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Texas Education Today

News from the Texas Education Agency

In Appreciation

At its July meeting, the State Board of Education passed a resolution honoring former Commissioner of Education Robert Scott and presented him with student-created artwork as a token of their appreciation. Pictured from left to right: Chief Deputy Commissioner Todd Webster; State Board of Education Chair Barbara Cargill; and former Commissioner of Education Robert Scott.

Side-by-Side

New graduation requirements take effect this fall

Changes to graduation requirements made by the State Board of Education take effect this fall, beginning with students who enter grade 9 in the 2012-2013 school year. [complete story]

End-of-course exams

Statewide STAAR™ results released

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) results released by TEA show that passing rates on five rigorous, key end-of-course tests ranged from 87 percent on the biology test to 55 percent on the English I writing test. [complete story]

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Draft of the revised Fine Arts TEKS is now available

Informal feedback is now being sought on suggested revisions to the Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. [complete story]

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Texas Education Agency

Robert Scott steps down as commissioner of education

Robert Scott stepped down as commissioner of education July 2 after five years in the state's highest public education job.

He did not announce his future plans.

As of press time, Gov. Rick Perry has not named Scott's successor. Todd Webster, the Texas Education Agency's chief deputy commissioner, will oversee the agency until a new commissioner is named. Webster said he is not a candidate for the job of commissioner.

State Board of Education Chair Barbara Cargill (far left) along with board members Mavis Knight (center) and Marsha Farney (far right) present Robert Scott with a resolution honoring his service as commissioner of education.

The commissioner serves a four-year term that runs concurrently with the governor's term. There are about two and half years remaining on this current term. Along with being appointed by the governor, the commissioner must be confirmed by the Texas Senate.

Scott, 43, began his career at the Texas Education Agency in 1994 as a legislative liaison. "I've been here since Jon was one and Katie was three months old," he said, referring to his children. "It's time." Both children have now graduated from Texas public schools.

Scott, a lawyer, has dedicated his career to education policy matters, whether serving as a congressional aide, education aide to Gov. Rick Perry or through a variety of jobs at TEA, including serving as interim commissioner and deputy commissioner.

As a parent of public school children, Scott could see firsthand how policies he helped craft impacted the classroom. His children's involvement in the fine arts, for example, convinced him of the importance of this area of study, causing him to be a steadfast advocate for the arts and the important role they play in the schools.

Other highlights of Scott's career include:

- increased emphasis on early childhood and pre-kindergarten education through the development of pre-K curriculum standards and other school readiness initiatives;
- the establishment of the Texas High School Project, a public-private partnership that worked to improve college readiness and high school graduation rates;
- creation of the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (T-STEM) initiative, an idea which has now been adopted by many states;
- working with the State Board of Education to improve the state's curriculum standards, which form the backbone of instruction in the public schools; and
- creation of Project Share, a free global online learning community where educators collaborate, share resources and showcase accomplishments. Less than two years old, Project Share already has almost one million subscribers, including about 600,000 students.

"It's been a privilege to serve as commissioner. I want to thank Gov. Perry for entrusting me with this job. I also want to thank the State Board of Education for working with me to provide the best public schools possible for our students," Scott said.

Scott served as interim commissioner of TEA from Aug. 1, 2003 to Jan. 12, 2004 and again from July 2, 2007 to Oct. 15, 2007, before being appointed as commissioner on Oct. 16, 2007.

Scott is the only person to twice serve as interim commissioner and is now the fourth-longest serving commissioner in the agency's history. No one has had a longer tenure in the past 20 years.

Although there were many new initiatives begun during his tenure, it also fell to Scott to twice oversee drastic downsizings of TEA during a budget crisis. This prompted reorganizations of the agency and the way it operates.

"As someone who has risen through the ranks, I've seen firsthand the dedicated service provided by TEA employees. I want to thank them for their unwavering devotion to Texas children," he said.

"I want to express my sincere thanks to the educators who work tirelessly in our schools. I can't thank them enough."

Three-peat for Texas!

Texas student wins 24th annual National Geographic Bee

For the third time in the past four years, a Texas student has won the National Geographic Bee. Rahul Nagvekar, an eighth-grade student at Quail Middle School in the Fort Bend Independent School District, captured the top honor at the 24th annual National Geographic Bee, held in Washington, D.C. in May.

