



TEXANS ADVOCATING FOR MEANINGFUL STUDENT ASSESSMENT

PRESS RELEASE

May 3, 2019

Texans Advocating for Meaningful Student Assessment (TAMSA)

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TAMSA appreciates the hard work and dedication the legislature has put into education this session. But we were dismayed to see the Senate Education Committee substitute of the School Finance Bill (HB 3) include a late but significant expansion of high-stakes testing. The current version of HB 3 requires funding to be tied to 3rd grade test scores, increases the number of STAAR tests with the addition of 4 new writing tests in grades 3-8, adds a new assessment in kindergarten, and increases the passing threshold for STAAR tests.

This overreach comes when public confidence in STAAR reliability is at its lowest due to recent revelations about misaligned STAAR reading passages. A poll conducted by TAMSA in January showed 98% of more than 2400 respondents opposed tying funding to testing. Readability studies show that STAAR passages are written 1-3 grade levels above the grade level being tested. Additionally, despite the assurance that STAAR passages are thoroughly vetted, the 2019 5th grade STAAR test included at least two profane words. HB 3 also includes an additional \$100 million more taxpayer dollars to implement these new STAAR provisions when there has been little political will to adequately fund Texas public schools.

This is the time to push pause on STAAR, not double-down on a misguided and ill-conceived testing system. **We urge the Senate to block these testing provisions, remove them from HB 3, pass the version passed by the House and move school funding forward.**

TAMSA is a statewide, grassroots organization comprised of parents and other community members concerned with the overemphasis on high stakes STAAR tests and the misallocation of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to the tests that should be going to the classroom. Our mission is to improve public education in Texas through the use of meaningful and effective student assessments that allow for more productive classroom instruction and more efficient use of public funds.

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