

Texas Education Today

News from the Texas Education Agency

Commissioner Michael Williams tours Rio Grande Valley schools

Commissioner Williams and SBOE member Ruben Cortez, Jr. (District 2) toured several schools in the Rio Grande Valley on Oct 3. Among the schools visited were: Thomas Jefferson T-STEM Early College High

School (Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD), Central Middle School (Weslaco ISD), IDEA Brownsville Academy and Veterans Memorial High School and Yturria Elementary School both of Brownsville ISD.



NCLB waiver

Conditional waiver from USDE

The State of Texas has secured a conditional waiver from the U.S. Department of Education for specific provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. [\[complete story on page 2\]](#)

College Admission Scores

Texas ACT scores hit new highs

The 2013 composite score for all Texas students taking the ACT college admission test hit a new high of 20.9 according to a report released by ACT. [\[complete story on page 7\]](#)

Accolades

2013 Heroes for Children honored

The State Board of Education honored 17 Texans with the Heroes for Children award at the SBOE meeting. Collectively, the honorees have provided more than 100 years of volunteer service to Texas public schools [\[complete story on page 9\]](#)

Date reminder

GED test to expire at end of 2013

The Texas Education Agency issued a reminder to those seeking a high school equivalency credential that the current version of the GED test will expire at the end of 2013 and be replaced with the new 2014 Series GED test. [\[complete story on page 15\]](#)

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NCLB Waiver

Texas secures conditional NCLB waiver from USDE

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams announced on Sept. 30 that the State of Texas has secured a conditional waiver from the U.S. Department of Education for specific provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Commissioner Williams initiated the waiver process earlier this year to give the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and more than 1,200 school districts and charters additional flexibility.

“Successfully navigating this waiver process proved to be both lengthy and complex, but it was a task I believed necessary to bring some relief from burdensome federal mandates to our school districts,” said Commissioner Williams. “At TEA, we will now work with superintendents statewide to implement key provisions of this waiver to the benefit of all our students.”

Under key components of the state’s NCLB waiver, Texas schools will no longer be designated as having met or made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Instead of federal designations for all schools in Texas, only the lowest performing 15 percent of schools will be identified as Priority or Focus Schools. Those schools will be subject to a series of federally-prescribed interventions.

Additionally, Texas school districts will no longer be required to set aside 20 percent of their Title I federal dollars to provide Supplemental Educational Services (SES). A district will now be free to use those funds on academic intervention programs it deems most effective for its students.

“My decision to place a condition on the approval of Texas’ request is based on the fact that Texas has not yet finalized its guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems,” write U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in a Sept. 30th letter to Commissioner Williams. “However, I have determined that, in the 2013-2014 school year, Texas is able to fully meet the ESEA flexibility principles while it continues to finalize its new guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.”

From the beginning of the waiver process, Commissioner Williams pointed out to federal officials that Texas has been a national leader in the college- and career-readiness movement. Texas was the first state to develop and implement college- and career-readiness curriculum standards, the first state to assess those standards, and is the first state to implement an accountability system to hold schools accountable for preparing students for postsecondary success.

“The underlying message throughout our negotiations with the federal government has been Texans know what’s best for Texas schools,” said Commissioner Williams. “I believe our school districts will appreciate the additional flexibility this waiver provides while also adhering to our strong principles on effective public education.”

Commissioner Williams announced the state’s intent to file for a waiver from certain federal NCLB requirements shortly after assuming office last year. TEA submitted its initial waiver request in February after seeking input from superintendents, educators, business leaders and the general public on the scope of the waiver request. TEA staff immediately entered into negotiations with their federal counterparts.

Commissioner Williams also visited with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan - in person and by phone - on several occasions to discuss provisions of the Texas waiver. Texas superintendents have also been kept apprised of the NCLB negotiations during the Commissioner’s visits with them across the state over the past several months.

The NCLB waiver granted to Texas does not affect any student assessments currently required under federal law. The waiver is effective for the 2013-2014 school year. The complete [waiver request](#) - including the approval letter from Secretary Duncan - is available for viewing on the Texas Education Agency website.



Foundation High School Program

Staff directed to draft rule on Foundation HS Program

As the State Board of Education begins its work to flesh out the new Foundation High School Program created by the Texas Legislature, board members have directed staff to draft a rule that includes more detailed guidance that the public can respond to rather than asking for feedback on a more general proposal.

The board indicated that its draft rule will require a student to complete four related courses, often in a coherent sequence, in order to earn an endorsement. The draft proposal will include language to require students seeking any endorsement to complete Algebra II.

The proposal will also include language to require a student to complete chemistry and physics to earn a STEM endorsement and to require a student to complete English IV and both world history and world geography to earn an arts and humanities endorsement.

The draft proposal will keep speech as a graduation requirement. While never required under state law, the board has required students to take a speech class to meet graduation requirements since the late 1990s.

