
From: Spring Branch Speaks <updates@springbranchspeaks.com>
Sent: Monday, February 20, 2012 2:06 PM
To: Á
Subject: Testing Debate Continues - Round 1 Won By StudentsÁ

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Spring Branch Speaks

... to make our voices heard in Austin.

Dear *Spring Branch Speaks* members:

Thanks for your efforts contacting legislators prior to the Jan. 23rd House Public Education Committee meeting regarding testing/accountability. Chairman Rob Eissler reported receiving over 600 emails on the issue- **you had an impact!**

GREAT NEWS, at least for this year.

Late Friday afternoon, the Commissioner notified school districts that, for this year only, the 9th grade exams will not count towards students' GPAs! The exams will, however, continue to count towards graduation.

This adjustment to the law was recommended by the Chairs of both the Senate and House Education Committees, in reaction to public outcry and recent comments by the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency, Robert Scott, who spoke out to the [State Board of Education](#) and again with the [Texas Assoc. of School Administrators](#) and called the current testing plan a "perversion of its original intent."

Just Another Layer of Testing for our Students

Schools are being forced to spend precious academic time and millions of dollars preparing for a new set of tests. Overall, SBISD spends about \$2.3 million a year on tests, their related administration and analysis. All Texas public school students, including SBISD's, spend 15% - 21% of their school days taking and preparing for state tests and the associated benchmarks; that's 26 - 38 days a year.

School superintendents in the North Texas Regional Consortium wrote a [letter](#) stating that state exams are "strangling" their high-performing schools, and State Board of Education member Thomas Ratliff wrote a [letter](#) questioning whether or not these tests correlate to student success in higher education.

Accountability is necessary to make sure schools prepare students for advanced learning. Yet in the case of high school, the universities have told us that they don't care about state standardized exams - they only consider the SAT and ACT. And with our state tests, given in March and May, the results aren't released until June; after the students have left for the summer, and after grades are due. "End of Course" tests - supposed to replace finals - need to be given over the last week of the school year with the results immediately available for teachers, otherwise they are just another layer of testing that waste time and money!

YOUR VOICES ARE STILL NEEDED TO IMPACT TESTING OF YOUR CHILD

NOW IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY with the recent press about state testing for parents to weigh in. **We urge you to continue the conversation about testing, and contact the Texas leaders who control education laws and share your family's experience with standardized state testing** - let them know if, as a parent/taxpayer, you feel these exams are worth the time and money. Below is a distribution list for you to use.

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Click [here](#) to read another article about the STAAR testing, with a comment by Superintendent Duncan Klussman.

Thank you for taking the time to weigh in.

Sincerely,



[Spring Branch Speaks](#)

Parent-organized community outreach with SBISD in mind.

Spring Branch ISD educates a diverse community of 32,000 students on 46 campuses, including 57% economically disadvantaged students and 33% limited-English-proficient (ESL) students.

(Forward this email to your family and friends - ask them to join, too:
www.SpringBranchSpeaks.com)

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