

The Metropolitan Organization (TMO)

4141 Southwest Freeway, Suite 650, Houston, Texas 77027

713-807-1429

www.TMOHouston.net

The Metropolitan Organization (TMO) is an organization of institutions dedicated to developing power and leadership among citizens to transform democracy. TMO was formed to give a voice to people who are usually not included in the major decisions affecting their lives. The approach of TMO, however, is not to advocate on behalf of citizens, but to train people to advocate on their own behalf. TMO is a member of the Network of Texas Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) Organizations, which includes broad-based organizations in 12 Texas cities that work together on statewide issues.

For over 25 years, TMO has established a track record of successfully organizing around issues that affect families and communities in Houston. (*See recent accomplishments on reverse*)

TMO is:

- **Broad-based**, consisting of dues paying congregations and other institutions that is striking for its diversity. TMO is dedicated to negotiating across the racial, economic and religious lines that ordinarily divide our City.
- **Values-based**, involving men and women of diverse communities, who are committed to acting on the call to social justice that is central to varied faith and democratic traditions.
- **Non-partisan**, never endorsing candidates or political parties, but embracing fully the art of politics — the discussion, debate and active participation necessary for persons to take collective action to reclaim their birthright as citizens in a democratic country.
- **Multi-issue**, working on a diverse agenda of issues that comes from hundreds of individual and small group conversations in and around member institutions.
- **Dues-based**, giving member institutions ownership over the organization and the independence to act freely on their own interests.

How We Organize:

- Developing core organizing teams in member institutions in geographic clusters throughout Houston, who are trained to lead a listening campaign across their institution through individual meetings and house meetings. These meetings allow institutional members to develop relationships, learn about the pressures facing families, identify new leaders, and surface issues for potential action;
- Neighborhood Walks help people to understand their neighborhood and surroundings, build relationships, and sign up people to support an agenda of issues that affect their daily lives;
- Research Actions, to develop, among a broad group of leaders, the knowledge and expertise around an issue to make action effective and meaningful;
- Action, bringing public pressure to bear on the person or persons with the authority to make a decision for a specific change and creating a stage for leaders to practice the skills of public engagement;
- Evaluation, assessing what leaders have learned from their experience to inform future organizing.

For more information about TMO, please call 713-807-1429.

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4141 Southwest Freeway, #650

Houston, Texas, 77027

List of Speaker scheduled to Testify-

Father Kevin Collins, O.M.I.

Tim Smith

Thelma De La Cruz

Betsey Runge

Vernita Grimes

Jesus Santoya

Rev. Robert ~~Grimes~~ McGee

Honorable Committee Members, my name is Father Kevin Collins. I am the pastor of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Houston, and I am a leader with The Metropolitan Organization (TMO). TMO is a member of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation with sister organizations in 12 other Texas cities. TMO is an organization of thirty Houston-area institutions dedicated to developing power and leadership among ordinary citizens. Our organizations believe in public school accountability, and we believe all children are capable of learning if provided with a "well-balanced and appropriate" education.

During the spring of this year, TMO conducted four "listening sessions" in cooperation with Houston A+ Challenge and the three largest school districts in the area, and many house-meetings on education in our congregations. Our intent was to listen to the stories of the students, parents, teachers and administrators to understand how accountability in Texas has affected them. We found:

- Children are feeling the high-stakes pressure as early as third grade.
- Many 9th graders see no diploma in their future, and they drop out. Statistics show that high school drop-outs make up 8 of 10 prisoners in the Texas prison system, a future that is almost certain for many of our children.
- The time and resources that are spent on testing-taking have shifted priorities from children who are "encouraged and challenged to reach their full educational potential" and "prepared to be thoughtful and active citizens", to stressed out widgets that are all treated the same, with an expectation that everyone can succeed at some arbitrary level. While this may not have been the original intent, this is the reality.
- This testing calendar from a local district shows by the colored areas that ~~59~~ ^{more than 50} of 180 days of instruction time are spent on some form of test-taking. Some schools have given up band, clubs, art, music and the like to make enough space for tutoring, drills, and practice tests.
- So much testing and focus on test-taking is not reflected in the Texas Education Code. The current high-stakes nature of test-taking in Texas may be an unintended consequence, but its consequences are real. Morally, we are responsible for our actions, intended or unintended.