The board will hold a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed rules on Nov. 20 at the Texas Education Agency headquarters in Austin and then will take preliminary votes on the measure on Nov. 21-22. A final vote is expected in January.

It is necessary to revise graduation requirements because of the passage of House Bill 5 this spring. That law created the 22-credit Foundation High School Program, which will eventually replace the state's three current graduation plans.

The law requires students to complete a total of 26 credits in order to earn an endorsement. Students can earn a distinguished level of achievement by completing a total of four math credits, including Algebra II, and at least one endorsement. Students must earn this distinguished level of achievement in order to be eligible for automatic college admission under the state's top 10 percent rule.

Additionally, the new graduation program allows students to earn performance acknowledgments for outstanding performance in areas such as bilingualism and biliteracy or on tests such as the SAT or ACT.

The new graduation program won't be implemented until the fall of 2014. However, students who are in ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade this school year will be given the option of continuing on one of the current graduation programs or switching to the new program.

In September, Commissioner of Education Michael Williams filed transition rules that will also allow some members of the Class of 2014 to switch to the new Foundation High School Program.

“Before making a final decision regarding the graduation program they will pursue, I strongly encourage students and their parents to consider the benefits of taking additional advanced math and science courses, and to fully research required or recommended coursework for admission to any higher education institution they may have interest in attending.”

The proposed Commissioner's rules, which can be found at www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=25769807506, will only apply to the small group of seniors who are able to complete the coursework required to graduate under the

◆ See **Rule**, page 4



Rule continued

Foundation High School Program in 2013-2014 and who choose this option. This includes students who complete the required coursework during the summer of 2014, but not thereafter.

“While the majority of seniors this year will still graduate under the existing Minimum High School Program, Recommended High School Program, or Distinguished Achievement Program, some students may meet the requirements for the new Foundation High School Program and elect to graduate under that program,” said Commissioner Williams. “Before making a final decision regarding the graduation program they will pursue, I strongly encourage students and their parents to consider

the benefits of taking additional advanced math and science courses, and to fully research required or recommended coursework for admission to any higher education institution they may have interest in attending.”

Because the state board has not yet finalized plans for the endorsements and performance acknowledgements, current seniors who switch to the new program would receive the basic Foundation diploma only.

To stay informed about developments concerning HB 5 graduation requirements, visit www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=25769806149.

Charter Schools**Commissioner sends charter school decisions to SBOE**

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams advised members of the State Board of Education (SBOE) on Sept. 27 of his decision to grant four Generation 18 charter schools. Those approved by the Commissioner include:

- Carpe Diem Schools - San Antonio
- El Paso Leadership Academy
- Great Hearts Academies Dallas
- Magnolia and Redbud Montessori for All

“Strengthening the network of charter schools across our state is a critical component to providing greater parental choice,” said Commissioner Williams. “After a careful review of the Generation 18 charter applications, applicant interview testimony, impact statements, staff recommendations and input from State Board of Education members, I am confident we are adding new charter schools that will carry out the mission of innovative and effective education for Texas students.”

Under Senate Bill 2, passed during the 83rd Texas Legislature, the Commissioner grants new open-enrollment charters in Texas and must notify the SBOE of those he approves. SBOE members can veto any new charter approved by the Commissioner.

The State Board is expected to discuss the Commissioner’s decisions and take any action - if necessary - at its Nov. 22 meeting in Austin.

Twelve Generation 18 applicants took part in the public applicant interviews on Sept. 11th and 12th in Austin. Those that were seeking to operate an open-enrollment charter in Texas - but not granted approval by the Commissioner - include:

- Beta Academy
- Destiny Preparatory
- EXCEL Center
- Gardens of Learning, Rio Grande Valley
- iWin Preparatory
- Rivercrest Academy
- Urban Lyceum.

High Point Academy also took part in the public applicant interviews, but withdrew from consideration for a Generation 18 charter.

To learn more about open-enrollment charter schools in Texas and the application process, visit the TEA website at www.tea.state.tx.us/charters.aspx.



Waivers

Feds: No waiver on HB 866 means no changes for 3-8 testing

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has notified the Texas Education Agency (TEA) that it will not grant a waiver for specific provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) as it relates to House Bill 866 (HB 866).

Had a waiver been secured from the federal government, potential changes under HB 866 would have included math assessments for certain students in grades 3, 5 and 8; and reading in grades 3, 5 and 8. High-performing students would have been exempt from taking these assessments in grades 4, 6, and 7. Current federal law requires testing for math and reading for all students in grades 3 through 8.

"Annual assessment of all students in grades 3 through 8 is critical to holding schools and LEAs [local education agencies] accountable for improving the achievement of all students and to providing transparency on LEA, school, and student performance to families, communities, and other stakeholders," wrote Assistant Secretary of Education Deborah S. Delisle in a Sept.

