

Texas Education Today

News from the Texas Education Agency



“It has been my pleasure to serve the students, educators and people of Texas as Education Commissioner over the past three years.”

- Michael Williams

Commissioner to step down

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams announced his intention to step down from his current position at the Texas Education Agency. [\[complete story on page 2\]](#)

Commission members named

Education experts have been appointed by state leaders to serve on the newly-created Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability. [\[complete story on page 4\]](#)

Digital Learning roundtable

As more and more digital products and technology move into Texas classrooms, the State Board of Education devoted a day in November to hearing from experts about the pros and cons of this changing environment and its impact on the classroom. [\[complete story on page 6\]](#)

House Bill 5 Implementation

According to an evaluation study by the Texas Education Agency, more than half of all school districts responding to a recent survey reported currently offering students all five endorsements – Multidisciplinary Studies; Business and Industry; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Arts and Humanities; Public Services – created under House Bill 5. [\[complete story on page 10\]](#)

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TEA

Williams to step down as education commissioner

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams has announced his intention to step down from his current position at the Texas Education Agency, effective Jan. 1 2016.

"It has been my pleasure to serve the students, educators and people of Texas as Education Commissioner over the past three years," wrote Commissioner Williams in his October letter to Gov. Greg Abbott. "I am deeply honored and appreciative to have served you in your initial gubernatorial legislative session."

Commissioner Williams noted that during the course of his career in public service, he has held two statewide positions since 1999 – first as a member of the Texas Railroad Commission and then as Commissioner of Education. Both of those are based in Austin.

"While carrying out my responsibilities, I have kept my house in Arlington and managed to maintain a long-distance partnership with my wife," wrote the Commissioner. "But after more than 16 years of weekend commuting, I feel it is finally time to simply head home."

Williams was appointed Texas Commissioner of Education by Gov. Rick Perry on Sept. 1, 2012. As commissioner, he has led the Texas Education Agency, which oversees pre-kindergarten through high school education for more than five million students enrolled in both traditional public schools and charter schools. Williams is the first African-American to hold the position of Commissioner of Education.

During his tenure as education commissioner, Williams was instrumental in securing the state's federal waiver from provisions of ESEA/NCLB. He oversaw the successful implementation of a new statewide accountability system and prioritized closing of the achievement gap among

students in districts across Texas by including that component within the state accountability system. In addition, Williams partnered with the state's Commissioner of Higher Education and the Texas Workforce Commissioner Chairman to develop recommendations that strengthen the student pipeline from public education through higher education and/or the workforce.



SBEC

SBEC to reconsider superintendent certificate rules

The State Board for Educator Certification will consider revising certification rules for superintendents at its Dec. 11 meeting after its first proposal was rejected by the State Board of Education.

The original proposal offered two new routes to certification for superintendent candidates. The proposal would have broadened the prerequisite experience required for superintendent candidates to allow for managerial experience in education to substitute for the principal certification requirement and satisfy a statutory requirement for management training or experience to substitute for part of the educational experience required of superintendents. The proposal provided an additional route to allow for experience outside the field of education, provided a school district has determined that a particular candidate fits the current needs of the district.

Under existing rules, a candidate for superintendent certification must hold a principal certificate, which requires two years of teaching experience; hold a master’s degree; complete a superintendent preparation program and be recommended by that program for certification; and pass the superintendent certification exam.

The only current route for districts to hire individuals without superintendent certification is to obtain a waiver from the commissioner of education. Currently, only six of the 1,027 school

district superintendents are serving under a waiver. This route is typically used by those who have served in educational jobs other than that of principal. Two high profile examples of individuals who served as a superintendent while on a waiver were former Texas Commissioner of Education Jim Nelson, who also had extensive service on a local school board and on SBEC, and Rod Paige, a former classroom teacher, college instructor and dean of education.

During both the SBEC and SBOE meetings, many education association advocates expressed reservations about the proposal, included expressing concerns about awarding a superintendent certification to someone without teaching experience. There was more support among board members and advocates for the proposed candidate initiated option for individuals with managerial experience in a district than for the school district initiated proposal.

Under state law, the SBOE can only reject a proposed SBEC rule in its entirety or take no action, which in effect approves the proposal.

With the SBOE’s rejection of this rule, the educator certification board on Dec. 11 will decide whether to maintain current certification standards or revise the proposed changes.



The SBEC meeting, which begins at 9 a.m., will be livestreamed at www.adminmonitor.com/tx/tea/.

