



PRESS RELEASE

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**SAFETY AUDIT AND STATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS
DISCUSSED DURING TISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

Texarkana, TX – During their Tuesday, January 18, 2011, regular session, Texarkana Independent School District Board of Trustees were updated on the District's recent safety audit report findings.

As a result of Texas Senate Bill 11, all schools in the state of Texas are required to conduct a comprehensive school safety audit every three years. The purpose of the audit is to identify safety and security practices, policies and needs on each school campus within a district and to make recommendations to help the district create the safest environment possible for students.

"TISD is proud of our score of 92 which is an Acceptable Audit Compliance rating," commented Georgette Duke, Director of Risk Management & Children's Services. "This score is eight points higher than our audit completed in May 2008."

Components of the audit process include: safety and security of site and building exterior and interior; access control; type and extent of monitoring and surveillance; development and enforcement of policies, intervention and prevention plans; level of staff development; opportunities for student involvement; level of parent and community involvement; role of law enforcement; crisis communication and development of emergency operation plans; and school climate and culture.

TISD worked with Robert Bookout & Associates Risk Management Services, an approved safety and security consulting firm through the Texas School Safety Center. His report commented, "TISD is heads above others that we have worked with regarding safety and security for staff and students."

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In other business, Mark Schroeder, Texas High School Associate Principal for Student Advancement, previewed state assessment information that will be presented in a workshop on Monday, January 31 for parents/guardians of current 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. The workshop will begin at 6:00 p.m. in the Sullivan Performing Arts Center. Discussions will include the NEW State of Texas assessments - STAAR, End-Of-Course testing and NEW state graduation requirements.

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) will be replaced with STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) for students in grades 3 thru 9 as TAKS is being phased out with students in grades 10 and 11. Subjects being tested will remain the same – mathematics, reading, writing, science and social studies. The new STAAR testing will be more difficult in an effort to provide a more clearly articulated assessment program that focuses on fewer skills with more knowledge depth.

However, the biggest changes to the new state testing will affect high school students who will now have to take twelve end-of-course tests that will be used to meet the state graduation requirements versus needing to pass four “exit” exams in core subject areas as was required in the former state assessment program. “For the first time, assessment scores will now be directly linked to the student’s grade - accounting for 15% of the final grade – and also to which graduation plan they will graduate under,” stated Schroeder.

Tested courses will be: English I, English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, World Geography, World History and U.S. History.

According to TISD Superintendent of Schools, James Henry Russell, “This completely new testing system for the 2011-12 school year is a bit overwhelming for school districts at this time. We have received very little information or specifics on it until just recently. Unfortunately, the state is not giving us much time to get ready for the changes, and no new funds are being made available for a system that is completely different than anything that we have ever seen. All of this is coming at a time when state agency funds are being restricted and schools in the state of Texas are being flooded with unfunded mandates.”

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