

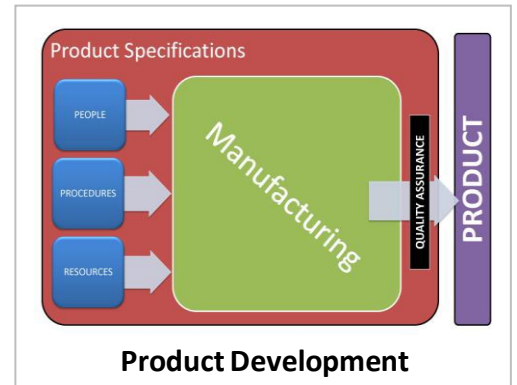


Inputs & Outputs in Public Education

There has been significant discussion lately regarding **outcomes-based funding** for public schools. TAMSA urges that it is critical to remember that schools are not traditional for-profit businesses and should not be run as such. Public schools take all students from every ethnic and socio-economic group as the students enter the education system. Public school funding is mandated by the Texas constitution and that mandate does not tie reasonable funding to high stakes testing outcomes.

High-performing Organizations Focus on Inputs & Quality Assurance

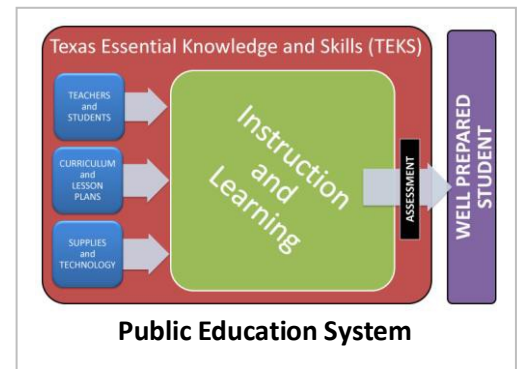
Best practices in many high-performing organizations adhere to the philosophy that you cannot **test** quality into the product; you **design and build** in quality by using people, procedures and resources. In today's competitive, global market, it is far too costly for companies to wait until completing their processes to determine if their product meets specifications. Instead, high-functioning organizations invest in trained employees, defined procedures and proper resources to ensure that a quality product is produced. These companies focus on a "right-first-time" strategy to produce a quality product, not testing upon completion. Quality Assurance (QA) checks are performed on the final product only to ensure that defined specifications have been met. If these checks reveal flaws, then the design and manufacturing process is reevaluated.



Texas Tests Instead of Invests

Texas started a national trend in the 1990s by making standardized testing the centerpiece of its education system. However, Texas cannot **test** knowledge into students. **Because our desired educational outcome is knowledge, Texas must invest in quality inputs: teachers, curriculum and resources.** Once the proper inputs are in place, then assessments can act as a Quality Assurance (QA) check.

So long as the State continues to spend its limited resources on state-mandated standardized tests instead of quality inputs, we know the outcome will be more tests but not more learning. As Dr. Carolyn Heinrich of Vanderbilt University states in her article, [Texas Leads in Tests But Not in Education](#), "We have over-invested in testing (as if it was some kind of "magic bullet") and under-invested in other tools for educational improvement." She further states, "The reason that proponents of the current flawed system do not cite any credible research that supports a causal link between this type of aggressive, test-based accountability system and student improvement is that it does not exist."



Are 22 Tests Quality Assurance?

The 83rd Texas Legislature unanimously passed House Bill 5 (HB5) reforming public education at the secondary level - revising the testing, curriculum, and accountability system. Under HB5, the number of tests high school students must pass to graduate is 5 (prior to HB5 there were 15); only 3 are federally mandated. Students in grades 3-8 are still required to take 17 state-mandated standardized tests (only 14 are required by federal law). Texas is one of only 12 states that still have high stakes, which are not required by federal law. Overall, Texas currently requires a student to take 22 state-mandated exams in grades 3-12; more than most other states in the country. This over-emphasis on standardized tests looks nothing like a QA check.

Texas must think like a high-performing organization and focus on providing high quality, proven "inputs" to our education system such as: teacher professional development, strong curriculum, pre-kindergarten programs, and effective classroom tools and technology. State-mandated standardized tests do NOT increase the knowledge of Texas students. No company could remain competitive with the ineffective method that Texas is using as it attempts to test, not build, quality into our schools.