Current and Proposed Additional Pathways to Obtain Texas Superintendent Standard Certification

Current Process 19 TAC § 242.20(a)(1)-(4)	Proposed 19 TAC §242.20(a)(1)-(3) and (5)*	Proposed 19 TAC §242.20(b)*
Candidate Initiated	Candidate Initiated	School District Initiated
<p>Candidate Must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold a principal certificate 2. Hold a master’s degree 3. Complete a superintendent preparation program and be recommended by that program for certification 4. Pass the superintendent certification examination 	<p>Candidate Must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have obtained three years of managerial experience at a public school district to substitute for the principal certificate requirement (approved by TEA) 2. Hold a master’s degree 3. Complete a superintendent preparation program and be recommended by that program for certification 4. Pass the superintendent certification examination 	<p>School Board Must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select candidate to hire under a probationary certificate (good for a maximum of three years) 2. Publicly post the reasons the district requires the skillset of the desired non- traditional candidate <p>Candidate Must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold a post-baccalaureate degree 2. Complete a superintendent preparation program and be recommended by that program for certification 3. Pass the superintendent certification examination

* This pathway would not replace the current process but would provide an additional pathway



TEA

Next Generation Assessments and Accountability Commission named

Fifteen Texas education experts have been appointed by state leaders to serve on the newly-created Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability.

Created by the 84th Texas Legislature through House Bill (HB) 2804, the commission has the responsibility of developing and making recommendations for new systems of student assessment and public school accountability. The commission is to submit a report of its recommendations to Gov. Greg Abbott and legislative leaders no later than Sept. 1, 2016, for use in the 2017 legislative session.

Commission members were named by elected leaders. Gov. Abbott nominated four members, while Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Speaker of the House Joe Straus each nominated three members. The chairs of the Senate Public Education Committee, Senate Higher Education Committee, House Public Education Committee and House Higher Education Committee each named a representative from their committees. State Board of Education (SBOE) Chairwoman Donna Bahorich named one SBOE member to complete the board.

In addition, the legislation required the three statewide leaders to make sure their appointees included a parent or guardian of a child still attending public school; a public school educator; an educator who teaches in a school district that participates in the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium; a member of the business community; a member of the civic community; a leader in student assessment development and use; and a leader in research concerning student assessment and education outcomes.

The 15 members named to the commission are:

Mike Morath (Chair)

Member, Board of Trustees
Dallas Independent School District (ISD)
Dallas

Kim Alexander

Superintendent, Roscoe Collegiate ISD
Roscoe

Rep. Jimmie Don Aycock

Chair, House Committee on Public Education
Texas House of Representatives
Killeen

Erika Beltran

Member, State Board of Education
District 13
Fort Worth

Paul Castro

Superintendent, A+ Unlimited Potential
Charter School District
Houston

Pauline Dow

Associate Superintendent, Instruction and Technology
North East ISD
San Antonio

Maria Hernandez Ferrier

President, Texas A&M University-San Antonio
San Antonio

Andrew Kim

Superintendent, Comal ISD
New Braunfels

Michael McLendon

Dean, School of Education, Baylor University
Waco

Sen. Kel Seliger

Chair, Committee on Higher Education
Texas State Senate
Amarillo

Catherine Susser

Member, Board of Trustees, Corpus Christi ISD
Corpus Christi

Sen. Larry Taylor

Chair, Committee on Education
Texas State Senate
Friendswood

Theresa Trevino

Board Member, Texans Advocating for Meaningful
Student Assessment
Austin

Quinton Vance

Executive Director, KIPP: Dallas-Fort Worth College
Preparatory Charter Schools
Dallas

Rep. John Zerwas

Chair, Committee on Higher Education
Texas House of Representatives
Richmond

♦ See **Commission**, page 5



Commission continued

In addition to the Commission meetings, SBOE Chair Bahorich plans to travel and host at least eight “community conversations” around the state. The purpose of the conversations is to identify future goals for assessment and accountability, including suggestions for improving the state’s current system, and to discuss factors that will be submitted online for the commission to review and consider – in the hopes that seeking stakeholder input will help produce more meaningful recommendations for the Legislature to consider.

“The Legislature’s establishment of this commission demonstrates the value of high standards in our public schools,” said Bahorich in a Nov. 10 press release. “Creating a more timely and relevant system that clearly identifies student learning gaps

for early intervention and provides meaningful information to both parents and taxpayers will help ensure that high school students in Texas graduate with a diploma that means something.”

Bahorich and SBOE members Barbara Cargill and Lawrence Allen, Jr. conducted the first Community Conversation in Houston on Oct. 27. It was attended by about 90 people. The other seven forums are tentatively scheduled for early 2016 in San Antonio, Austin, El Paso, Brownsville, Dallas/Fort Worth, Kilgore and Amarillo. The dates of the meetings are still to be determined.

The Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability will hold its first meeting in January at the Texas Capitol.

TEA

Grades 3-8 STAAR® assessments lengths shortened

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams notified school districts and charters that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will reduce the length of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) in grades 3–8 for the 2016 spring administrations.

“House Bill 743, which was passed by the Legislature earlier this year, requires STAAR assessments be designed so 85 percent of students can complete the grades 3–5 assessments in two hours and 85 percent of students can complete the grades 6–8 assessments in three hours,” said Commissioner Williams. “The steps I’m announcing for the coming school year are merely the first as TEA works to meet the legislative requirements while also balancing the validity and reliability of each assessment.”

To meet this legislative requirements of HB 743, TEA will take the following actions in the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years:

- For 2016 only, TEA will remove all currently-embedded field-test questions for STAAR grades 3–8, which will reduce the length of each assessment by five to eight questions.
- TEA has also redesigned the 2016 STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing tests so they will be completed in one four-hour administration.

In addition, Commissioner Williams advised that TEA will also collect detailed data during the spring 2016 test administration on the time it takes students to complete the assessments. That data will then be used to determine how to adjust the STAAR grades 3–8 assessments for spring 2017 testing to more precisely meet the testing time requirements of HB 743.



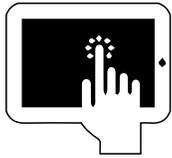
To read Commissioner Williams’ letter to school districts, visit tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/Reduction_of_Number_of_Questions_State_of_Texas_Assessments_of_Academic_Readiness_%28STAAR%29_Grades_3-8_Assessments.



SBOE

Learning Roundtable – Educating the Digital Generation

As more and more digital products and technology move into Texas classrooms, the State Board of Education devoted a day in November to hearing from experts about the pros and cons of this changing environment and its impact on the classroom.



Videos and PowerPoint presentations from the Learning Roundtable – Educating the Digital Generation are available at tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Leadership/State_Board_of_Education/2015/November/Learning_Roundtable_%E2%80%93_Educating_the_Digital_Generation/.

Following are some highlights from the roundtable summit.

**The changing environment**

Anthony Swei – co-founder of EducationSuperHighway:

- Digital learning is changing Texas.
- McAllen ISD made mobile devices available to all students and teachers as part of its digital learning framework.
- El Paso ISD uses PowerUp, which provides 1:1 programs for all 18,000 high school students.

“We are maintaining a focus on the four Cs: the collaboration, creativity, the communication and critical thinking. Those are the pieces that come behind digital learning. It’s not just putting a kid behind a device and letting him stare at it all day.”

– **Deanna Lovesmith**
Belton ISD

“In 2014, 41% of our instructional materials were digital. In 2015, 87% of the materials ordered were digital.”

– **Donna Bahorich**
Chair, State Board of Education

♦ See Roundtable, page 7



Roundtable *continued*

Deanna Lovesmith, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in Belton ISD, said the use of electronic devices is growing rapidly in her district.

- In 2011-2012, there were 849 electronic devices available to Belton secondary students. This school year, there are 5,658. There is also a 1:3 ratio for Belton students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- Belton ISD created a vetting process for applications to be sure they align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and to examine the cost and implementation issues.
- When Belton ISD builds new buildings, it incorporates open spaces and collaboration areas.



The Christensen Institute predicts that 50 percent of all U.S. high school courses will be taught on line in some form by 2019.
– **Heather Staker** of readytoblend.com

Karen Rue – Northwest ISD Superintendent

What Do Kids Request?

- Ubiquitous, anywhere, anytime access
- Interactive, personalized, adaptive
- Elevated control of content
- More dynamic than a PDF
- Ability to manipulate and annotate
- Ease when logging in

“Houston ISD no longer buys printed textbooks at the high school level. Instead, it has created a technology hub.”

– **Lenny Schad**
Technology Director
Houston ISD

◆ See **Learn/Teach**, page 8



How should students learn and how should teachers teach?

Chuck Weaver – Chair, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at Baylor University

What does work?

- Encourage student-generated effort. Study guides are valuable as long as students produce them.
- Encourage spaced (not massed) study. “Cramming...is remarkably ineffective. Studying that is spaced out over time shows remarkably less forgetting.”
- Incorporate testing as a key part of learning, not just as an assessment.

“Professional Development has dramatically changed from one week in August, one day in October and February, to responsive, on-going, mentoring and support from instructional leaders including content coaches.”