6th letter to Commissioner of Education Michael Williams. "Therefore, should the TEA submit such a request, I would decline to exercise my authority to grant a waiver of the provisions you have identified."

In July, Commissioner Williams submitted a letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan seeking clarification from USDE whether specific federal provisions related to student tests might be waived. The authors of HB 866 (passed by the 83rd Texas Legislature) recognized a federal waiver was necessary before provisions of the legislation could be put into effect.

In her letter to Commissioner Williams, Assistant Secretary Delisle went on to say that HB 866 provisions could also impact the state's current request for a general NCLB waiver. TEA submitted its original application in February, updated its submission in August and received a final decision on Sept 30.

The general [NCLB waiver request](#) for the State of Texas is available for viewing on the TEA website.

Student Performance



Members of the Mission High School FFA Chapter Parliamentary Procedure Team demonstrated the use of correct parliamentary procedures at the September SBOE meeting. The group from Mission CISD will compete October 30 - Nov. 2 at the national FAA convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Members are Vanessa Calderon, president; Johanna Jimenez, secretary; Jose Calderon, officer; Rolando Hinojosa, officer; Alyssa Flores, officer; Itzel Lopez, officer; Christopher Venecia, officer; Kimberly Cantu, officer and Sebastian Martinez, officer.



College Admission Scores & AP

2012-2013 SAT, AP participation rates for Texas public school students increase

New data released on Sept. 26 by the College Board shows that 2012-2013 student participation rates for the SAT and Advanced Placement (AP) exams for Texas public school students increased over the previous school year. The increases mark the fourth consecutive year the SAT and AP participation numbers in Texas have grown.

School Year	Number of Texas Public School Students Taking SAT	Number of Texas Public School Students Taking AP Exams
2012-2013	156,877	204,795
2011-2012	156,486	194,391
2010-2011	148,099	186,830
2009-2010	127,985	168,438
2008-2009	115,439	148,859

The 156,877 Texas public school students who took the SAT in 2012-2013 reflects an increase of 0.2 percent from 2011-2012. The SAT takers in the Texas Class of 2013 represent 56 percent of the state's public high school graduates. Of the total SAT examinees, 62 percent identified themselves as minority students with greater participation from the previous year among Hispanic and Asian students than other racial/ethnic groups.

For the first time in state history, more Hispanic students (59,294) than White students (58,307) took the SAT in Texas public schools.

The 204,795 Texas public school students who took AP exams in 2012-2013 represent an increase of 5.4 percent from 2011-2012 and a 37.6 percent jump over the past five school years. Students took 373,447 AP exams in 2012-2013, an increase of 6.5 percent over the previous school year and 38.6 percent over the past five years.

"More Texas students are taking the SAT and AP exams because they have career aspirations that require education beyond high school," said Commissioner of Education Michael Williams. "As a state, our job should be to provide every student a solid foundation to assure they not only begin that dream, but can make it across the finish line at the post-secondary level."

College Board data also shows that while participation in Texas has increased, SAT mean scores have remained relatively stable since 2010. Texas public school students in 2012-2013 posted a one point increase in Critical Reading (from 470 to 471). The mean scores for Mathematics (496) and Writing (456) both remained unchanged from the previous school year.

Additional Texas items of note from the 2012-2013 College Board report include:

- More than half of the 156,877 public school students who took the SAT were female (84,281).
- Among the Texas public school SAT takers who responded to an optional question about parental education, almost half (45 percent) of the public school students taking the SAT reported coming from families where the highest level of parental education is a high school diploma or no high school diploma.

♦ See **SAT & AP**, page 8



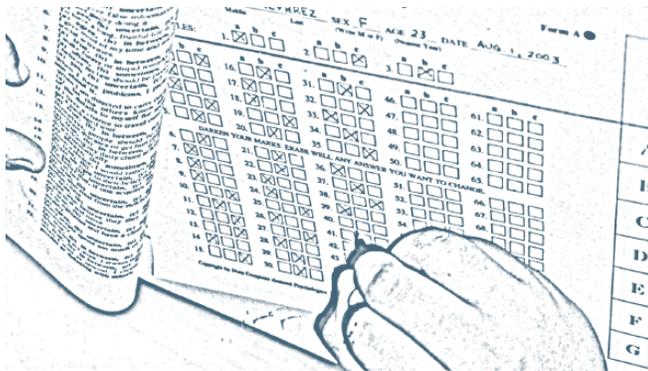
College Admission Scores

Texas ACT scores for various student groups hit new highs

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams announced that the 2013 composite score for all Texas students taking the ACT college admission test hit a new high of 20.9 according to a report released by ACT.

In addition, the composite scores for Texas White, Hispanic/Latino and African-American students are at all-time highs - matching or exceeding national composite scores in each of those student groups.

