

## Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee about these important issues. The impact of the accountability system at the campus level has been vast. The impact is clearly felt from school board members, to every level of administration, and in the daily lessons prepared by campus teachers. In my opinion, the most profound impact of the accountability system is that from the classroom to the board room, educators are making use of student performance data generated by TAKS tests to help them refine programs, channel funding, and identify roots of success. Campus administrators must address accountability issues when creating the master schedule, staffing, course assignments, facilities use, funding, and in our personal evaluations.

The positive impact of TAKS include:

1. The focus public attention on schools with low-achieving students.
2. Motivating administrators to ensure that standards (TEKS) on which the tests are based are part of the curriculum and are being successfully taught. This is achieved primarily through the public display of high-stakes test scores.
3. A catalyst for increased attention to students with special needs.
4. Improved professional development by focusing on helping educators hone his or her teaching skills and content area expertise.
5. Educators know more about testing than ever before.
6. An intensity of effort directed toward data collection and quality control that is unparalleled.
7. Promoting a greater homogeneity of education. This is a result of schools' aligning their curricula and instructional focus more closely to outcomes embodied in TAKS, the experiences of and aspirations for children in urban, suburban, and rural districts within Texas are more comparable than they have been in the recent past.
8. Exposing educators to high-quality writing prompts, document-based questions, constructed-response formats, and even challenging multiple-choice items.

The unintended consequences of TAKS include:

1. The resulting test preparation results in a loss of instructional time.
2. Educators "teach to the test," which results in a narrowing of the curriculum, limiting the scope of tested subjects and shortchanging or eliminating subjects not included in the assessments.
3. A focus on standards and accountability that ignores the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms will not provide the direction that teachers need in their quest to improve instruction.
4. Doing poorly on TAKS tests often will not lead to increased student effort to learn.
5. Testing and the accompanying consequences of failure lead to overstressed students.
6. Decisions based on high-stakes tests have a disproportionate impact on poor and minority children.
7. Pressures inherent in preparing students for high-stakes tests are driving out good teachers.
8. TAKS unfairly and inaccurately assesses and penalizes learners for whom English is not their first language.

9. Educators strongly believe that high-stakes decision such as grade retention or graduation should not be based on the results of a single test.
10. Resulting fatigue. Spreading exams over several weeks could avoid or reduce the impact of test fatigue.

Most educators tentatively support the impending move to End of Course (EOC) exams. However, several questions must be answered.

1. Exit criteria? - Average all four-subject areas together to meet Exit criteria or meet four separate standards?
2. How will we handle students new to Texas public schools (i.e. Out-of-state transfers, home school, private schools, etc.)? – Exemptions?
3. How will we handle high school courses taught on Middle/Junior High campuses? Will these students take both an EOC and a grade level TAKS?
4. Who will qualify for re-test and when will they be given?
5. How will EOCs impact graduation plans, minimum, recommended, and DAP? Care must be taken to ensure that EOCs will not motivate students to take lesser graduation plans to avoid taking difficult EOCs.
6. Are current technology capabilities of schools sufficient to test online?

Thank you for taking the time to listen to practitioners in the field. Please call on me if I may be of further assistance.