– **Mary Kemper**
Director of Mathematics
Coppell ISD

Schools are shifting to 1:1 and blended models

Basic Access and Assessment Capable

- Computers clustered in labs/carts
- Online assessments driving district requirements
- Technology is a special resource

Individual Classroom Technology Use

- Basic network infrastructure
- Infrastructure supports basic and media-rich assessments
- Classroom use is supported by staff and curriculum

Everyday 1:1 Campuswide Technology Use

- Technology is widely available
- Students and teachers use devices daily
- Digital curriculum is critical to one or more subjects

– **Anthony Swei**, co-founder of EducationSuperHighway

♦ See **Digital learning**, page 9



Digital learning roadblocks

Economic

- District budgets
- Service provider limitations
 - > Geographic challenges
 - > Rural access
 - > Provider competition

Organizational

- Leadership to make broadband connectivity a priority
- Technical expertise to understand key challenges and opportunities
 - > Monitor bandwidth utilization
 - > Leverage funding opportunities
 - > Purchasing
 - > Technology planning

– **Anthony Swei**, co-founder of EducationSuperHighway

“Twenty-six states are using or are promoting open educational resources (OER), which are educational resources that are in the public domain.”

– **Geoffrey Fletcher**
Founder
GH Fletcher Consulting

“Sixty-three percent of schools nationally lack the infrastructure to support the speed needed for digital learning.”

– **Marc Kinney**
Pearson Learning Services

“Our students, our educators and our schools systems are beginning an unprecedented transition towards digital learning...”

– **Scott Kinney**
Senior Vice-president
Discovery Education

Future needs

- Materials should be accessible on any device
- Students require consistent access to materials
 - > Login requirements must be standard
 - > Access methods must be standard
 - > Integration must be standard
- Define technical specifications standards for instructional materials
- Define standards for student privacy
- Provide seamless access for staff and students

– **Karen Rue**, Northwest ISD Superintendent



TEA

TEA Report: School districts implementing House Bill 5

According to an evaluation study released by the Texas Education Agency, more than half of all school districts responding to a recent survey reported currently offering students all five endorsements – Multidisciplinary Studies; Business and Industry; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Arts and Humanities; Public Services – created under House Bill 5 (HB 5).

Passed by the 83rd Texas Legislature in 2013, HB 5 initiated substantial changes to the curriculum requirements for high school graduation in Texas. The legislation replaced the existing graduation programs with the Foundation High School Program and included the option for students to earn endorsements, a distinguished level of achievement and performance acknowledgements within the new program.

According to the House Bill 5 Evaluation Report, endorsements offered by districts:

Endorsement offered	Percent of districts
5 endorsements (all)	53%
1 endorsement	6%
Multidisciplinary Studies	96%
Business and Industry	87%
STEM	86%
Arts and Humanities	79%
Public Service	62%

Most districts with more than one high school reported offering the same endorsements on each high school campus.

Other key findings of the evaluation study include:

- Almost all responding districts (98 percent) reported taking into consideration their current course offerings and staff capacity when deciding which endorsements to offer.
- Student interest, availability of facilities, and availability of resources were also among the top considerations reported by districts.
- A majority of responding districts (68 percent) reported not taking any actions to encourage students to pursue particular endorsements.

Districts were also asked about the methods used for communicating with parents and students about the endorsement and course options available to students. The most frequently reported methods for communicating with parents were meeting directly with parents (94 percent) and communicating through guidance counselors (92 percent).

A majority of districts also reported including information intended for parents in the student handbook, on the district webpage, or in a brochure or flyer focused on endorsement or course offerings. The most frequently reported methods for communicating with students about available endorsement and course offerings were through counselors (94 percent) and parent meetings (89 percent).

Approximately 45 percent of districts reported planning to offer Statistics and about 30 percent reported planning to offer Algebraic Reasoning as additional options for the third or fourth credit requirement in mathematics. Thirty-seven percent of responding districts reported requiring students to complete Algebra II to graduate.

As part of HB 5, the Texas Education Agency – in collaboration with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Texas Workforce Commission – is required to conduct an evaluation that estimates the effects of the new graduation requirements on several key student outcomes.

However, because the first cohort of Grade 9 students required to complete the requirements under the Foundation High School Program will not graduate until spring 2018, this first evaluation report does not include an estimate of HB 5's effect on high school graduation rates, college readiness, college admissions, obtainment of workforce certificates, employment rates, and earnings.

The American Institutes for Research administered a 44-item electronic survey to 1,214 public school districts in Texas. The survey was designed to gather information on districts' implementation of changes to graduation requirements in response

♦ See **HB 5**, page 11



HB 5 continued

to the enactment of HB 5 and the establishment of the Foundation High School Program. During the survey period (which ran from March 25 through May 5), 890 districts – representing approximately 81 percent of all districts in Texas with at least one high school (1098 districts) – responded to the survey.