"Our state's ongoing commitment to rigor in the classroom is clearly evident in these national results," said Commissioner Williams. "In the coming years, the challenge will be in maintaining this momentum which has provided a strong foundation of success for all students, while also offering all students greater flexibility to make course choices."



"The ACT data show that we continue to make steady progress in college and career readiness, validating our efforts to improve rigor in Texas public schools," said Dr. Raymund Paredes, Texas Commissioner of Higher Education. "As we begin implementation of HB 5 to provide additional flexibility in student coursework, it is imperative that education leaders work collaboratively to sustain a level of rigor that prepares students for the workplace and college."

For the Class of 2013, the number of ACT test takers in Texas totaled 109,841. ACT tests are administered for a number of subject areas including English, math, reading, science and writing (optional). Texas scores in all those areas (excluding the optional writing test) increased in 2013:

- English - 19.8 (compared to 19.6 in 2012)
- Reading - 21.0 (compared to 20.8 in 2012)
- Science - 20.9 (compared to 20.8 in 2012)
- Math - 21.5 (compared to 21.4 in 2012)

Williams specifically noted an increase in the math scores for Texas students while national ACT scores in math dropped to 20.9 (a decrease of .2). The ACT report also showed that 48 percent of Texas students were identified as being ready for College Algebra compared to 44 percent of nationally-tested students.

"We've seen that an emphasis on an important core subject such as math can put Texas students in position to succeed," said Commissioner Williams. "Math should continue to be a focus in our classrooms if we expect Texas students to keep excelling and surpassing students in other states."

Other highlights of the Texas ACT results for the Class of 2013 include:

- From 2012 to 2013, the Texas ACT composite score increased .1 to 20.9, an all-time high that equals the national composite score, which dropped by .2 during the same period.
- The number of test takers decreased slightly, from a record-high in 2012 of 110,180 to 109,841 in 2013.
- The 41,877 Texas Hispanic/Latino students reported in the Class of 2013 represents 38 percent of the total tested population. Nationally, Hispanic/Latino students represent 14 percent of the ACT-tested population.
- The 41,877 Texas Hispanic/Latino students reported in the Class of 2013 represents an increase in participation that is greater than 85 percent over the last five years.
- The 2013 composite score for Hispanic/Latino students in Texas is at an all-time high of 18.8, equal to their national counterparts.
- The 2013 composite score for African-American students in Texas is at an all-time

◆ See **ACT scores**, page 8



ACT scores *continued*

high of 17.6, which is .7 higher than their national counterparts (16.9).

- The 2013 composite score for white students in Texas is at an all-time high of 23.3, which is 1.1 higher than their national counterparts (22.2). Twenty percent of students (22,148) plan on careers in health sciences and technologies, while business and engineering careers are tied for second at 11 percent. Fourteen percent were undecided.

The top 10 Texas universities, in descending order, receiving scores from Texas ACT test-takers were: Texas A&M University; University of Texas at Austin; Texas Tech University; Texas State University; Baylor University; University of Texas at San Antonio; University of Texas - Pan American; University of North Texas; University of Houston; and Sam Houston State University.

The entire ACT report - complete with national and state-by-state results - can be viewed at www.act.org/readiness/2013.



SAT & AP *continued from page 4*

- Texas mean scores on the SAT have remained stable over the last year, but are below the national average for public school students.
- The most popular AP exams were English Language, U.S. History, World History, English Literature, Spanish Language, and U.S. Government and Politics.
- 173,245 AP exams earned a score of 3 or higher, an increase of 6.3 percent over 2011-2012 and 38.4 percent over the last five years.
- Among the Texas public school SAT takers who responded to optional questions about their college plans, 33 percent indicated they plan to attain a bachelor's degree and 52 percent hoped to attain a more advanced (master's or doctoral) degree.
- Of the intended college major/degree-level goal reported by public school SAT takers in Texas, the top three were: Health Professions and related clinical services (23 percent); Engineering (12 percent); and Business Management, Marketing and related support services (11 percent).
- Public school students from the Texas Class of 2013 who took the SAT and/or SAT Subject Tests designated their score reports to be sent to a total of 2,720 institutions of higher education. The top ten (in descending order) were the University of Texas at Austin; Texas A&M University; Texas State University; Baylor University; the University of Texas - San Antonio; the University of Houston; Texas Tech University; the University of North Texas; Sam Houston State University; and the University of Texas - Arlington.

