

### Texas' NAEP Results are a Mixed Bag

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) recently released its analysis of student achievement in mathematics for each state. The results, which are released every two years, look at test results for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in core subjects. The following are some highlights of the report:

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math:

- Scores for all students fell from 242 in 2007 to 240 in 2009. This caused the state's 4<sup>th</sup> graders to fall from 4<sup>th</sup> place among states to 5<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- White students gained a point from 253 to 254, but fell from 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- Black students gained a point from 230 to 231 and maintained a 3<sup>rd</sup> place ranking nationally.
- Hispanic students dropped from 236 to 233 and fell from 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- Economically-disadvantaged students fell from 235 to 233 and dropped from 5<sup>th</sup> place to 11<sup>th</sup> place.

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math:

- Overall results went from 286 to 287, but our ranking dropped from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>.
- White students improved from 300 to 301, but dropped from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- Black students improved from 271 to 272 and jumped from 4<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> nationally.
- Hispanic students remained at 277, but dropped from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- Economically-disadvantaged students improved from 275 to 276, but fell from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>.

All student groups bettered the national average on test scores and most have consistently remained in the top five nationally.

However, as more states improve their curricula and assessments, Texas must continue to raise the bar to keep pace. According to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, "None of us should be satisfied. We need reforms that will accelerate student achievement. Our students need to graduate high school ready to succeed in college and the workplace."

With the passage of HB 3 earlier this year, Texas took an important step towards making college and career-readiness the goal of the public education system. TIER is working closely with the Texas Education Agency to ensure that the reforms in HB 3 are properly implemented. Once in place, Texas' upgraded academic standards should result in higher test scores, better graduation rates, and a brighter future for Texas students.

### TEA Adopts Projection Model

Earlier this year, the Texas Education Agency instituted the Texas Performance Measure (TPM) for use in assigning the "Exemplary", "Recognized", "Academically Acceptable", and "Academically Unacceptable" ratings. In short, the TPM predicts how students would perform at the next high-stakes test level—in grades 5 and 8. If a student failed the TAKS, but his or her score indicated that they would pass the TAKS in 5<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the student was counted as having passed the test for accountability purposes.

Although TIER and the TCCW have supported the use of a growth measure, these results—in conjunction for credit given for annual improvement and exceptions—caused a significant increase in districts and schools that received an "Exemplary" or "Recognized" rating. When growth was not considered in 2008, the overall ratings were as follows:

	<u>Districts</u>	<u>Campuses</u>
Unacceptable	2%	2%
Acceptable	61%	38%
Recognized	27%	34%
Exemplary	4%	12%

The growth measure, in conjunction with slightly improved test scores, yielded the following breakdown for 2009:

	<u>Districts</u>	<u>Campuses</u>
Unacceptable	6%	3%
Acceptable	41%	23%
Recognized	37%	35%
Exemplary	10%	26%

Please note that these scores would have been significantly higher if the TEA did not choose to enforce the completion rate requirements.

Critics believe that the 2009 calculations gave district and campus ratings a misleading increase. While test scores did increase modestly, they do not believe those increases justify 47% of districts and 61% of campuses receiving one of the two distinctions for excellence.

In response to these concerns, Commissioner Robert Scott and his staff have asked TIER, our partner organization the Texas Coalition for a Competitive Workforce (TCCW), and other interested groups to submit recommendations for improving the system.

Earlier this month, TIER and the TCCW submitted the following ideas:

- In addition to current goals, require 30% of students to achieve “Commended Performance” (the equivalent of a score of 2300 on the current TAKS test which equates to college and career-readiness upon graduation) in order to receive an “Exemplary” designation. This will help to focus districts and schools on meeting college and career-readiness standards.
- Require 20% of students to achieve Commended Performance to qualify for a “Recognized” distinction.
- In both cases above, this requirement would apply to the student population at large and to economically-disadvantaged students to ensure that schools continue to focus on all student subgroups.
- Eliminate the use of exceptions in conjunction with the TPM.
- Since many districts and schools improved based solely on the use of the TPM, these schools need to be identified as such to differentiate them from districts and schools that earned their distinctions through actual student scores.
- The TPM and the corresponding results need to be reviewed and improved on an annual basis to ensure the highest accuracy and predictive validity of the projections.

## **TCCW Adopts 2010 Goals**

After a successful legislative session, follow up on the rule-making and legislative intent now becomes a very high priority for us. During the next year, TCCW will focus on the following activities:

### Texas Education Agency (high priority):

1. Identify the provisions in HB 3 and other legislation that give the TEA discretionary or rulemaking authority in implementing the measures;

2. Establish TCCW policy recommendations on how we would like each provision to be implemented;
3. Work with the TEA and the State Board of Education, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Comptroller to obtain a implementation schedule for HB 3 and ensure that the reforms in HB 3 are implemented in accordance with our recommendations;
4. Help the TEA upgrade the state’s data system to better track student progress, teacher effectiveness, and program effectiveness;
5. Work with the TEA to ensure appropriate standards for and use of the Texas Projection Model for accountability;
6. Work with the TEA and other interested groups to ensure that more rigorous and relevant CTE courses are approved for students; and
7. Work with the TEA and other groups to develop a better model for determining the dropout rate.

### Other Issues:

1. Develop policy that will strengthen charter schools as competitive alternatives by closing ineffective charters, providing equitable funding, increasing or eliminating the charter cap, and adopting student growth assessment to better identify the value of good charter schools;
2. Work with the State Board on Educator Certification, the TEA, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on the implementation of SB 174 to improve educator effectiveness by removing barriers to entry and advocating improved educator preparation, mentoring, and continuing education programs;
3. Identify implementation assistance and support those educators willing to embrace reforms;
4. Work with higher education to establish meaningful core curriculum requirements for freshmen); and
5. Monitor interim hearings of the legislature in preparation for the 2011 session.

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TIER welcomes your questions and comments. Please visit the “contact us” section of our website, [www.texaseducationreform.org](http://www.texaseducationreform.org) and let us know what you think.