Established in 1946, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., American Institutes for Research

is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally.



To review the complete House Bill 5 Evaluation Report, visit tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/Program_Evaluations/Research_Reports/Program_Evaluation_Research_Reports/.

TEA
Final 2014-2015 financial accountability ratings released

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has released final financial accountability ratings for more than 1,200 school districts and charters across the state, with almost 98 percent of all Texas school districts and charters earning a successful final rating for 2014-2015.

Created by the 77th Texas Legislature in 2001, the School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) is designed to encourage public schools to better manage their financial resources in order to provide the maximum allocation possible for direct instructional purposes.

The 2014-2015 ratings are based on annual financial reports provided to TEA by districts and charters from the 2014 fiscal year. The financial accountability system requires TEA to review the audited financial reports from all districts and charters.

This year, the FIRST ratings are based on seven financial indicators, such as administrative cost expenditures; the accuracy of a district or charter’s financial information submitted to TEA; and any financial vulnerabilities or material weaknesses

in internal controls as determined by an external auditor. Based on the submitted information, one of two financial management ratings – *Pass* or *Substandard Achievement* – is then assigned.

All school districts and charters are required to report information and financial accountability ratings to parents and taxpayers. In addition, school districts and charters must hold a public discussion or hearing regarding its financial report.



TEA formally notified school districts and charters of their preliminary FIRST rating in August. At that time, any district or charter that wished to appeal its rating had an opportunity to submit a written appeal with supporting evidence. Four school districts and eight charters submitted a request for an appeal of their preliminary FIRST rating. After a review of the submitted information, no appeals were granted.



To review the final 2014-2015 FIRST ratings for all districts and charters, visit the TEA website at tea.texas.gov/index4.aspx?id=3864.

Final 2014-15 FIRST Ratings

Final Rating	Districts	%	Charters	%	Total	%
Pass	1,012	98.83%	167	91.76%	1,179	97.76%
Substandard Achievement	12	1.17%	15	8.24%	27	2.24%
Total	1,024	100.00%	182	100.00%	1,206	100.00%



TEA

Final 2015 academic accountability ratings released

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), released the final 2015 state academic accountability ratings for more than 1,200 school districts and charters and more than 8,500 campuses. The final ratings include the results of an appeals process that provides districts and charters an opportunity to contest preliminary ratings.

Preliminary state accountability ratings were announced by TEA in August. The Texas Education Code requires the commissioner of education to provide a process for districts and charters to challenge their accountability ratings. School district appeals are first carefully reviewed by an independent appeals panel before being sent to the commissioner for a final decision.

The Texas Education Agency received 72 school district and campus-level appeals in 2015, compared to 90 in 2014 and 85 in 2013.

Two of 13 district appeals were granted by the commissioner. The final district rating for George Gervin Academy in San Antonio was changed from *Improvement Required* to *Met Standard*. The final district rating for Bynum ISD was changed from *Improvement Required* to *Not Rated*. See Campus Appeals chart on page 13.

Under the final 2015 ratings, more than 90 percent of school districts and charters across Texas achieved the rating of *Met Standard*. Districts, campuses, and charters receive one of three ratings under the state's accountability system: *Met Standard*, *Met Alternative Standard*, or *Improvement Required*. See District Ratings chart on page 13.

The 2015 ratings are based on a system of indexes that provides a comprehensive evaluation of the performance of a district or charter and each individual campus throughout the state. The performance index framework includes four areas: student achievement, student progress, closing performance gaps, and postsecondary readiness. An overview of the accountability system can be found at ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2015/accountability_rating_system.pdf.

Results of 2015 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) in mathematics for grades 3–8 were excluded from the 2015 state accountability system. New rigorous math standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in April 2012 and implemented in grades K–8 in the 2014–2015 school year. In addition, results from STAAR Accommodated (STAAR A) and STAAR Alternate 2 (a redesign of the original STAAR Alternate) were also excluded.

Parents and the general public seeking a quick overview of the state accountability system and what goes into the annual ratings of schools, districts, and charters can watch an informational animation video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbEgrdijuc8.

To view the 2015 state accountability ratings for districts, charters, and campuses (that include a listing of any distinction designations earned at the campus- and district-level), visit the Texas Education Agency website at ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2015/index.html.

Texas Education Agency Accountability Rating System

Every school gets one of two ratings: MET STANDARD or IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED.