In considering changes to the Texas accountability system you should consider the following:

- State-mandated test-taking in any form should be diagnostic not punitive.
- A portfolio of measures should be used to assess children's learning and determine teacher's instruction and schools' performance. No one, single measure should seal a child's fate or a teacher's career.

Spring Branch Independent School District

Elementary Testing Calendar 2007-2008

July							August							September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
29	30	31											30							
4 Holiday – Student / Staff							14 - 16 New Teacher Orientation 17 & 24 Teacher Workdays 20 - 23 Teacher Inservice Days 27 Begin Grading Cycle							3 Holiday – Student / Staff						
October							November							December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	25	26	27	28	29	30	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
28	29	30	31										30	31						
25 - 26 Elementary Early Dismissal TAKS M field test Oct 8-19 Oct 22-Nov 2 2/3 benchmark Gr. PK-5 Math Gr. 3-5 Reading Gr. 5 Science							21 - 23 Holiday – Student / Staff [21 – Bad Weather Day if needed] Nov. 12 - 14 Release Test Gr. 4 Writing							19 - 21 Secondary Early Dismissal 21 Elementary Early Dismissal 21 End Grading Cycle 24 - 31 Holiday – Student / Staff						
January							February							March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
27	28	29	30	31	24	25	26	27	28	29	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			
1 - 2 Holiday – Student / Staff 3 Teacher Workday – Student Holiday 4 Teacher Inservice – Student Holiday 7 Begin Grading Cycle 21 Teacher Inservice / Staff Development (Flex) – Student Holiday							Jan. 14 - 25 DRA Testing (Gr. 1 - Gr. 5) Jan. 14 - Feb. 1 DRA Testing (PK & Kinder) Feb 20 - Feb 29 Release Test Gr. PK-5 Math Gr. 4 Reading Gr. 5 Science							17 - 21 Holiday – Student / Staff Mar 24 - April 11 TELPAS Mar 24 - 29 Spanish Field Testing						
Jan 8 - 11 Release Test Gr. 3 and 5 Reading Jan 28 - Feb 8 Field Testing							March 4 - TAKS testing TAKS M field testing Gr. 3 and 5 Reading Gr. 4 Writing													
April							May							June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Apr 7-8 Gr. 5 Math Apr 28-May 2 TAKS Testing 3rd Math 4 Reading 3-5 Release Test 5 Science Apr 14-May 2 PK-2 Testing Apr 28-May 9 Gr. 3 - Gr. 5 Testing							24 Graduation Day (23 – Seniors End Grading Cycle) 26 Holiday – Student / Staff [Bad Weather Day if needed] 27 - 29 Secondary Early Dismissal 29 Elementary Early Dismissal 30 End Grading Cycle; Teacher Workday – Student Holiday [Bad Weather Day if needed]							July 1 & 2 SBI 3rd Administration						
May 5 - 16 Benchmarks Gr. PK - 2 Math Gr. 2 Reading Gr. 3 Writing Gr. 2-4 Science Gr. 5 Social Studies							May 13 - Gr. 5 Math 2nd admin. Retest													



Grading Periods

First Semester – 81 student days; 87 teacher days
Second Semester – 97 student days; 101 teacher days

6 Weeks	9 Weeks
Aug. 27 - Oct. 5: 29 days	Aug. 27 - Oct. 23: 41 days
Oct. 8 - Nov. 9: 25 days	Oct. 24 - Dec. 21: 40 days
Nov. 12 - Dec. 21: 27 days	Jan. 7 - Mar. 14: 49 days
Jan. 7 - Feb. 22: 34 days	Mar. 24 - May 30: 48 days
Feb. 25 - Apr. 11: 30 days	
Apr. 14 - May 30: 33 days	

Symbol Key

[Begin Grading Cycle	[X]	New Teacher Orientation
]	End Grading Cycle	[X]	Teacher Workday – Student Holiday
○	Early Dismissal	[]	Teacher Inservice – Staff Development – Student Holiday
[]	Bad Weather Day	[]	Holiday – Student / Staff