that over the past five years, Texas has experienced a huge increase in the number of college-bound minority students who take the SAT college admissions test.

The number of Hispanic students in Texas public schools who took the SAT between the 2006-2007 school year and the 2010-2011 school year increased by 57.7 percent.

Over the same five-year period, the number of African-American SAT examinees in the public schools increased 43.4 percent, while the number of Asian examinees in Texas increased 23.4 percent. The number of all Texas public school students taking the test increased by 21.6 percent during this period.

“There is clearly an increase in the college-going culture in this state. Whether it’s elementary schools decorated with college pennants, new high-tech science and technology programs or expanding dual enrollment and Advanced Placement courses, there is a synergy in Texas that is causing more students to consider going to college,” Commissioner of Education Robert Scott said.

The latest data shows that 147,960 students or 54 percent of the Class of 2011 who graduated from Texas public schools took the SAT. The figure rises to 58 percent when private school students are included in the calculation.

Texas ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in public school student participation. Around the country, the public school participation rate ranged from 100 percent in Maine to three percent each in Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota and South Dakota.

States with the lowest participation rates typically have the highest test scores, while those that draw from a larger pool have lower scores.

Minority public school students in Texas outpaced their counterparts nationally on the mathematics test. Hispanic students in Texas, who represent 24 percent of all the Hispanics nationally who took the SAT, increased their mean mathematics score by one point, to 467. The score for Hispanics nationally fell one point to 460.

African-American public school students in Texas, who represent about 12 percent of all African-American students tested nationally, increased their mean mathematics score two points to 438, substantially higher than the score of 425 posted nationally by African-American public school students. The math scores for this group nationally dropped one point.

The higher education institutions that received the most SAT score reports in 2011 were, in order:

1. University of Texas at Austin
2. Texas A&M University in College Station
3. Texas State University
4. Baylor University
5. University of Texas at San Antonio

Below are the scores and participation information for the three-part test, which consists of critical reading, mathematics and writing sections.

Texas Public School Student Group*	Number of Class of 2011 test takers	Critical Reading	Mathematics	Writing
<b>African-American</b>	21,694	422	438	411
Change from 2010	15.80%	-1	+2	-4
<b>Asian American</b>	10,012	522	582	520
Change from 2010	13.50%	-3	-2	-3
<b>Hispanics Overall</b>	50,662	438	467	428
Change from 2010	21.60%	-5	+1	-6
<b>White</b>	59,989	518	539	499
Change from 2010	11.60%	-4	-2	-5

\*This represents only the state’s major ethnic groups.

Student group	Number of test takers	Critical Reading	Mathematics	Writing
Texas - public schools	147,960	475	500	461
Change from 2010	15.70%	-5	-2	-7
Nation - public schools	1,267,239	494	506	483
Change from 2010	10.90%	-3	-4	-3
Texas - all schools	166,012	479	502	465
Change from 2010	7.90%	-4	-2	-7
Nation - all schools	1,647,123	497	514	489
Change from 2010	3.10%	-3	-1	-2

**SCHOOL CHOICE**

# State Board of Education awards eight new charters

Eight new charter schools were approved by the State Board of Education on Sept. 16. The new public charters are expected to open during the 2012-2013 school year.

Thirty-two groups submitted charter applications for consideration. Fifteen of those were judged to have both a complete application and earned a score of 225 out of a possible 300

points during a review process.

Those 15 applicants were interviewed by the board's Committee on School Initiatives in August.

After additional review by the full board, the following charters were awarded a charter contract, providing they clear up any contingencies.

Applicant	Location	Approved Grades	Max. Enrollment
UME Preparatory Academy	Grand Prairie	K-12	540
Austin Achieve Public Schools	Austin	6-12	1,050
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	Houston	K-12	1,280
Legacy Preparatory	Dallas, Garland, Irving, Mesquite	K-12	2,600
Prime Prep Academy	Dallas, Fort Worth	K-12	2,000
Hope Global Learning Village K-12	Houston	K-12	500
Excellence in Leadership Academy	Mission	PreK (4yr olds)-12	600
The Pro-Vision Academy	Houston	3-12	500

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# State Board for Educator Certification elects new officers

At its Aug. 12 meeting, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) elected new officers.

Bonnie Cain, the Waco Independent School District superintendent, was reappointed to serve as chair of the board. The chairperson serves a two-year term.

Christie Pogue from Buda was elected to

serve as vice chair, and Laurie Bricker, a representative from Houston, was elected to serve as secretary. Both the vice-chair and secretary serve in those positions until February 2012.

The next SBEC meeting is scheduled for Oct. 7. More information can be found on the SBEC website at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=428&menu\\_id=869&menu\\_id2=794](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=428&menu_id=869&menu_id2=794)



Bonnie Cain



Christie Pogue



Laurie Bricker

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# October is Persons with Disabilities History and Awareness Month.

To learn more about the contributions of people with disabilities throughout history, please visit: [http://governor.state.tx.us/disabilities/resources/disability\\_history/](http://governor.state.tx.us/disabilities/resources/disability_history/)

To see how you can get involved in your own community, please visit: <http://governor.state.tx.us/disabilities/committees/calendar/>



## Join us in celebrating

- the achievements of Texans and other Americans with disabilities who made significant contributions to the state, and who have led the way in the disability rights movement.
- equality, full participation and inclusion for individuals with disabilities.