The College Board's 2013 Report on College & Career Readiness, which offers a broader view of the most recent SAT data, can be found here press.collegeboard.org/sat



Accolades

State Board of Education honors 2013 Heroes for Children

The 2013 Heroes for Children are: front row, left to right, Melanie Smith, Richland Springs ISD; Eulla Krueger, Southwest ISD; Kathy Carskadden, Hondo ISD; Ann Prochaska, Conroe ISD; Maria del Carmen Rivas, Galena Park ISD; and Sharon Johnston, Irving ISD. Back row, left to right, Doug James, Leander ISD; Kimberly Aldrich, Judson ISD; Eloisa Mireles, Brownsville ISD; Susan Jacobs, El Paso ISD; Roger Waldrep, Texarkana ISD; Ron Green, Richardson ISD; Uwe Zeizinger, Wichita Falls ISD; and Demetrius Moffett, West Orange-Cove ISD. Not pictured are Brette Machiorlette, Houston ISD; Thomas P. Address Jr., Arlington ISD; and Ray Guttenfelder, Joshua ISD.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) honored 17 Texans who have collectively provided more than 100 years of volunteer service to Texas public schools with the Heroes for Children award at the SBOE meeting in September.

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 2013 Heroes for Children award (along with a brief description of the contributions each has made to Texas schoolchildren) follows.

SBOE District 1

Kathy Carskadden

Carskadden is a volunteer in the Hondo ISD, who works with groups of students needing a little extra help on their English Language Arts lessons. As a volunteer, she is fulfilling her lifelong dream of helping those students who were "falling through the cracks."

SBOE District 1

Susan Jacobs

Jacobs in the El Paso ISD is described as one who puts the needs of the community before herself. As president of the Franklin High School Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA), Jacobs dedicated countless hours to making each school year a success for the high school students. She is called the driving force behind the PTSA for the past four years despite a life-threatening illness.

◆ See **HEROES**, page 10



HEROES *continued*

has served on the Parent-Teacher Association, the district's Parent Advisory Committee, Superintendent's Scholarship Committee and was chair of the district's School Health Advisory Committee.

SBOE District 3

Kimberly Aldrich

Aldrich, one of two volunteers to be honored for SBOE District 3, is a volunteer at Wagner High School in the Judson ISD. She has worked tirelessly for the Wagner Cheer Team making sure the program is affordable and accessible for all the participants. She has created props, designed materials, raised money, driven carpools and provided many items for the team with funds from her own pocket.

SBOE District 3

Eulla Krueger

Krueger, the second honoree for District 3, has been a volunteer since 1976 in the classrooms, special events, and extracurricular activities. She currently serves on the Southwest ISD Education Foundation as the key organizer of the annual Classic Golf Tournament and Las Vegas Casino Night, two events that raise funds for classroom grants.

SBOE District 4

Maria del Carmen Rivas

A volunteer at North Shore Elementary School in the Galena Park ISD, Rivas works with struggling bilingual first graders and in the Life Skills classroom. She also helps with collecting "picture day" money, filling in for lunch duty, helping children get to the nurse's office, chaperoning

SBOE District 2

Eloisa Mireles

Mireles has been a volunteer in the Brownsville district since 1990 and has volunteered at all levels – from elementary to high school. She

field trips, assisting with morning and afternoon dismissals, distributing Backpack Buddy meals for needy children, and delivering Christmas gifts to needy families.

SBOE District 5

Melanie Smith

Smith works with the students who are on the Richland Springs ISD academic UIL teams. She assists the UIL coordinator with administrative tasks, coaches speaking events in grades 2-12, assists with the background preparations for One Act Play competitions, and will often use her own money to buy the necessary items so students can participate with pride in their chosen events.

SBOE District 6

Brette Machiorlette

A current student at the University of Texas, Machiorlette is honored for her work as both a high school and college student in creating and launching the Reading Aces literacy program in the Houston ISD and in Austin. The program provides reading mentors to at-risk elementary school students. In the four years since starting the program, Machiorlette has recruited over 150 high school volunteers from eight public and private schools to help more than 300 at-risk children at 10 Houston community centers and elementary schools.

SBOE District 7

Demetrius Moffett

Described as an exceptional role model, Moffett of West Orange-Cove CISD volunteers each week as part of the Build Great Readers Community Partnership at West Orange-Stark Elementary School. Moffett works with the students on reading skills, vocabulary, pronunciation and comprehension. Uplifting and encouraging, he stresses the importance of reading and a good education. He also finds time to serve on the high school's site-based decision making committee and is an advisory board member of the high school's National Academy Foundation local governance committee.

◆ See **HEROES, District 8** page 11



HEROES, District 8 *continued*

SBOE District 8

Ann Prochaska

Prochaska is a Bush Buddy, a volunteer at Barbara Bush Elementary School in Conroe ISD who mentors at-risk students. She works with struggling students to help them achieve their highest potential. She consistently attends and supports the Bush PTO meetings, Sock Hop, Field and Safety Days, Science and Technology Nights, and other special events. She is also involved in a variety of community activities including promoting recycling and providing blankets to the needy.

SBOE District 9

Roger Waldrep

Described by one student as a true superhero, Waldrep of Texarkana ISD has worked for the past 17 years with the students of Texarkana High School, supporting both academic and extracurricular activities. He acts as a mentor, father figure, a friend and as an advocate for education – encouraging students to further their education beyond high school. He teaches life lessons of commitment, perseverance, spirit and positive attitude.

