



TEXANS ADVOCATING FOR MEANINGFUL STUDENT ASSESSMENT

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Enough is Enough!

Texans Advocating for Meaningful Student Assessment (TAMSA) finds that the current standardized testing system has so many faults that it cannot be remedied at this time. TAMSA calls for a statewide moratorium on all standardized student testing.

“Enough is enough!” said Dr. Theresa Trevino, TAMSA board president, “the events of recent weeks, compounded by years of increasingly high stakes imposed on standardized tests, demonstrate that we have reached a tipping point.”

Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath stated earlier this week that the most recent flurry of problems with STAAR tests are “unacceptable.” Yet, student performances on these tests will continue to be used to determine promotion to the next grade, high school graduation, and school ratings. TAMSA submits the State’s lack of accountability within the system they created is “unacceptable.”

TAMSA, given the moniker “Mothers Against Drunk Testing”, believes that the State is failing to put the needs of our children’s education ahead of the rhetoric of the testing industry and its lobbyists.

“For five years, TAMSA has worked collaboratively to bring constructive changes to the state standardized testing regime,” Trevino explained. “While we appreciate our state legislators who have acted to mitigate the array of issues with high stakes standardized tests, it is time to put on the brakes and completely re-evaluate the State’s priorities and strategies with assessments. It’s time to stop harming our children and hold the State accountable.”

TAMSA calls for a moratorium on the use of all state standardized testing because it is in the best interest of the citizens of Texas.

“TAMSA has always supported meaningful student assessment, but the Texas standardized testing system has gone too far. In this week of relentless testing, and the week before Mother’s Day, we are reminded of the saying, ‘when Mom ain’t happy, nobody’s happy.’ Well, the moms are not happy,” Trevino said.



Why have we reached this point?

- Two weeks ago, Lewisville ISD and Arlington ISD had to pay tens of thousands of dollars to prove serious errors in standardized test grading. Enough.
- Earlier this week 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.
- Last week 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.
- Since the inception of STAAR four years ago, there have been numerous instances of computer glitches, tests misaligned with curriculum and reading levels, incorrect answers on tests and subjective grading problems. The issues encompass both the prior testing vendor, Pearson Education, and the state's current vendor, Educational Testing Service. Enough.
- 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. 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.

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.

Texas continues to require more tests than required under federal law. The new Every Student Succeeds Act gives more power to the states to revamp the way they assess their students.

“The state mindset about testing must change, only then can we make real progress,” said Trevino. “That real change can only happen if we stop what we are doing and look for a better solution. The current testing regime is not working, is harming students, is costly, and lacks a modicum of common sense. The time to stop is now.”

