



DURÓN'S DIGEST

UPDATE FROM SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT J. DURÓN

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Federal Accountability

This week we braced ourselves for the expected news that SAISD would not meet Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the federal government through the No Child Left Behind law. But let me make clear: As a District we are getting better even as the standards for passing the state TAKS continue to increase. In fact, we had a total of 36 *exemplary* and *recognized* campuses in 2008, nine more than last year. Although TAKS scores are considered under both the federal and state systems, the feds place unrealistic and unfair expectations on special education students while the state makes allowances for these students. For example, under NCLB, 99 percent of special education students must pass the TAKS at grade level even if allowances have been made for their particular learning disability. This testing system sets up schools for failure.

On a different note, our high schools missed AYP for graduation rates. Again, we are making strides in this area evidenced by campus efforts to keep students in schools plus the highly successful Reach Out to Dropouts initiative that saw an overwhelming positive response from community members who joined us in reclaiming former students. While we have more work to do, as a District we are better and we have much for which to be proud.

Finances at Top of our Legislative Agenda

With the 81st Legislature set to convene in January, much behind-the-scenes communication is taking place to convey to our legislators the inequities of target revenue funding and the impact to our District's budget. We are funded at the same level as in 2006 without any adjustment at all for inflation. If SAISD had the same revenue per student as the highest district in our area, state revenue for SAISD would increase by \$77 million! SAISD revenue per student is 14 percent less than the five wealthiest districts in Bexar County. We will continue to tell our story to the state and hope to see some relief in the new legislative session.

Enrollment: Better than Expected

Good news: For the first time in many years, we have exceeded our enrollment projections. Although we are slightly ahead of projections, this news is significant for a district such as ours that has seen a steady decline in enrollment. Thanks to the determined efforts of principals and staff, 22 campuses have surpassed projected enrollment and have increased their enrollment by more than 10 students compared to last year.

Containing Costs

The first meeting of the Cost Containment Committee was held last week. The committee was presented with data on expenditures to be analyzed and gave recommendations on priorities and functions to be reviewed. The work of this committee will be valuable as we study more ways to reduce the District's budget.

Sincerely,