SBOE District 10

Doug James

James is the chief organizer and proponent of a program to supply 3,200 Leander ISD elementary school students with backpacks full of school supplies. He is also responsible for the phenomenal growth of an award winning Literacy Partner program which counts 250 literacy partners and 20 mentors from 15-faith based congregations of various denominations in 21 elementary schools.

SBOE District 11

Thomas P. Andress, Jr.

Andress has been a volunteer at Venture School in Arlington ISD for 22 years. Five days a week he works with math students helping them to understand the complexities of algebra and pre-calculus. For the 2012-13 school year, Andress devoted more than 500 hours of guidance and help. He is regarded as a valued assistant by the school's teachers and helps students to better grasp and to understand challenging concepts.

SBOE District 12

Ron Green

Sixteen years ago, Green began volunteering in Richardson ISD in a remedial reading program at Prestonwood Elementary School. From there he also started working with the RHS Offstage Inc., a booster club that supports the Richardson High School Theater magnet program. He has also volunteered for the past seven years as an algebra tutor helping Algebra I and Algebra II students.

SBOE District 13

Sharon Johnston

As the volunteer president of the Irving Women's Network, Johnston has been a constant advocate for the area's homeless students in Irving ISD. She is one of five founding members of the Advocates for Homeless Teens, a group dedicated to creating housing options for teens who have no place to live. She is also the founder for The Main Place, a store with new clothing for teens in homeless situations.

SBOE District 14

Ray Guttenfelder

Guttenfelder, a 90-year-old retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, volunteers four days a week at North Joshua Elementary School in Joshua ISD. He works with struggling readers in kindergarten through sixth grade. He also helps the teachers grade the daily math quizzes, and works with the students on their multiplication problems. Guttenfelder happily provides the students each morning with his words of wisdom.

SBOE District 15

Uwe Zeizinger

Zeizinger is a volunteer at Rider High School in Wichita Falls ISD. A retiree from the German Air Force, he started volunteering to learn more about the American school system. He provides adult guidance for numerous students and also works with special needs students providing them with extra tutoring. In addition, Zeizinger mentors a student from Germany who attends the school.



Employers for Education Excellence (EEE)

Employers recognized for support of Texas public schools

From mentoring to donations to lunchtime visits, Texas businesses large and small are an integral part of many Texas public schools. In recognition of this support, the State Board of Education has named 12 Texas employers as recipients of the 2013 Employers for Education Excellence (EEE) Award. 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.

“Congratulations to these businesses on this recognition of their support of our Texas public schools,” said Barbara Cargill, chair of the State Board of Education. “I would like to thank these employers and their employees for taking the time to mentor and work with these students and their schools.”

The EEE Awards are given in three categories – Gold, Silver and Bronze. For the 2013 award, 11 companies received a gold award and one company received a silver 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.

Gold recipients



Automatic Data Processing Inc. (ADP)

Through numerous activities and community partnerships, Automatic Data Processing Inc. (ADP) employees are given many avenues to impact the youth in the El Paso community. Every ADP employee is allowed eight paid hours for community volunteering. The business partners closely with the Junior Achievement (JA) organizations in El Paso helping to mentor students, promote career-prone thinking and social success. During the 2012-2013 school year, 120 ADP volunteers assumed teacher roles bringing JA's financial literacy work readiness and entrepreneurship programs to 633 local students. Since 2010, ADP has supported 400 volunteers for JA, impacting a total of 2,808 students at eight local elementary schools.

Capital One Bank – San Antonio

Capital One Bank and its associates are proud partners with the Rey Feo Program in San Antonio. This school visitation program reaches

approximately 70,000 elementary school students each year. The Rey Feo Program presents students with a fun, unique message on the importance of staying in school and pursuing a college education; and visits approximately 100 schools per year. Each student is presented with a gold coin as a reminder that when they reach high school, they can apply for the Rey Feo Scholarship, which Capital One awards to need-based Title I high school graduates. Capital One Bank – San Antonio also participates in the Heart of America READesign efforts. The company provided Rodriguez Elementary School in San Antonio with a new library and through a campaign called Book by Book along with READesign, has donated more than 6,300 books.

City of Austin

The City of Austin partners with six local non-profit organizations to support mentoring and tutoring program that benefit the students of the Austin Independent School District. City of Austin policy provides its employees with two hours of administrative leave per week to participate in the program. During the 2012-2013 school year, 385 employees participated in the City Mentor and Tutor Program. In addition, city employees also participate directly in the Austin ISD related

◆ See EEE awards, page 13



EEE awards *continued*

volunteer programs. The City of Austin also participates in a Title I schools Mentor and Tutor program in which employees are given paid time off to volunteer and mentor some of the city's most at-risk students. This is the second time the City of Austin has been recognized as an Employer for Education Excellence. The city was previously awarded an EEE in 2008.

