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Commissioner Williams defers 15 percent grading policy for 2012-2013 school year

AUSTIN – Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams announced today that he is deferring implementation of the 15 percent grading requirement for the 2012-2013 school year. Under the rule connected to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) end-of-course examinations, a student's score on the STAAR end-of-course exams would count 15 percent of the student's final grade in each tested subject area.

"Deferring the 15 percent rule for this school year relieves some of the pressure being felt in Texas districts as we continue the transition to a more rigorous accountability system," Williams said. "This deferral also allows the Texas Legislature ample opportunity to address the various issues and concerns that have been expressed about implementation of the new system."

On Nov. 29th, Williams received letters from Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and Senate Education Committee Chair Dan Patrick urging deferral of the 15 percent rule. All three state leaders noted the rule would be an issue that would be discussed during the upcoming legislative session.

"I thank Gov. Perry, Lt. Gov. Dewhurst and Sen. Patrick for their valuable input and direction on a matter of great importance to students, parents, teachers and administrators across our state," Williams said. "I join in their commitment to a meaningful state accountability system for our students and schools that strengthens our state's position for the future."

Williams' decision marks the second year the rule has been deferred. In the 2011-2012 school year, more than 1,100 of the state's more than 1,200 school districts notified the Texas Education Agency it would be deferring the rule.

Local school districts still have the option to move forward in utilizing the 15 percent rule should they choose. Texas school districts will soon receive formal notification of the deferral so they can plan accordingly.

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