



WICHITA FALLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Report to the Committee on Public School Accountability

Monday, June 16, 2008, 12:00 p.m.
University of North Texas, Dallas Campus, Room 102
7300 Houston School Road
Dallas, Texas 75241

My name is Tim Powers and I am the assistant superintendent for Wichita Falls ISD, a district of over 14,500 students and a wonderful staff dedicated to helping all students to succeed.

I am asking the committee to give serious consideration for an interim study on the advantage of offering a second administration of the TAKS tests and also on the proposed End of Course tests for all grade levels.

My purpose and rationale for offering a second administration are:

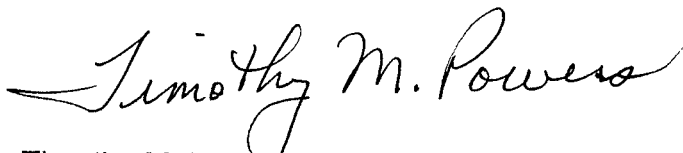
1. There is now longitudinal evidence in our own accountability system that more students achieve mastery when given a second opportunity. The data in WFISD show that from 2004-2007 we were able to help 53% of our students who did not master the first administration, to master the second administration. In every case, this allowed our district to move 90%+ of our students in reading and math into minimum mastery.
2. The second administration allowed for approximately an increase of 7% in the two grade and subject levels across the board. That translated in 631 tests to be mastered by students in our district over a four year period. Our state now serves over 4.5 million students. A 7% improvement could potentially affect a significant number of students across the state if a second administration of the TAKS test was given in all grade levels currently administering the TAKS test and eventually, the End of Course exams.
3. The federal No Child Left Behind accountability system does not integrate well with our state's accountability system. There is no margin for error with students in testing. This is especially disconcerting when considering the additional inclusion of more special education students in the accountability system. Allowing for a second administration of our TAKS tests could help the campuses, districts, and the state in meeting more of those accountability standards and would decrease the number of campuses and districts not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress.

4. The TAKS test is a summative test that only provides for an analysis by Local Education Agencies at the end of the instructional year, to prepare for instructional improvements to be applied the next year. An additional or second administration of the TAKS test would allow for the first test to be a more formative test, thus allowing for immediate re-teaching and acceleration with students who did not master the material on the first administration. This process would compliment campuses and school districts who are operating as professional learning communities and who are working to help ALL students to achieve academic success.

5. The state dedicates many dollars into providing opportunities for student success through the support of many research based programs and processes. I can think of no other program or process that would provide this great a return on the financial investment. It puts the onus for student success rightly upon the educators and gives students a second chance at success.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this proposal to allow for the second administration of the TAKS tests with all grade levels that take the TAKS test and are connected to the Academic Excellence Indicator System. Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Timothy M. Powers". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and contact information.

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