

# Texas Education Today

## News from the Texas Education Agency



### Commissioner Michael L. Williams

Michael L. Williams of Arlington was appointed Texas Commissioner of Education by Governor Rick Perry on September 1. Williams brings public service experience from the local, state and federal levels to his new job. Since assuming office, he has made it a priority to visit schools around the state and has met with many educational leaders.

Commissioner Williams made news on November 30 when he announced that he would [defer the 15% end-of-course exam](#) grading requirement.

### USDE Data

## Texas graduation rates top the charts

Texas tied for the third highest high school graduation rate in the country for all students and ranks number one in graduation rates for Asian and white students, according to preliminary data released by the U.S. Department of Education. [\[complete story\]](#)

### Successful Schools

## 16 schools earn Blue Ribbon Award

Sixteen Texas schools were recognized as 2012 Blue Ribbon Schools in November during a ceremony in Washington, D.C. [\[complete story\]](#)

### Legislative Recommendations

## SBOE sets legislative priorities

Funding and issues tied to graduation requirements dominate the State Board of Education's legislative priorities for the 2013 session of the Texas Legislature. [\[complete story\]](#)

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## Appointment

## Williams takes office as new commissioner of education

Michael L. Williams was appointed Texas Commissioner of Education by Gov. Rick Perry on Sept. 1. His appointment is the latest in what has been a lifetime of public service. After earning a Bachelor's, Master's and law degree from the University of Southern California, Williams returned to his hometown of Midland where he served as an assistant district attorney. He went on to become a federal prosecutor in the Reagan Justice Department. President George Herbert Walker Bush appointed Williams as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Law Enforcement at the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

In 1990, President Bush named Williams the Assistant Secretary of Education for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education. In that job, he acted as the principal advisor to the President and Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander on civil rights matters. He led the charge to establish much of the DOE policy still in effect today regarding increased investigative resources to issues such as the overrepresentation of minority males in special education, the underrepresentation of females in advanced placement curriculums, racial harassment on college campuses, and the treatment of limited-English proficiency students.

In 1998, Gov. George W. Bush appointed Williams to an unexpired term on the Railroad Commission of Texas. Texans subsequently elected him to this position in 2000, 2002 and 2008.

He is a past Honorary State Chairman of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Texas. He chaired the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and has served on the board of directors of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce.

Williams is the son of public school teachers, (who earned degrees in math), and the husband of Donna, a mechanical engineer who is also involved in education. She has just been named the chair of the Texas State University System Board of Regents.



*Williams sworn in as Texas Commissioner of Education*

### Staffing Changes

Senior Policy Director William Fullerton, Director of Governmental Relations Julie Kopycinski, and Director of Communications Gene Acuña join Senior Policy Advisor Ryan Franklin as part of Williams' leadership team at TEA.

In addition, a number of promotions and revisions have occurred within the organizational structure to strengthen TEA's ability to carry on its day-to-day responsibilities:

- Lizzette Gonzalez Reynolds, who previously served as the Deputy Commissioner of Policy and Programs, has been promoted to the job of Chief Deputy Commissioner.
- Michael Berry, an education policy advisor to the governor and a former TEA staffer, rejoined the agency as the Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Programs.
- Michele Moore, a policy advisor to Reynolds, has been promoted and is now the Associate Commissioner for Educator Leadership and Quality.
- Lisa Dawn-Fisher, the agency's school finance expert, has been promoted and is now the Chief School Finance Officer overseeing new divisions: State Funding and State Financial Reviews.
- Debbie Ratcliffe, formerly the director of Communications and State Board of Education Support, serves as the Director of Media Relations.
- In order to clearly delineate the role



**Commissioner Williams** *continued*

between monitoring and support, and enforcement and sanctions, Alice McAfee is now director of Enforcement Coordination and Governance. Ron Rowell has joined McAfee in this new unit.