The Texas Education Agency looks at four areas in determining a school or district's accountability rating:

<p style="text-align: center; color: #0072bc;">Student Achievement</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">STAAR test scores for the year</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #0072bc;">Student Progress</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Progress in subjects from year-to-year</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #0072bc;">Closing Performance Gaps</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Emphasis on high-level achievement of lowest performing students</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #0072bc;">Postsecondary Readiness</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Graduation rates Diploma plans College and career readiness standards</p>
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◆ See **Academic Accountability**, page 13



Academic Accountability *continued*

Final 2015 District Ratings (including charter operators)

2015 Rating	District	Charter	Total	Percent
Met Standard/Alternative	983	169	1,152	94.5%
Met Standard	983	137	1,120	91.9%
Met Alternative Standard	N/A	32	32	2.6%
Improvement Required	39	16	55	4.5%
Not Rated	2	10	12	1.0%
TOTAL	1,024	195	1,219	100.0%

Seven of 59 campus appeals were granted by the commissioner.

2015 Granted Campus Appeals

District	Campus	Rating	
		August	Final
Arrow Academy	Save Our Streets Center (Bryan)	Improvement Required	Met Standard
Austin ISD	Govalle Elementary School	Improvement Required	Not Rated
Bynum ISD	Bynum School	Improvement Required	Not Rated
George Gervin Academy	George Gervin Academy (San Antonio)	Improvement Required	Met Standard
Navasota ISD	W.B. Bizzell Academy	Improvement Required	Met Alternative Standard
Nova Academy (Southeast)	Nova Academy (Southeast) (Dallas)	Improvement Required	Met Standard
Post ISD	Post Elementary School	Improvement Required	Not Rated

Final 2015 Campus Ratings (including charter campuses)

2015 Rating	Elem	Middle	HS	K-12	Total	Percent
Met Standard/Alternative	4,168	1,555	1,454	299	7,476	86.5%
Met Standard	4,168	1,544	1,221	273	7,206	83.3%
Met Alternative Standard	0	11	233	26	270	3.1%
Improvement Required	422	102	42	37	603	7.0%
Not Rated	64	56	285	162	567	6.6%
TOTAL	4,654	1,713	1,781	498	8,646	100.0%



SBOE

Earlier effective date set for bond guarantee program

After approving amendments to the Bond Guarantee Program for school districts at the September 2015 meeting, the State Board of Education took action in November to approve an earlier effective date for the rules.

By a two-thirds vote, the board adopted an earlier effective date of Feb. 1, 2016, which will accelerate the availability of approximately \$250 million under the BGP that can be used to back charter school bond projects.

Because the board did not approve the September actions with a two-thirds majority vote, the amended rules would not have been effective until Aug. 22, 2016.

The board was asked to reconsider the effective date of the amendments in November and at that time agreed to the earlier implementation.

SBOE

2015 Employers for Education Excellence Award named

The State Board of Education named seven Texas businesses as recipients of the 2015 Employers for Education Excellence (EEE) Award. The EEE award was established in 2007 by the Texas Legislature to honor Texas employers who encourage and support staff participation and volunteerism in the public schools.

"I congratulate these seven outstanding employers for their ongoing support of our Texas public schools," said Donna Bahorich, chair of the State Board of Education. "These companies and their employees are to be commended for helping our students with their time, expertise and support."

The EEE Awards are given in three categories – Gold, Silver and Bronze. For the 2015 award, three companies received a Gold Award, three received a Silver Award and one company received a Bronze Award.

Winners in the Gold Award category have implemented policies that: encourage and support employees who attend parent-teacher conferences; encourage employees to volunteer in school activities; and support employees that participate in student mentoring programs.

The 2015 EEE recipients are:



Gold

Cisco Systems – San Antonio

For the past four years, Cisco Systems has partnered with the North East Independent School District to provide innovative technology solutions and to support programs aimed at fostering student learning and development. Of the 80-plus employees in the San Antonio office, half have participated in the mentoring programs and volunteer activities in the district. Cisco has sponsored and/or collaborated with the North East ISD on Global Girls Power Tech Day, a Career Technical Education Expo and hosted a virtual parent-staff meeting for the district STEM Academy.

Texas Department of Public Safety – Odessa District Office

The Texas Department of Public Safety – Odessa District Office has partnered for many years with the Noel Elementary School in the Ector County ISD. The troopers act as mentors for many of the

♦ See **EEE**, page 15



EEE continued

Noel students, offering them not only excellent role models, but also providing another “safe” adult for the children to confide in and receive direction. The troopers also help out with homework and have been known to visit their mentees who were in the hospital. Even if a trooper has to miss an appointment with their student, often another trooper will step in and cover their time.