The State Board of Education on July 20 passed a resolution recognizing Nagvekar and his accomplishments.

Similar to a spelling bee, thousands of students in grades four through eight compete in "Jeopardy!"-style quizzes about geography.

During the final match after four-rounds of tie-breaker questions, Nagvekar won by correctly answering this question: "Name the Bavarian city located on the Danube River that was the legislative seat of the Holy Roman Empire from 1663 to 1806."

The answer: Regensburg.

That correct response earned Nagvekar a $25,000 college scholarship, a lifetime membership in the National Geographic Society and a trip for two to the Galápagos Islands on an expedition aboard the National Geographic Endeavor.

"Participating in the geographic bee was a wonderful experience," Negvekar said during the July state board meeting. He began competing in geographic bees in the fourth grade.

Board member Pat Hardy presents a resolution to eighth-grade student Rahul Nagvekar for bringing home the top honors in the 24th annual National Geographic Bee.

In 2011, Tine Valencic of Grapevine-Colleyville ISD won the bee as did Eric Yang from Lewisville ISD in 2009.

Side-by-Side

New graduation requirements take effect this fall

Changes to graduation requirements made by the State Board of Education take effect this fall, beginning with students who enter grade 9 in the 2012-2013 school year. The new rules update the graduation requirements to align with recently passed legislation, allow additional courses to satisfy certain graduation requirements, and provide additional clarification regarding certain requirements. Some notable changes include:

- On the Recommended High School Program (RHSP), there are no longer course sequence requirements for math, except when a student takes Math Models with Applications or a CTE course to satisfy the fourth math requirement.
- On the RHSP and Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP), CTE courses that may satisfy the fourth math requirement may be taken after the successful completion of Algebra I and Geometry and either after the successful completion of or concurrently with Algebra II.
- On the DAP, there are no longer course sequence requirements for science, except when a student takes a CTE course to satisfy the fourth science requirement.
- A student may now take Digital Art and Animation or 3-D Modeling and Animation to satisfy the fine arts graduation requirement.
- A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to disability or illness may substitute an academic elective credit (English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies) for the physical education credit requirement.

The new graduation requirements, detailed in a side-by-side format, can be found on following three pages.

A full-size printable version of the side-by-side graduation requirements can be found at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147507808&libID=2147507799.

2012 –2013 Graduation Credit Requirements

Minimum High School Program 22 Total Credits	Recommended High School Program 26 Total Credits	Distinguished Achievement Program* 26 Total Credits
♦**English Language Arts — Four credits** to include: • **English I, II, III** • The fourth credit may be selected from the following: • English IV • Literary Genres • Practical Writing Skills • Journalism • Research/Technical Writing • Creative Writing • Business English (CTE) • Approved AP English courses • **English I and II for Speakers of Other Languages** may be substituted for English I and II for students with limited English proficiency who are at the beginning or intermediate levels of English language proficiency.	♦**English Language Arts — Four credits** to include: • **English I, II, III and IV** • **English I and II for Speakers of Other Languages** may be substituted for English I and II for students with limited English proficiency who are at the beginning or intermediate levels of English language proficiency.	♦**English Language Arts — Four credits** to include: • **English I, II, III and IV** • **English I and II for Speakers of Other Languages** may be substituted for English I and II for students with limited English proficiency who are at the beginning or intermediate levels of English language proficiency.
♦**Mathematics — Three credits** to include: • **Algebra I** • **Geometry** • The third credit may be Algebra II • The third credit may be selected from one full credit or a combination of two half credits from the following: • Precalculus • Mathematical Models with Applications • Independent Study in Mathematics • Advanced Quantitative Reasoning • AP Statistics • AP Calculus AB • AP Calculus BC • AP Computer Science • IB Mathematical Studies Standard Level • IB Mathematics Standard Level • IB Mathematics Higher Level • IB Further Mathematics Standard Level • Mathematical Applications in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (CTE) • Engineering Mathematics (CTE) • Statistics and Risk Management (CTE)	♦**Mathematics — Four credits** to include: • **Algebra I** • **Geometry** • **Algebra II** • The additional credit may be Mathematical Models with Applications and must be completed prior to Algebra II. • The fourth credit may be selected from the following: • Precalculus • AP Statistics • AP Computer Science • AP Calculus AB • AP Calculus BC • Advanced Quantitative Reasoning • Independent Study in Mathematics • IB Mathematical Studies Standard Level • IB Mathematics Standard Level • IB Mathematics Higher Level • IB Further Mathematics Standard Level • The fourth credit may be selected from the following courses and may be taken after the completion of Algebra I and Geometry and either after the completion of or concurrently with Algebra II: • Engineering Mathematics (CTE) • Statistics and Risk Management (CTE) • Mathematical Applications in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (CTE)	♦**Mathematics — Four credits** to include: • **Algebra I** • **Geometry** • **Algebra II** • The fourth credit may be selected from any of the following after successful completion of Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry: • Precalculus • Advanced Quantitative Reasoning • AP Statistics • AP Calculus AB • AP Calculus BC • AP Computer Science • Independent Study in Mathematics • IB Mathematical Studies Standard Level • IB Mathematics Standard Level • IB Mathematics Higher Level • IB Further Mathematics Standard Level • The fourth credit may be selected from the following courses and may be taken after the completion of Algebra I and Geometry and either after the completion of or concurrently with Algebra II: • Engineering Mathematics (CTE) • Statistics and Risk Management (CTE)