- Waivers remains in Accreditation and School Improvement under Laura Taylor, the Associate Commissioner for Accreditation and School Improvement.
- School Financial Audits has been reorganized into two cost centers:
  - ◊ Federal Fiscal Monitoring to focus on federal funds reporting to Nora Hancock, the Associate Commissioner for Grants and Federal Fiscal Compliance.
  - ◊ State Financial Reviews to focus on state funds (including financial audits) reporting to Dawn-Fisher.
- Fingerprinting has been fully transferred to Educator Standards and Certification.
- Organization Development, Agency Services, Organizational Effectiveness, and Records Management and Administrative Support Services have been renamed Organization Development and Agency Services.
- Ombuds Office/Open Records has been renamed Correspondence and Special Investigations.
- Federal Program Compliance has been renamed Federal Program Compliance and Reporting.
- Educator Initiatives now resides in Educator Leadership and Quality.

## AP Exams

**Advanced Placement participation, scores increase**

Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams announced in October that participation in Advanced Placement (AP) tests by Texas public school students was up by 4 percent in the 2011-2012 school year.

According to data from the College Board, performance increased for all students by 9.1 percent, with African-American and Hispanic students showing the greatest gain in performance at 12 percent and 13.9 percent, respectively.

"More Texas students are choosing to take the academically rigorous AP classes, and increasingly they are meeting the challenge, said Williams. "Students who are succeeding in AP classes and on AP exams in our high schools are

positioning themselves for future success in college."

AP tests are graded on a one to five scale, with many colleges and universities awarding course credit for scores of three or better. Last school year, 194,391 Texas public school students took 350,766 AP exams, and earned scores of three, four or five on 162,959 exams.

College Board officials estimate that if the 34,564 students who received a five on an AP exam enrolled in one of the state's two flagship universities and were awarded course credit, they would save \$36.7 million to \$42.9 million in tuition costs alone. The savings climb by millions more if students apply for and receive credit for scores of three and four.

Williams noted that the latest results reflect a continuing trend of increased performance and participation. Since 2009, the number of AP exams taken by Texans increased by 81,412 exams or 30.2 percent. During that same period, scores of three, four or five increased by 30.1 percent.

The AP exams most frequently taken by Texas students in descending order are:

- English Language and Composition
- United States History
- World History
- English Literature and Composition
- Spanish Language

See chart on page 4 for additional details about AP results.



AP results *continued*

		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	Total	194,391	100.0%	350,766	162,959	1,813,533	100.0%	3,170,978	1,812,518
	Change from last year	+4.0%		+3.2%	+9.1%	+6.4%		+7.0%	+9.7%
Gender	Female	108,571	55.9%	190,326	83,437	1,022,951	56.4%	1,746,325	940,804
	Change from last year	+3.9%		+3.1%	+7.9%	+6.3%		+6.9%	+9.1%
	Male	85,820	44.1%	160,440	79,522	790,582	43.6%	1,424,653	871,714
	Change from last year	+4.2%		+3.4%	+10.4%	+6.5%		+7.2%	+10.4%
Ethnic Group	American Indian	974	0.5%	1,751	814	9,195	0.5%	14,744	6,441
	Change from last year	-0.3%		+0.2%	+3.2%	+4.1%		+5.9%	+7.5%
	Asian	19,554	10.1%	44,521	29,273	216,938	12.0%	458,888	310,683
	Change from last year	+5.8%		+4.3%	+11.1%	+7.0%		+7.8%	+10.5%
	Black	15,487	8.0%	25,197	6,275	147,029	8.1%	227,190	62,534
	Change from last year	+1.1%		-0.2%	+12.0%	+3.6%		+4.1%	+12.5%
	Hispanic Overall	76,687	39.4%	127,525	40,752	307,621	17.0%	509,524	210,074
	Change from last year	+4.7%		+4.7%	+13.9%	+8.1%		+8.7%	+14.0%
	<i>Mexican American</i>	44,213	22.7%	73,892	25,104	156,049	8.6%	258,196	103,359
	Change from last year	+10.4%		+9.5%	+18.8%	+12.9%		+13.5%	+18.7%
	<i>Puerto Rican</i>	1,007	0.5%	1,823	834	17,573	1.0%	28,001	12,125
	Change from last year	+7.2%		+11.8%	+8.3%	+7.0%		+7.6%	+13.6%
	<i>Other Hispanic</i>	31,467	16.2%	51,810	14,814	133,999	7.4%	223,327	94,590
	Change from last year	-2.4%		-1.6%	+6.7%	+3.1%		+3.8%	+9.3%
	White	71,295	36.7%	134,212	77,798	1,003,685	55.3%	1,745,369	1,106,559
	Change from last year	+1.7%		+0.3%	+4.1%	+5.1%		+5.5%	+7.4%
	Other	3,607	1.9%	6,622	3,302	55,093	3.0%	98,865	55,301
	Change from last year	+1.3%		+0.2%	+7.9%	+2.7%		+4.3%	+7.1%
	No Response	6,787	3.5%	10,938	4,745	73,972	4.1%	116,398	60,926
	Change from last year	+31.4%		+37.6%	+55.9%	+29.3%		+33.3%	+40.3%