DATCU – Denton

The Denton Independent School District benefits greatly from the employees of DATCU, a credit union that allows employees to attend parent-teacher conferences, volunteer activities and mentoring. The credit union provides 20 employees to serve as mentors in the Denton ISD. Employees are able to customize their work schedules to accommodate visits to their children's schools, and are encouraged and incentivized to participate in volunteer activities in schools. Employees volunteer through such groups as Big Brother Big Sisters, Adopt a School – Partners in Education, Giving Heart, Apple Tree Project, Lone Star Technical Instructional Academy and the Denton Public School Foundation. For the past eight years, DATCU has provided the total funding for the Volunteer Advisory Board, which oversees all volunteer activities in the district's 36 schools, which in 2012-2013 generated 392,000 volunteer hours.

Electric Reliability Council of Texas – Taylor

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) provides valuable mentoring services to the students of the Taylor Independent School District. Every week, 11 ERCOT employees participate in a lunch mentoring program at Taylor ISD campuses. ERCOT also sponsors a scientific renewable energy club, Beginners Learning Alternative Designs of Energy (BLADE), at Taylor High School. ERCOT employees visit with students every Tuesday and Thursday to provide them with a hands-on learning opportunities and exposure to new ideas. The club's first project involved designing a machine to be used for emergency situations having an immediate need for electricity. The club successfully created a power supply by turning a van into a solar generator. The project garnered top honors at the 38th annual Institute of Electrical

and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) solar day competition for high school students in Austin.

**H-E-B – San Antonio**

Since 2002, H-E-B has recognized excellent teachers across the state through its Excellence in Education Awards. More than \$500,000 is awarded annually to teachers through this program, which is the largest monetary recognition program for educators in Texas and one of the largest in the nation. Through its Read 3 program, H-E-B has collected and distributed 1.5 million books to children in need. In the Northside Independent School District in San Antonio, the company is a vital partner to the Nellie Reddix Center providing a unique mentoring program through the H-E-B Marketplace called Work Place Learning. The program is designed to teach young adults with special needs on the job training with an emphasis on how to secure and carry out a job. Each day, students come to the store and are mentored by an employee. The H-E-B Marketplace mentors work to give these students lifelong skills that can ultimately lead to their independence and success.

National Instruments – Austin

National Instruments – Austin has developed a 10-year partnership with Will Davis Elementary School, an Austin Independent School District school named for a former State Board of Education member. During the last five years, more than 40 National Instrument employees have worked with the school's teachers, helped with fundraising activities, and led robotics workshops and trainings for teachers and students. The company has created the Mentoring Young Minds Robotics mentor program in 14 of its worldwide offices. In 2012, the Austin-based employees served as robotics mentors working directly in classrooms or training mentors from other companies and organizations to work in the classrooms with students. Overall, National Instrument mentors

◆ See **EEE, Weatherford**, page 14



EEE, Weatherford *continued*

worked in 141 classrooms, teaching 3,162 students engineering, math and science skills, providing more than 10,000 volunteer hours.

North Side Baptist Church – Weatherford

North Side Baptist Church, under the leadership of Senior Pastor Van Houser, is committed to supporting the children of the Weatherford Independent School District. For the past five years, members of the church have mentored students at Seguin Elementary School, providing extra academic and social support to children who might need a little extra help or a positive adults role model. Three years ago, they started the Backpacks for Children Program. Every Friday, they deliver backpacks filled with food to last the weekend for Seguin students. On Mondays, they return to collect the empty backpacks so they can refill them for the following weekend. When the program first started, the church provided meals for 15 students each week. The program grew quickly, and today, it provides backpacks filled with food for more than 100 children each week. When the holidays arrive, or spring break rolls around, North Side Baptist is there to provide additional food. They also provide clothing, shoes, supplies and even provide incentives to encourage children to attend school.

Rackspace Hosting

Rackspace Hosting employees, or Rackers, as they are known, generously donate their time and money within the community in which they work. Rackers strongly support schools and education through the Rackspace Foundation and Rack Gives Back. The Rackspace Foundation enables employees to pledge funds out of the paychecks to invest in the neighborhood surrounding the company's headquarters located within the boundaries of the North East Independent School District in San Antonio. All proceeds from the foundation are invested in enrichment programs in the local community schools. Rack Gives Back is a volunteer and grant program that supports the arts and culture, as well as education and technology. This program supports the NEISD schools and communities with FIRST robotics, food drives, mentor programs, beautification programs, service

projects and special events. Overall, about 59 percent of the Rackspace employees volunteer in their local communities and schools, logging more than 15,000 volunteer hours.