♦College Board Advanced Placement, college-level concurrent/dual enrollment, and International Baccalaureate courses may be substituted for requirements in appropriate areas.

* Distinguished Achievement Program requirements also include student achievement of four advanced measures. Details at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074g.html#74.74

Be sure to check with your local district, which may have additional graduation requirements. For state requirements, www.tea.state.tx.us/graduation.aspx.

For 11x17 single page flyer of **2012-2013 Graduation Requirements**, visit:
www.tea.state.tx.us/brochures/.

2012 –2013 Graduation Credit Requirements

Minimum High School Program 22 Total Credits	Recommended High School Program 26 Total Credits	Distinguished Achievement Program* 26 Total Credits
♦Science — **Two credits** to include: • **Biology** • **Integrated Physics & Chemistry** May substitute a chemistry credit (Chemistry, AP Chemistry or IB Chemistry) or a physics credit (Physics, Principles of Technology, AP Physics or IB Physics) for IPC. Students must take both a chemistry course and a physics course to substitute for IPC. One course will satisfy the science credit and the other course must be used as academic elective credit.	♦Science — **Four credits** to include: • **Biology, AP Biology, or IB Biology** • **Chemistry, AP Chemistry, or IB Chemistry** • **Physics, Principles of Technology, AP or IB Physics** • The additional credit may be IPC and must be successfully completed prior to chemistry and physics. • The fourth credit may be selected from the following: • Aquatic Science • Earth and Space Science • Astronomy • Environmental Systems • AP Biology • AP Physics B • AP Chemistry • AP Physics C • AP Environmental Science • IB Biology • IB Chemistry • IB Physics • IB EnvironmentalSystems • The fourth credit may be selected from the following courses and may be taken after the completion of biology and chemistry and either after the completion of or concurrently with physics: • Scientific Research and Design (CTE) • Anatomy and Physiology (CTE) • Engineering Design and Problem Solving (CTE) • Medical Microbiology (CTE) • Pathophysiology (CTE) • Advanced Animal Science (CTE) • Advanced Biotechnology (CTE) • Advanced Plant and Soil Science (CTE) • Food Science (CTE) • Forensic Science (CTE)	♦Science — **Four credits** to include: • **Biology, AP Biology, or IB Biology** • **Chemistry, AP Chemistry, or IB Chemistry** • **Physics, AP or IB Physics** • The fourth credit may be selected from the following: • Aquatic Science • Earth and Space Science • Astronomy • Environmental Systems • AP Biology • AP Physics B • AP Chemistry • AP Physics C • AP Environmental Science • IB Biology • IB Chemistry • IB Physics • IB Environmental Systems • The fourth credit may be selected from the following courses and may be taken after the completion of biology and chemistry and either after the completion of or concurrently with physics: • Scientific Research and Design (CTE) • Anatomy and Physiology (CTE) • Engineering Design and Problem Solving (CTE) • Medical Microbiology (CTE) • Pathophysiology (CTE) • Advanced Animal Science (CTE) • Advanced Biotechnology (CTE) • Advanced Plant and Soil Science (CTE) • Food Science (CTE) • Forensic Science (CTE)
♦Social Studies — **Three credits** to include: • **U.S. History Studies Since 1877** (one credit) • **U.S. Government** (one-half credit) • **Economics with Emphasis on the Free Enterprise System and Its Benefits** (one-half credit) • The final credit may be selected from the following: • World History Studies (one credit) • World Geography Studies (one credit)	♦Social Studies — **Four credits** to include: • **World History Studies** (one credit) • **World Geography Studies** (one credit) • **U.S. History Studies Since 1877** (one credit) • **U.S. Government** (one-half credit) • **Economics with Emphasis on the Free Enterprise System and Its Benefits** (one-half credit)	♦Social Studies — **Four credits** to include: • **World History Studies** (one credit) • **World Geography Studies** (one credit) • **U.S. History Studies Since 1877** (one credit) • **U.S. Government** (one-half credit) • **Economics with Emphasis on the Free Enterprise System and Its Benefits** (one-half credit)