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

Chart from College Board State Integrated Summary 2011-2012, Texas - Public Schools  
AP: Participation and Performance Overview

## Legislative Recommendations

**SBOE approves legislative priorities**

Funding and issues tied to graduation requirements dominate the State Board of Education's legislative priorities for the 2013 session of the Texas Legislature.

The board's priorities, which were approved at the November meeting, are:

1. As part of the General Appropriations Act, set aside an amount equal to 50 percent of the annual distribution made by the Permanent School Fund to the Available School Fund and place it in the state instructional materials fund as required under Section 43.001(d) of the Texas Education Code.
2. Eliminate the provision in Section 39.023(c) of the Texas Education Code that requires an end-of-course assessment to count for 15 percent of a student's final course grade.
3. Rename the minimum high school graduation plan the Standard High School Program.
4. Increase the number of open-enrollment charters by 10 over the current cap of 215 and support the Texas Education Agency's efforts to reform or remove underperforming charters.
5. Restore funding to the Foundation School Program.

The priorities will be reviewed and could potentially change when the new state board is seated in January.

The 180-day legislative session begins Jan. 8. By the end of November, a number of education bills have already been filed. It's possible to follow the progress of bills at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>.





## Texas high school graduation rates top the charts

Texas tied for the third highest high school graduation rate in the country for all students and ranks number one in graduation rates for Asian and white students, according to preliminary data released by the U.S. Department of Education.

"This state-by-state comparison confirms what Texas educators have been saying for a long time. Our public schools are delivering a high quality education and our students are having great success," said Texas Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams.

This marks the first time all states have used a uniform method for calculating graduation rates.

"We think, in part, the state's school

accountability system has helped shine a light on this issue over the past 15 years and focused greater attention on raising the graduation rate" Williams said.

"Of course, there is more work to be done to raise the rates even higher. But let's give credit where credit is due. Thanks to hard work from teachers, administrators, students and parents, more Texas students are earning a high school diploma than ever before," he said.

The state-by-state comparison is available on the U.S. Department of Education website at <http://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/state-2010-11-graduation-rate-data.pdf>.

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The USDE data for the Class of 2011 shows Texas:

- Number 1 with Asian students with a graduation rate of 95 percent.
- Number 1 for white students with a graduation rate of 92 percent.
- Number 1 by tying with Montana with a graduation rate of 81 percent for African-American students.
- Has the third highest graduation rate for all students, tying with Tennessee, New Hampshire, Indiana, Nebraska and North Dakota with a rate of 86 percent. Iowa, Vermont and Wisconsin exceed Texas by one to two percentage points.
- Number 2 for Hispanic students with a graduation rate of 82 percent, behind only Maine.
- Number 2 for children with disabilities who graduate at a rate of 77 percent. Only South Dakota had a higher rate.
- In a tie for second place with Missouri for multi-racial students who have a graduation rate of 92 percent, with only Delaware students graduating at a higher rate.
- In a tie for second place with New Jersey with an American-Indian graduate rate of 87 percent. Only Tennessee has a higher rate.
- Number 2 for economically-disadvantaged students who graduate at a rate of 84 percent, behind only South Dakota.
- Number 26 for limited English proficient students who have a graduation rate of 58 percent. Those who become proficient in English are removed from the limited English proficient category.