State Farm Insurance

Danny Humphreys and Andrea Walton with State Farm Insurance continuously support the Red Oak Independent School District. Their support goes beyond a simple donation. They have helped the families and students of the Red Oak ISD through hosting fundraisers for the choir, providing scholarships, providing incentives for school programs through the Red Oak ISD Renaissance Program, and working with the fifth grade Advance math students on safe driving, money management and making good choices. They support athletics, academics and the fine arts alike. All of their employees have participated in volunteer activities for the schools.

Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)

The Texas Association of School Board (TASB) is a non-profit association that partners with T.A. Brown Elementary School in the Austin Independent School District. TASB has been a partner with Brown Elementary for more than 24 years. The TASB team is committed to staying focused on children by supporting educational as well as social and emotional needs. In the 2012-2013 school year, TASB volunteers recorded 837 hours working with the Brown students and staff. In addition to the volunteer and mentoring programs, the volunteers support the school with donations of supplies, book drives, implementing a pen pal program with fourth graders, adopting families for the holidays, monetary support and in any way that will support the goals of the campus and the district. TASB is also a two-time recipient of the EEE Award. It first received a Gold Award in 2010.

◆ See EEE, Silver Award, page 15



EEE, Silver Award *continued*

Silver Award



Recognized with a Silver Award is the law firm of Shulman, Lopez & Hoffer, LLP of San Antonio. Employees are encouraged and permitted to volunteer on school committees, education endowments, booster clubs, board committees and

bond political action committees. Twenty percent of the firm's employees volunteer on District Wide Improvement Committees and education foundations. Volunteer activities have been provided to the Randolph Field Independent School District, Judson Independent School District, San Felipe del Rio Consolidated Independent School District and North East Independent School District Education Foundation. The firm provides many hours of pro bono legal services to these school districts and numerous charter schools. The firm also supports various student and child related charities and provides donations for student scholarships in several area school districts.

Date Reminder

Current version of GED test to expire at end of 2013

The Texas Education Agency issued a reminder to those seeking a high school equivalency credential that the current version of the GED test will expire at the end of 2013 and be replaced with the new 2014 Series GED test. The new GED test will officially be in place across the country on Jan. 2, 2014.

Those who have taken the 2002 Series GED test – but not completed the 2002 Series tests – have until the end of 2013 to pass. On Jan. 2, 2014, those who have not completed all of the requirements for the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency under the 2002 series will need to complete their equivalency credential with the new 2014 Series GED test.

All potential test-takers are encouraged to begin the GED registration process immediately to ensure adequate time is available to complete testing. Since March, 48 computer-based GED testing centers have been added to the 130 existing paper-based testing centers across the state. Through the end of this year, test-takers can choose to take their exams on paper, computer or a combination of the two.

Five special paper-based GED testing sessions are scheduled in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex in

October and November. These testing sessions have been added to ensure that adult learners in that region (where limited testing dates and sites had previously been available) have ample opportunity to complete testing for the 2002 Series GED Test before the end of the year.

To find testing dates and locations, as well as schedule a spot for the GED Event Testing in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, please visit:

www.tea.state.tx.us/GEDEventTesting/.

To find a local GED Test Center in all areas of the state, please visit the Online Test Center Locator Service at: www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/locate-a-testing-center.

General information on GED testing in Texas can be found at www.texged.com.

Texas test-takers encouraged to finish and pass test before deadline



In Other Action

Summaries of SBOE actions can be found online

The State Board of Education met Sept. 17 – 20, 2013. Summaries of actions taken by the SBOE can be found on the Texas Education Agency's website at www.tea.state.tx.us/sboe/actions/

New Resource

Foster Care & Student Success**FOSTER CARE & STUDENT SUCCESS:**

Texas Systems Working Together
to Transform Education Outcomes
of Students in Foster Care



Texas Education Agency (TEA) has worked over the last year to develop a resource addressing the education of children and youth in foster care. **[Foster Care & Student Success: Texas Systems Working Together to Transform Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care](#)** is a comprehensive

resource guide for Texas schools and all who support the education of young people impacted by foster care. The resource guide was developed as a result of a federal demonstration grant awarded to TEA by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration of Children & Families, Children's Bureau. In coordination with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission), TEA centralized important foster care and education information, relevant

tips, laws, and resources designed to promote educational success. The guide addresses a variety of foster care related topics and aims to familiarize education professionals with the complexities of the foster care system, while increasing awareness and promoting improved cross-system practices, policies and collaboration to benefit students who attend Texas public schools.

[Foster Care & Student Success](#), housed in the Federal & State Education Policy Division at TEA, maintains resources and information for school district liaisons, educators, and others interested in supporting the educational success of students in foster care. The resources and materials provide guidance related to the unique circumstances surrounding students who live in foster care and attend Texas public schools. For more information, contact Foster Care Education & Policy Coordinator, Kelly Kravitz at fostercareliaison@tea.state.tx.us.

Please join TEA in distributing the guide and sharing this resource with your districts, schools, and networks.

Texas Education Today may be found online at www.tea.state.tx.us/tet/

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