♦College Board Advanced Placement, college-level concurrent/dual enrollment, and International Baccalaureate courses may be substituted for requirements in appropriate areas.

* Distinguished Achievement Program requirements also include student achievement of four advanced measures. Details at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074g.html#74.74

Be sure to check with your local district, which may have additional graduation requirements. For state requirements, www.tea.state.tx.us/graduation.aspx.

2012 –2013 Graduation Credit Requirements

Minimum High School Program 22 Total Credits	Recommended High School Program 26 Total Credits	Distinguished Achievement Program* 26 Total Credits
Academic Elective — One credit from any of the following: • **World History Studies** • **World Geography Studies** • Any science course approved by SBOE (if substituting Chemistry or Physics for IPC, must use other as academic elective credit here.)	None	None
None	♦**Languages Other Than English** — Two credits: The credits must consist of any two levels in the same language.	♦**Languages Other Than English** — Three credits: The credits must consist of any three levels in the same language.
Physical Education — One credit: applies to all 3 programs • The required credit may be from any combination of the following one-half to one credit courses: • Foundations of Personal Fitness • Adventure/Outdoor Education • Aerobic Activities • Team or Individual Sports • In accordance with local district policy, credit for any of the courses listed above may be earned through participation in the following activities: • Athletics • JROTC • Appropriate private or commercially-sponsored physical activity programs conducted on or off campus • In accordance with local district policy, up to one credit for any one of the courses listed above may be earned through participation in any of the following activities: • Drill Team • Marching Band • Cheerleading • All allowed substitution activities must include at least 100 minutes per five-day school week of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Credit may not be earned for any TEKS-based course more than once. No more than four credits may be earned through any combination of substitutions. *A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to disability or illness may substitute an academic elective credit (English language arts, math, science or social studies).*		
Speech — One-half credit from either of the following: • Communication Applications or • Professional Communications (CTE)	**Speech** — One-half credit from either of the following: • Communication Applications or • Professional Communications (CTE)	**Speech** — One-half credit from either of the following: • Communication Applications or • Professional Communications (CTE)
♦**Fine Arts** — One credit from any of the following: • Art, Level I, II, III, or IV • Dance, Level I, II, III, or IV • Music, Level I, II, III, or IV • Theatre, Level I, II, III, or IV • Principles and Elements of Floral Design (CTE) • Digital Art and Animation (Tech App) • 3-D Modeling and Animation (Tech Apps)	♦**Fine Arts** — One credit from any of the following: • Art, Level I, II, III, or IV • Dance, Level I, II, III, or IV • Music, Level I, II, III, or IV • Theatre, Level I, II, III, or IV • Principles and Elements of Floral Design (CTE) • Digital Art and Animation (Tech App) • 3-D Modeling and Animation (Tech Apps)	♦**Fine Arts** — One credit from any of the following: • Art, Level I, II, III, or IV • Dance, Level I, II, III, or IV • Music, Level I, II, III, or IV • Theatre, Level I, II, III, or IV • Principles and Elements of Floral Design (CTE) • Digital Art and Animation (Tech App) • 3-D Modeling and Animation (Tech Apps)
♦**Elective Courses — Six and one-half credits** from any of the following: • The list of courses approved by the SBOE for grades 9-12 (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills) • State-approved innovative courses • JROTC (one to four credits) • Driver Education (one-half credit)	♦**Elective Courses — Five and one-half credits:** from any of the following • The list of courses approved by the SBOE for grades 9-12 (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills) • State-approved innovative courses • JROTC (one to four credits) • Driver Education (one-half credit)	♦**Elective Courses — Four and one-half credits:** from any of the following • The list of courses approved by the SBOE for grades 9-12 (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills) • State-approved innovative courses • JROTC (one to four credits) • Driver Education (one-half credit)