## Charter Schools

# Board approves new charters, updates rules

Eight new open-enrollment charter schools could open their doors in fall 2013 following approval by the State Board of Education (SBOE) in November. Charters are public schools that are subject to fewer state laws than other public schools. Like school districts, charter schools are monitored and accredited under the statewide testing and accountability system.

The new Generation 17 charters were chosen during a competitive process that began in February. The following entities were awarded five-year contracts for charters:

- BASIS San Antonio  
BTX Schools, Inc.  
San Antonio
- Ben Yehuda Academy,  
The Eleanor Kolitz Academy,  
San Antonio
- C.O.R.E. Academy  
Generations of Life Foundation  
Houston
- Dallas Scholars Charter School  
Lone Star Scholars Foundation  
Dallas County
- Great Hearts Academy - San Antonio  
Great Hearts America Texas  
San Antonio
- International Leadership of Texas  
International American Education  
Federation Inc.  
Dallas County
- The Pro-Vision Academy  
Pro-Vision Educational Services, Inc.  
Houston
- Village Tech Schools  
Duncanville Church of Christ, Inc.  
Dallas County

All eight are subject to clearing any contingencies in their applications that were noted during the application process. Contingencies are issues that must be cleared before the final charter contract is awarded.

If all contingencies are cleared, the total

number of open-enrollment charter schools in Texas would reach 209. State law caps the number of open-enrollment charter schools at 215.

In addition to reviewing Generation 17 applications, the board approved the application and guidelines process for Generation 18 Open-Enrollment Charter Schools. The Request for Application (RFA) will be made available to the public on Dec. 7.

Information on charter schools and the application process can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/charters.aspx>.

The board also approved amendments to the open-enrollment charter school rules that deal with: the application and selection procedures and criteria; the annual report on open-enrollment charter governance; and the application to public senior college or university charters and public junior college charters.

The amendments align the SBOE rules pertaining to the charter application process with newly adopted commissioner of education rules, clarifies who signs the original contract for the charter, codifies practices adopted through the annual governance report pertaining to which family members of board members and school officers must be disclosed, and expands the provisions that would apply to public senior college or university charters and public junior college charters.

To better help the state's charter schools, the Texas Education Agency announced in September that it was teaming up with the Region 11 Education Service Center in Fort Worth and the Texas Charter Schools Association to create the Texas Charter School Technical Assistance Network, an extensive support system for the state's charter schools.

"This partnership will allow us all to bring more training and technical support to charters than ever before," said Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams. "By working together to help the schools get set up and maintained properly, charter school officials can focus their energies on academics and innovative education approaches."



## Charter Schools *continued*

The two partners were selected by TEA through a competitive application process. Both have experience working with charter schools.

Along with creating the technical assistance network, TEA has posted charter applications online to make them easily accessible to the public. The applications for those charter schools that were awarded a state contract and still operate an active charter are posted for

Generations 5 (2000) through 15 (2010).

Beginning with Generation 16 (2011), any submitted charter application – whether the entity was granted a charter by the SBOE or not – is accessible online.

The agency is in the process of posting the applications for active charter schools awarded in Generations 1 through 4.

## SBOE Departures

### Eight SBOE members to depart in January

Retirements and election outcomes resulted in the departure of eight of the 15 State Board of Education members. Collectively, they have provided 68 years of service on the board. Resolutions were passed in their honor during their final board meeting in November. Following is a list of board members whose terms of office are ending and their years of service on the SBOE: Mary Helen Berlanga of Corpus Christi (30); Terri Leo of Spring (10); Gail Lowe of Lampasas (10); Bob Craig of Lubbock (10); Charlie Garza of El Paso (2); Michael Soto of San Antonio (2); Marsha Farney of Georgetown (2); and George Clayton of Richardson (2).



