



TEXANS ADVOCATING FOR MEANINGFUL STUDENT ASSESSMENT

February 9, 2017

Dear Texas Legislator,

TAMSA is a statewide, grassroots organization comprised of parents and other community members concerned with the overemphasis on high-stakes STAAR tests and the misallocation of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to the tests that should be going to the classroom. Our mission is to improve public education in Texas through the use of meaningful and effective student assessments that allow for more productive classroom instruction and more efficient use of public funds.

Texas is at a critical juncture in public education. With recent changes to federal law, Texas can finally move down a path where appropriate standardized tests are only one data point for assessing educational progress and identifying schools and students in need of additional support. Texas needs to address over-testing and allow all students to meet their full potential.

TAMSA recommends that Texas adopt a vastly less expensive assessment regime that provides more diagnostic data to help students succeed. Several legislators have been busy filing legislation that meets TAMSA's recommendations. Texas should test no more than is required by federal law (HB 515 VanDeaver-R, HB 546 Deshotel-D, and SB 215 Menendez-D), and should remove the high stakes on students consistent with positions of 36 other states (HB 1321 Landgraf-R). Texas should also replace state specific tests with more widely accepted national tests such as SAT or ACT in high school, and ITBS, Stanford, Aspire in grades 3-8 (HB 1333 Isaac-R). Texas needs to continue the Individual Graduation Committees (SB 463 Seliger-R, HB 966 Huberty-R, SB 531 Lucio-D, and HB 77 Metcalf-R). Education needs to create opportunities for students to move into successful post-secondary options.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you and your staff to implement a more reasoned approach to student assessment in Texas. In this information packet you will find:

- TAMSA Recommendations for the 85th Legislative Session
- Fifty State Exit Exam Comparison
- Individual Graduation Committee Graduate Fact Sheet
- Summaries of Students Who Graduated by Individual Graduation Committee
- An article written by a poet whose poem appeared on the STAAR test.

We look forward to a productive legislative session to improve education for all Texas students.

Respectfully,

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