♦College Board Advanced Placement, college-level concurrent/dual enrollment, and International Baccalaureate courses may be substituted for requirements in appropriate areas.

* Distinguished Achievement Program requirements also include student achievement of four advanced measures. Details at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074g.html#74.74

Be sure to check with your local district, which may have additional graduation requirements. For state requirements, www.tea.state.tx.us/graduation.aspx.

Student Assessment

Initial statewide STAAR™ results released

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) results released June 8 by the Texas Education Agency show that passing rates on five rigorous, key end-of-course tests ranged from 87 percent on the biology test to 55 percent on the English I writing test.

Just as it did with the TAAS and TAKS tests, the state is phasing in the passing requirements for STAAR. The number of questions students must answer correctly will increase at intervals until 2016, when the final passing requirements will be in place. The purpose of this extended phase-in is to provide students and educators with sufficient time to adjust to the increased rigor of the assessments and higher performance expectations.

Results from the first administration of STAAR show what percentage of students passed the end-of-course tests at the first phase-in standard and what the passing rates would have been if the final passing standards had been in place this year. Even at the initial phase-in level, the STAAR passing standards require students to demonstrate more in-depth knowledge, critical thinking, and application skills than did the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The STAAR standards at the first phase-in level are higher than the passing standards for TAKS.

"While we know there is always an adjustment period for students and teachers in a new testing program, results from the first STAAR assessments are encouraging overall, showing that students generally performed as expected or better and that educators focused intensely on the state curriculum. These results give us the opportunity to focus on subject areas that need improvement, and we will continue to work with school districts, teachers and parents to ensure we continue to improve education for Texas students," said Robert Scott, who was commissioner of education at the time results were released.

Students who failed a STAAR end-of-course test had a retesting opportunity in July. The end-of-course exams will next be given at the end of the fall 2012 semester.

Students who are in ninth grade or below and who are pursuing the Recommended High School Program or the Distinguished Achievement graduation program by law must meet state-adopted standards on 15 end-of-course tests, as well as pass their courses, to earn a Texas high school diploma. Students following the minimum graduation plan must meet state-adopted standards on at least 11 end-of-course tests and pass their courses to graduate.

While there is no required course sequence in Texas, most high school freshmen take biology, world geography, Algebra I, and English I.

Eighty-seven percent of all students who took the biology end-of-course test passed it, and nine percent of those students reached Level III: Advanced Academic Performance, which means they are well prepared for the next course.

If the final passing standards had been in place this year, only 41 percent of all students would have passed biology.

Eighty-three percent of students passed the Algebra I test by reaching Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance, while 17 percent reached Level III: Advanced Academic Performance.

If the passing standards had been fully phased in, however, only 39 percent of all students would have passed the Algebra I test.

Eighty-one percent of all students passed the world geography test, and 13 percent achieved Level III: Advanced Academic Performance.

If the final passing standards had been in place this year, only 40 percent of all students would have passed the world geography test.

English I content is assessed using two different tests, one focusing on reading skills and the other on writing skills. Sixty-eight percent of students passed the English I reading test, with eight percent achieving Level III performance. However, only 55 percent passed the English I writing assessment, with three percent achieving Level III on the writing test.

If there had been no phase-in of standards, only 46 percent of students would have passed reading, and 34 percent would have passed writing.

While reading is tested each year on state assessments, this is the first year writing has been assessed at ninth grade. Students were required to write two essays, one literary and one expository. Students earned higher scores on the literary essay than on the expository essay, in which students have to explain a specific topic or issue.