*Mary Helen Berlanga*



*Terri Leo*



*Gail Lowe*



*Bob Craig*



*Charlie Garza*



*Michael Soto*



*Marsha Farney*



*George Clayton*

## Successful Schools

## 16 Texas schools recognized as Blue Ribbon

Sixteen Texas schools were recognized as 2012 Blue Ribbon Schools in November during a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

This program has recognized more than 7,000 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:

- dramatically improving student performance to high levels on state tests;
- students scoring in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests.

"I congratulate these schools on their recognition for outstanding performance," said Texas Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams. "They are examples of what our schools can accomplish through the hard work and dedication

of our teachers, administrators, students and parents."

The nominated schools were chosen through an objective evaluation of student achievement statistics and other data 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 the Texas Education Agency for the award serve as models of best practices for schools across the state.

Following is a list of the award-winning schools along with the school's principal and superintendent at the time of nomination.



Four schools were selected as **Improving Schools**:

### Blue Ridge High School

Danny Henderson, Principal  
Blue Ridge ISD–Todd Lintzen, Superintendent

### Douglass Elementary School

Lugarda Dominic, Principal  
El Paso ISD–Dr. Terri K. Jordan, Superintendent

### Fox Technical High School

Dawn Parker, Principal  
San Antonio ISD–Dr. Sylvester Perez, Superintendent

### J. Walter Graham Elementary School

Blaine Helwig, Principal  
Austin ISD–Dr. Meria J. Carstarphen, Superintendent

Twelve schools were selected to receive the award in the **High Performing Schools** category are:

### Bray Elementary School

Robert Johansen, Principal  
Cedar Hill ISD–Horace Williams, Superintendent

### Chandler Elementary School

Tina Eaton, Principal  
Brownsboro ISD–Dr. Chris Moran, Superintendent

### Diane Winborn Elementary School

Kelly Ricks, Principal  
Katy ISD–Alton Frailey, Superintendent

### East Early College High School

Tamera Bolden, Principal  
Houston ISD–Dr. Terry B. Grier, Superintendent

### George West Primary School

Patrick James, Principal  
George West ISD–Ty Sparks, Superintendent

### Gruver Elementary School

Amber Holland, Principal  
Gruver ISD–David Teal, Superintendent

### Judge Barefoot Sanders Law Magnet School

Anthony Palagonia, Principal  
Dallas ISD: Mike Miles, Superintendent

### Mission Early College High School

Leticia Guerra, Principal  
Socorro ISD–Patrick O'Neill, Superintendent

### Montgomery Elementary School

Wendy Graves, Principal  
Montgomery ISD–Dr. Beau Rees, Superintendent

### Project Chrysalis Middle School

Dr. Jose Covarrubia, Principal  
Houston ISD–Dr. Terry B. Grier, Superintendent

### Sundown Elementary School

Scott Marshall, Principal  
Sundown ISD–Mike D. Motheral, Superintendent

### William Velasquez Elementary School

Heather Patterson, Principal  
Lamar CISD–Dr. Thomas Randle, Superintendent





# News briefs from the Texas Education Agency

## Testing and accountability

Over the past five years, Texas experienced a dramatic increase in the number of Hispanic and African-American public school students taking the [SAT](#), a sign that more Texans are considering enrolling in college. Data released this fall by the College Board shows the number of Hispanic test takers in Texas public schools increased by 65 percent between the 2007-2008 school year and last school year.

The number of Texas students taking the [ACT](#) college admissions test reached an all-time high this year, with Hispanic participation doubling over the past five years. The composite score on the ACT was 20.8, which was unchanged from last year even though 8,611 more Texans took the test.

Twenty-three school districts are participating in the [Texas High Performance Schools Consortium](#), which will help develop innovative, next-generation learning standards, assessments and accountability systems.

## Awards

Ten Texas companies have been named recipients of the State Board of [Education's Employers for Education Excellence](#) (EEE) Award for 2012. Designed to promote more community involvement in the public schools, the EEE Award recognizes employers who implement policies that encourage employee involvement in school activities.

