



DURÓN'S DIGEST

UPDATE FROM SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT J. DURÓN

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State accountability ratings and the role of investing and strengthening in our programs

Yesterday we were pleased to bring out the restructuring proposals developed by the Long-Range Planning Committee. We have stressed that this effort is not just about buildings, but about providing the best resources to enrich our students' experience in the classroom and help them to achieve at the highest level. Reinforcing the importance of this effort is that SAISD did not meet state accountability levels for completion rate, based on students in the Class of 2008. While we met or exceeded all of the 25 academic indicators, we missed one of two non-academic categories, completion rate, by less than 50 students. Unfortunately, missing that one index means the District will be rated as "academically unacceptable".

By our own District standards, missing even one category by less than 2 percent is not acceptable. We have already put measures into place to rectify this. Campus Leaver Teams were established last year at all high schools to identify students at risk of dropping out. These teams have weekly tasks to make calls and visits to students to help keep them in school. Offering summer school and summer graduation is another effort in place to help these students graduate. In addition, we have identified non-completers in the class of 2009 that need to pass TAKS to graduate or earn credits for graduation. We are working to get these kids back into school to earn their high school diplomas. Our dropout initiative implemented last year with Cooper Academy is also supporting this effort: we brought back 132 students last year, many are still completing their education through Cooper, and 39 have since graduated.

I would be remiss in not recognizing the hard work that our teachers, students and families have put into academic achievements. **The TEA report will show that SAISD maintained its Exemplary performance for writing, and made gains in every other TAKS subject – along with gains in students achieving at the Commended level.** Additionally, we expect almost half of our schools to be rated *Exemplary* or *Recognized*. This includes *Exemplary* ratings for our two new college preparatory campuses, Young Women's Leadership Academy and the Travis Early College High School, along with our new Mission Academy. Fox Tech High School will be a *Recognized* campus, with a completion rate of 77.9 percent, up from 64 percent in 2007. Edison, Highlands and Lanier high schools also made great improvements in completion rates.

Restructuring is all about investing in and extending those programs that best benefit our students, so that they are widely available throughout the District. We know that our District must increase its efforts to ensure that *all* of our students attend excellent schools with strong educational offerings. There is much work to be done, and our top priority is to improve not only our student completion rate, but ensure continual improvement and accelerated student success. The restructuring proposals released yesterday take us a major step forward in this effort.

Best regards,