The focus of the English I writing test is on the application of writing skills in the context of actual writing tasks rather than on the recognition of cor-

***Continued,* page 5**

STAAR results continued

rect answers in multiple-choice questions. For this reason the two essays counted for 52 percent of the total score on the writing test.

Examples of actual student literary and expository essays and the scoring rubrics were released in June to provide teachers with additional information about the English I writing exam.

The raw score conversion chart shows the number and percent of items needed to meet the minimum, Level II, and Level III score requirements at the phase-in and final performance standards for the five EOC tests most ninth graders took.

Additional end-of-course tests

While more than 319,000 students took each of the five tests mentioned above, much smaller groups of students took the other 10 end-of-course tests this year. These testing groups consisted of advanced ninth graders, freshmen who are taking courses in an atypical sequence, or upperclassmen who are not required to pass EOC tests to graduate. Because students taking these tests were not representative of the entire student population, the test results for these EOC tests will likely not be indicative of future performance on these tests for the Class of 2015. Passing rates ranged from a high of 98 percent on geometry to a low of 38 percent on English III writing.

Complete score summaries for these tests are available on the TEA website.

Phase-in of standards

Public school and college educators, as well as policy and testing experts, helped the commissioner determine where to set the passing standards. Linking studies that compared STAAR to other tests, such as the SAT, ACT, and TAKS, also helped shape these decisions.

Once the determination was made on the final standards, statistical analysis and professional judgment were used to determine the phase-in schedule for the standards. The Level II passing standards will use a four-year, two-step process. The Level III standard will not be phased in, except for English III reading, English III writing, and Algebra II, which will have a two-year phase-in. The initial STAAR EOC passing standards were set higher than the equivalent TAKS standards.

"In Texas, we have always adopted the approach of meeting students where they are and gradually increasing the passing requirements," Scott said. "We want the passing standards to be challenging, but they shouldn't require students to make unrealistic academic gains in one year to achieve them. Some states simply adopt one passing standard, knowing that they will experience high failure rates the first year. But our more measured approach, which gives schools time to adjust instruction, provide staff training, and close knowledge gaps, has worked well for us in the past."

What now?

If a student did not pass an end-of-course test, he or she has three opportunities each school year to retake the test. The state does not require the student to retake the class if he or she doesn't pass the test. However, many students who failed the test were asked to attend summer school. They may also need significant instructional intervention and support during the next school year.

Passing standards for the STAAR tests for grades 3–8 will be set this winter. However, information showing the number of questions students statewide answered correctly on the spring 2012 tests has been released.

Because of requirements in state law, it was necessary to establish the STAAR passing standards so that they were anchored at English III and Algebra II and vertically aligned backwards through lower-level courses and grades down to grade 3. That made it necessary to set the standards for the end-of-course tests before establishing the standards for the elementary and middle school tests.

Data from complete tests were also needed before standards could be set for grades 3–8. While each test question was field-tested by embedding it in a TAKS test in 2011, the first time intact STAAR tests for those grades were given was this past spring.

TAKS

While students in grades 3–9 took STAAR this year, students in grades 10 and 11 took TAKS. Students in the Class of 2013 and the Class of 2014 must pass the 11th grade exit level TAKS to meet their graduation requirements. TAKS has been used as the state test since 2003.

Passing rates for sophomores were 91 percent on English language arts, which is a combined reading and writing test; 94 percent on social studies; 74 percent on mathematics; and 75 percent on science. Most students who failed TAKS failed only one portion of it.

Students in 11th grade earned the following passing rates: 93 percent for English language arts; 98 percent for social studies; 91 percent for mathematics; and 94 percent for science.

More testing information is available on TEA's student assessment website.

National Assessment

Texas students outscored peers on eighth-grade science NAEP

Texas students in every major ethnic group significantly outscored their peers nationally on the eighth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) science test, with the state's African-American students earning the fourth highest score in the country compared to other African-American students.

Test results recently released by the National Center for Education Statistics show that when the data is reported by ethnic groups, Texas' Hispanic students earned the sixth highest score and the state's white students ranked eighth among their peers.

Texas students who are Asian or English Language Learners also significantly outscored their peer groups nationally. Texans also substantially outperformed their peer groups from other large, diverse states.