Six Texas teachers have been named finalists for the prestigious [Presidential Awards](#) for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) program. The 2012 PAEMST awards recognize kindergarten through sixth grade mathematics and science teachers whose innovative methods bring teaching to life in the classroom.

## Permanent School Fund

Strong management and a sound process have resulted in an outstanding return on the investments of the [Permanent School Fund](#) for the most recent fiscal year. For the 2011-12 Fiscal Year, the fund reached a year-end value of \$25.5 billion and saw a high return of 9.44 percent on its investments.

## Online resources

Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams announced the expansion of [student resources](#) through Project Share, the Texas Education Agency's on-line learning community, throughout the 2012-13 fall semester. Updated OnTRACK Lessons for secondary English, math, science, and social studies subjects are available at no cost to local school districts.

The Texas Education Agency in October announced the launch of a new free online college and career planning website for Texas students, parents and educators. The [Texas College & Career](#) resource site, [www.texascollegeandcareer.org](http://www.texascollegeandcareer.org), provides information about college options, academic and financial preparation for college, higher education admissions and career research.



## State Board of Education honors 15 Texans

The State Board of Education (SBOE) recognized 15 Texans who have provided thousands of hours of volunteer service to Texas public schools with the Heroes for Children award in November.

These volunteers from across Texas were recognized for their passionate and strong desire to give back to their communities and schools, their numerous days and hours spent providing this service, and their hard work to improve the lives of children.

**Georgia Hayse, SBOE District 1.** Hayse has served for 21 years as a volunteer in the Ector County Independent School District. She has volunteered almost 14,000 hours at Gonzalez Elementary and Milam Elementary schools, Bonham Junior High and Permian High School and has touched the lives of approximately 11,500 students. She has served as the chair of the Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) program for many years and has performed many tasks including grading papers, copying, building bulletin boards, helping move classrooms over the summer, Red Ribbon Week projects, mentoring and tutoring students, and providing supplies to students in need.

**Patricia Haibach, SBOE District 2.** Haibach is recognized for her more than 300 volunteer hours and participating in the VIPS program and for sharing each day with the kindergarten students at Club Estates Elementary School in the Corpus Christi ISD. Her efforts include helping students read, assisting the school nurse with the required vision and hearing screenings; and participating as a classroom resource speaker.

**Rachel Ponce, SBOE District 3.** Ponce has been described as a strong advocate and voice for the children of the San Antonio ISD and for her neighborhood and community. Ponce has served on almost every district-level committee and does so with a caring, generous and passionate attitude described as an inspiration to all.

**Margaret Wilgis, SBOE District 4.** A volunteer at the Garden Oaks Elementary School in the Houston ISD, Wilgis has recruited nearly 100

The Heroes for Children honorees are selected by the State Board members and recognized for volunteering their time, talents and skills to help improve the public schools in their communities. Recipients of the 2012 Heroes for Children award (along with a brief description of the contributions each has made to Texas schoolchildren) appear below. See page 12 for photos.

volunteers over the past four years to tutor students in grades prekindergarten through sixth. In addition to being a mentor, Wilgis coordinates special events for the mentors and mentees; serves on the campus Shared Decision Making Committee; and advocates for students with special needs both on and off campus.

**Ralph Pfluger, SBOE District 5.** In 1967, Pfluger was named one of the original school board members of the Hays Consolidated ISD. For the past 45 years, he made many outstanding contributions to student learning by being one of the district's most dedicated volunteers. Pfluger has had a great impact on the entire community and spends countless hours in support of children who have challenges to overcome in their lives.

**Carol R. Zelle, SBOE District 6.** Zelle has been a volunteer at Boone Elementary School in the Alief ISD for the last 10 years. She works with prekindergarten through first grade students helping them build reading, math and writing skills. She can also be counted on to help when the school has special activities such as Field Days, garage sales and field trips, dedicating her time and resources to make these events successful.