Wal-Mart DC 6005 – Palestine

The management team at the Wal-Mart in Palestine has used the last two years to involve the eighth-grade students in the Palestine ISD in the Mi Futuro Program. The purpose of the program is to motivate the students to begin planning for future accomplishments and empower them with the knowledge that, regardless of their background, a good future is possible through education and hard work. Every month throughout the school year, the team meets with the students and offers a motivational speaker along with group mentoring. At the end of the year, the students go through a graduation ceremony, empowered with the skills to continue their education and have a successful future.

**O’Connell Robertson – Austin**

Receiving a Silver Award for the second time is the architectural and engineering firm O’Connell Robertson of Austin. The firm, which received its first EEE award in 2011, partners with Westwood High School in the Round Rock ISD. More than 50 percent of the firm’s employees regularly participate in school activities, serving as campus volunteers, mentors, job shadowing and intern hosts, organizing school supply drives and serving as campus and district committee members. Another unique program for the company is a teacher externship, where teachers shadow the engineers at O’Connell Robertson to gain insight into the business of engineering and use that insight in their classrooms. Employees also volunteer at schools as science fair judges, career day speakers and participate in campus beautification projects.

Peter Piper Pizza (Pizza Properties Inc.)– San Antonio

Peter Piper Pizza of San Antonio is also a repeat recipient of the EEE Silver Award, first receiving the award in 2012. For the last 33 years, Pizza Properties Inc. has supported local schools, clubs, non-profits and other various organizations. Each of the company’s 50 restaurants partner with their area schools throughout the state. In the San Antonio area, the restaurant partners with the North East ISD to provide items for schools to use as rewards and incentives. The company also allows managers to attend school career days, judge science fairs and talent shows and attend school fairs and carnivals.

VK Orthodontics, P.A. – San Antonio

Throughout the 2014-15 school year, the employees of VK Orthodontics in San Antonio teamed up to provide support for several campus events in the North East ISD. From volunteering at career day events, to providing information at health fairs, the employees provided area students with information on good dental practices and information on the orthodontic field as a future career choice. Staff members also participate in the local Parent-Teachers Association events and fundraisers and donate to the scholarship funds.

**Perry & Perry Builders – Rockdale**

Recognized with a Bronze Award is the construction firm of Perry & Perry Builders of Rockdale. The firm has long supported the Rockdale ISD in many capacities, including donations to various extra-curricular activities, sponsorship of an attendance incentive at all the campuses and support to employees to who attend events as both mentors and parents.

Any Texas employer is eligible to win the award, including private companies, nonprofit organizations and state, local, federal and educational entities. Recognized businesses receive a plaque and the EEE designation is recognized for three years.



TEA

2014-15 Texas Academic Performance Reports on website

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams announced that the 2014–15 Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) are now available on the Texas Education Agency website.

A tremendous resource for parents, the TAPR provides a wide range of performance information for every public school and district in the state. The campus-level, district-level, regional, and statewide reports combine details of academic

performance with financial reports and information about staff, programs, and demographics. TAPR is the successor to the popular Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report.



To review the 2014–15 Texas Academic Performance Report, visit the Texas Education Agency website at ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/2015/index.html.

TEA

Proposed STAAR performance standards announced

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams advised school districts and charters of his recommendation to replace the current phase-in schedule for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) student passing standards with a revised approach.

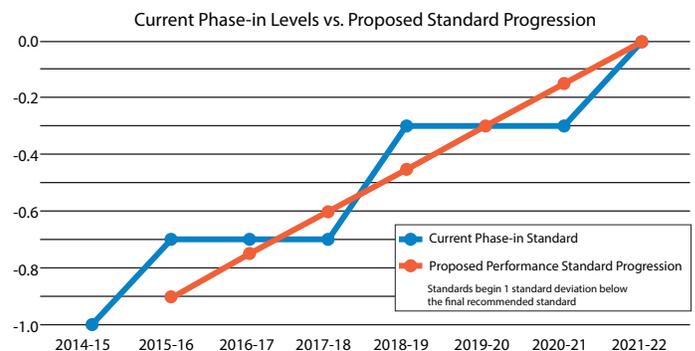
STAAR performance standards have been scheduled to move to the more rigorous phase-in 2 passing standard this school year. Each time the performance standard is increased, a student must achieve a higher score in order to pass a STAAR exam. The STAAR performance standards have been at phase-in 1 for the past four years.

Under new proposed rules from the Commissioner, the traditional phase-in approach would be replaced with a standard progression approach from 2015–2016 through 2021–2022, the year final standards are scheduled to be in place. In other words, rather than larger jumps to more rigorous performance standards every few years, this progression approach would mean smaller, predictable increases every year through the 2021–2022 school year.