Overall, Texas students earned a scale score of 153 on the test, besting the national score of 151. The state ranked 29th when the total testing population was considered.

"Although some groups have criticized our new science curriculum standards, the NAEP scores prove that Texas teachers and students are doing something very right in our science classrooms. Texans in every major ethnic group are outperforming their peers nationally, even though many of our students must overcome the obstacles associated with poverty to do so. This is Texas being Texas. I am extremely proud of our students and teachers," said Commissioner of Education Robert Scott.

Students took the 2011 NAEP during the first year that Texas' revised science curriculum standards were in use in classrooms. Prior to implementation of the standards, science training academies were held for those who teach science in fifth through eighth grade.

"Training, revised curriculum standards and a renewed push to improve math and science education are paying off for this state," Scott said.

The NAEP, called the "Nation's Report Card" because a random sample of students in all states and territories take it, gives parents a way to compare educational performance in their state with students in other states.

Many of the states that earned higher average scores than Texas have distinctly different demographic compositions than Texas.

Among African-American students, only students in Colorado, the Department of Defense schools and Virginia outperformed Texans.

Among Hispanic students, the states that earned higher average scores than Texas were the Department of Defense schools, Ohio, South Dakota, Kentucky and Alaska.

Among white students, only students in the following states earned a higher average scale score than did Texans: District of Columbia, Colorado, the Department of Defense schools, Massachusetts, Virginia, North Dakota and Minnesota.

Texas students drastically outperformed their peers in large diverse states. The following chart shows the state rank on the science test.

Grade 8 Scale Score

Score Range 0-300

Student Group	National Public	Texas	State Rank
All Students	151	**153**	29th
White	163	**167**	8th
African American	128	**137**	4th
Hispanic	136	**146**	6th
Asian	159	**172**	na
ELL (English Language Learners)	106	**118**	na
SD (Students with Disabilities)	124	121	na

Bolded numbers = statistically significantly higher than national public

State	African American	Hispanic	White	Overall
Texas	4th	6th	8th	29th
California	30th	42nd	43rd	49th
Florida	23rd	9th	34th	39th
Illinois	36th	32nd	33rd	43rd
New York	15th	41st	29th	38th

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

First draft of revised Fine Arts TEKS posted

Informal feedback is now being sought on suggested revisions to the Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

This marks the first time these curriculum standards have been updated since the current standards went into effect in 1998.

Expert reviewers and writing teams appointed by the State Board of Education have proposed revisions that can be found on the TEA website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147499973. The Fine Arts TEKS cover art, music, dance and theatre.

During the July meeting, the state board received input from the experts and writing team representatives. Much of the discussion at this meeting centered on a proposal to create dance standards for kindergarten through eighth grade for the first time. There are now only dance-related TEKS for the high school level.

Because of staffing, facilities and logistical issues associated with adding dance to the lower grades, the board directed the writing teams to create grade specific dance TEKS for sixth through eighth grade and eliminate the suggested standards for elementary school. However, board members suggested that the teams look for ways to incorporate suggested elementary dance standards into physical education and other existing curriculum areas.

Anyone interested may submit feedback on the proposed fine arts revisions by sending comments to TEKS@tea.state.tx.us or by faxing them to (512) 463-8057 through Sept. 14. If submitting specific comments and recommendations for the numbered paragraphs, please identify the Knowledge and Skills statement by number and/or student expectation by letter.

The experts and writing teams will continue to work on the proposal through September.

The standards will be presented to the board for discussion at its Nov. 14-16 meeting. A preliminary vote is expected on the standards in January with a final vote occurring in April.

Additional public comment will be taken between the first and second vote.

Anaphylaxis

Districts must adopt policy for students with food allergies

Texas school districts are required by Aug. 1 to adopt a policy or update their current policy regarding the care of students with diagnosed food allergies who are at risk for anaphylaxis.

The updated or new policy must be based on guidelines developed by the commissioner of state health services and a committee comprised of parents, a teacher, principal, superintendent, board members and a physician.

The new guidelines were required under Senate Bill 27, 82nd Texas Legislature, by Sen. Judith Zaffirini. Any district that already had a policy in place will need to review the new guidelines and then revise their current policy to ensure that it is consistent with the new requirements.

The new guidelines are available at the Department of State Health Services website at http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589966589.

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