**Lynn E. Wright, SBOE District 7.** Twenty-five years ago, Wright began volunteering with STARBASE – an Air Force program designed to give fourth through seventh graders a new perception of science, math and technology outside of the classroom. After retiring from the United States Air Force, he began volunteering with the Air Force Junior ROTC cadets at North Shore High School



in the Galena Park ISD and has spent the last 10 years overseeing and conducting the school's Radio Controlled Aircraft and Model Rocketry programs.

**Cherrie Edwards, SBOE District 8.** After a 25-year career teaching gifted and talented students, Edwards retired from the Magnolia ISD. But because she is so passionate about gifted and talented education, she now organizes and runs many of the clubs – as a volunteer on her own time – that she used to sponsor. Edwards also works with the district's problem-solving group including taking students to international competitions.

**Sunita Patel, SBOE District 9.** Patel has been a volunteer in the Frisco ISD for seven years volunteering as a room parent for Smith Elementary School and as a board member for the Parent-Teacher Association. She also serves as the Destination Imagination chairman, overseeing 24 teams of 150 students that have won honors at the regional, state and global competitions.

**Abby Alderete, SBOE District 10.** Alderete is a volunteer in the Thrall ISD where she works everyday with the prekindergarten class at the Thrall Elementary School. She works with the struggling students, assists with management control, shepherds students to the nurse's office, assists with the art center, reads to classes and much more. She has taught students to see beyond a person's physical abilities and to be more accepting of people who are physically disabled.

**Jerry Durant, SBOE District 11.** Durant has provided volunteer leadership, support and monetary assistance to the Weatherford ISD for more than 20 years. His service has included serving as a founding director of the Weatherford ISD Education Foundation, the Weatherford High School Project Opportunity Scholarship Foundation, and a donation of land for a new high school facility.

**Jeff Livingston, SBOE District 12.** A volunteer in the Irving ISD, Livingston gives his time to educate students, parents and educators about health issues. He does everything he can to help spread his message to teens regarding pregnancy

and STD prevention. Livingston also sponsors a Teenage Parent and Parenting (TAPPS) workshop each spring on child development, parenting, child abuse prevention, healthy relationships and other health information.

**N. Carolyn Wicker, SBOE District 13.** Wicker has served on the Grand Prairie ISD Education Foundation board for the last 15 years. In addition, she is a founding member of the district's Kindness Across the Prairie Anti-Bullying Task Force and she is passionate about improving education for children. She has donated countless business hours serving as an advocate for education and has made significant financial contributions in support of her advocacy.

**Virgie L. Lee, SBOE District 14.** Lee, a volunteer in the Newcastle ISD, gives her time and energy to the students of the Newcastle Elementary School. For the past two years, she has helped with mentoring and reading to the second grade class and assisted students with phonics, spelling, grammar, writing, social studies and other areas of the curriculum. Lee also works with the Backpack Buddies, making sure that several Newcastle students have backpacks filled with nutritious food to take home on the weekends so they will not go hungry.

**Bob Tate, District 15.** Tate is an inspiration to coworkers and the Lubbock community with his volunteer work in the Lubbock ISD. Tate has mentored and initiated several support programs for the students at Bozeman Elementary School including securing \$7,000 in school supplies. He has also served on the LISD Foundation for Excellence board for 10 years and been an overall advocate for education for more than 30 years.



## 2012 Heroes continued



The 2012 Heroes for Children above are, front row, Abby Alderete, District 10. Back row, left to right, Lynn E. Wright, District 7; Virgie L. Lee, District 14; Georgia Hayse, District 1; Rachel Ponce, District 3; Sunita Patel, District 9; Patricia Haibach, District 2; and Carol R. Zelle, District 6.



The 2012 Heroes for Children above are, front row, Abby Alderete, District 10. Back row, left to right, Jeff Livingston, District 12; Sunita Patel, District 9; Virgie L. Lee, District 14; Jerry Durant, District 11 and Bob Tate, District 15.



The 2012 Heroes for Children above are left to right, Patricia Haibach, District 2; Lynn E. Wright, District 7; Carol Zelle, District 6 and Ralph Pfluger, District 5.

### In Other Action

## Summaries of SBOE actions can be found online

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

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