“This approach is intended to minimize any abrupt single-year increase in the required Level II standard for this school year and in the future,” said Commissioner Williams. “The standard progression approach will still allow annual, consistent, incremental improvements toward the

same final recommended Level II performance standards in 2021–2022.”

Phase-in 2 standards were originally scheduled to take effect two years ago. However, Commissioner Williams delayed that move to allow educators and students to adjust to the more rigorous curriculum and assessments. In making this recommendation, Commissioner Williams emphasized that increasing the performance standards in smaller increments will still mean the state reaches the final performance standards on the current schedule (as illustrated by the chart below).



The proposed rules to move to a standard progression approach can be accessed on the Texas Education agency website at [tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Laws_and_Rules/Commissioner_Rules_\(TAC\)/Proposed_Commissioner_of_Education_Rules/](http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Laws_and_Rules/Commissioner_Rules_(TAC)/Proposed_Commissioner_of_Education_Rules/).



TEA

2015 NAEP math scores strong for Texas students

Texas fourth and eighth grade students taking the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics posted scores higher than the national average, according to results released by the federal government in The Nation's Report Card.

In fourth-grade mathematics, Texas ranked 11th nationally, up from 27th in 2013. The Texas fourth-grade math score (244) not only exceeded the national average (240), but also reflected a new high exceeding the score (242) posted by Texas fourth graders in 2005, 2007 and 2013. Scores for white, African-American and Hispanic students also exceeded scores by their national counterparts in NAEP fourth-grade mathematics, with Texas African-American students second only to those by African-American students in Department of Defense schools.

2015 NAEP – Fourth-Grade Mathematics

Student Groups	TEXAS	NATIONAL RANK	NATION
NATIONAL PUBLIC	244	11	240
White	255	4	248
African-American	233	2	224
Hispanic	239	4	230

"Math scores for our Texas fourth graders increased at a time when scores on the national level declined," noted Commissioner of Education Michael Williams. "Only through effective professional development support for our educators that, in turn, leads to strong instruction in our classrooms, can we sustain our state's success on the national level."

In eighth-grade mathematics, Texas ranked 23rd nationally, down from 16th in 2013. The Texas eighth-grade math score (284) exceeded the national average (281). However, the Texas eighth-grade math scores declined from 2013, mirroring a national trend. Scores for white, African-American and Hispanic students also exceeded scores posted by their counterparts in NAEP eighth-grade mathematics.

2015 NAEP – Eighth-Grade Mathematics

Student Groups	TEXAS	NATIONAL RANK	NATION
NATIONAL PUBLIC	284	23	281
White	298	6	291
African-American	267	6	260
Hispanic	277	4	269

On the national level, scores for fourth grade reading remained stable from 2013 while scores for eighth grade students declined. Reading scores for Texas students followed that latter trend. The Texas fourth-grade reading score (218) fell just below the national average (221). Despite the decline, Texas' national ranking moved up to 40th (a jump from 41st in 2013). Among specific student populations, scores for white (235) and Hispanic (210) students exceeded scores posted by their white (232) and Hispanic (208) counterparts across the country.

The Texas eighth-grade reading score (261) also fell just three points below the national average (264). Texas ranked 39th nationally, down from 38th in 2013. Scores for white (274) and African-American (251)

♦ See **NAEP**, page 18



SBOE

Summaries of SBOE actions can be found online

The State Board of Education met Nov. 17 – 20, 2015. Summaries of actions taken by the SBOE can be found on the Texas Education Agency’s website at tea.texas.gov/sboe/actions/.

NAEP *continued*

students exceeded scores posted by their white (273) and African-American (247) counterparts across the country.

“In an era of smart phone texting and 140-character communication, this national report confirms that all states are facing the same challenges in seeking ways to strengthen reading at every grade level,” said Commissioner Williams. “Under Gov. Abbott’s leadership, Texas is already a step ahead with the return of valuable literacy and math academics as well as other support for our teachers.”

NAEP is administered over a six-week period. For 2015, the assessment period was from Jan. 26 through March 6. Approximately 279,000 fourth-graders and 278,000 eighth graders across the country participated in NAEP assessments in mathematics and reading. For mathematics, 5,700

Texas fourth graders in 480 schools and 5,800 Texas eighth graders in 380 schools participated. For reading, 5,600 Texas fourth graders and 5,700 eighth graders participated.

NAEP is a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, located within the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences. It is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students in the United States know and can do in various subjects. Since 1969, NAEP has provided a common measure of student achievement across the country.



Complete 2015 results of The Nation’s Report Card (including snapshot reports for each state in mathematics and reading) are available at nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/.



Texas Education Today may be found online at tea.texas.gov/communications/tet.aspx.

State Board of Education

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