



# TEXANS ADVOCATING FOR MEANINGFUL STUDENT ASSESSMENT

## Enough is Enough - Recent Problems with STAAR Administration

Texas has been engaged in the testing mindset for decades, spent hundreds of millions of dollars, and has not moved the bar on college graduation, college and career readiness, and certainly not on developing a love of learning.

The problem is not only with this group of tests, but with the paradigm embraced by Texas that standardized tests should be the sole or main criteria for evaluating everything from student performance, to teacher effectiveness, to school accountability. The system is currently riddled with faults:

- In April 2016, a group of 50 well-respected superintendents in the Houston region presented dozens of complaints with the current testing regime and its implementation – inexcusable errors. Enough.
- Last spring, Lewisville ISD and Arlington ISD had to pay tens of thousands of dollars to prove serious errors in standardized test grading. Enough.
- In 2016, it was reported that ETS uses uncertified graders - people from around the country who have shown no proficiency for writing - to grade students' writing tests, potentially harming students who can be denied graduation based on test scores. Enough.
- Since the inception of STAAR four years ago, there have been numerous instances of computer glitches, tests misaligned with curriculum and reading levels, and grading problems. The issues encompass both the prior testing vendor, Pearson Education, and the state's current vendor, Educational Testing Service. Enough.
- TAMSA receives stories from parents and teachers all over the state about curriculum being curtailed by an environment - created by the state - that prioritizes a testing culture over one that allows students to learn material in a deep and inspiring manner. Enough.
- Our precious tax dollars are wasted on standardized testing with very poor return for our money. The current testing contract is costing the state over \$300 million; the prior 4 years the testing contract was almost \$500 million. Texas has wasted over \$1.5 billion on testing. Enough.

TAMSA believes the state mindset about testing must change. The current testing regime is not working, is harming students, is costly, and lacks common sense. Texas needs to move from a culture of testing to a culture of learning. Only then can the state make real progress and better prepare students for a brighter future.