

February 22, 2012

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: 15 Percent Grade Deferral

This letter serves as the official notification that I am modifying the Texas Education Agency's House Bill 3 Transition Plan. The modification gives public school districts and charter schools the ability to defer implementation of the statutory provision that requires performance on an end-of-course assessment to count as 15 percent of a student's final course grade. The deferral applies only to the 15 percent grading requirement in Chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code and will affect only the 2011-2012 school year. For this school year, the ultimate decision whether to include state-required end-of-course examination scores as part of course grades will be determined locally by school districts and charter schools.

The law still requires students who are first entering the ninth grade in the 2011-2012 school year to achieve a cumulative score on the end-of-course assessments to complete their graduation requirements. Districts and charter schools choosing to defer implementation of the 15 percent requirement for the 2011-2012 school year should notify TEA of that decision.

Giving school districts and charter schools the local option to use end-of-course assessment performance to calculate the course grade should help reduce some of the confusion and provide a smoother transition to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). To take advantage of this deferral, the superintendent or another district-level administrator authorized by the superintendent should notify the agency of that local decision by sending a brief email to the following email address: commissioner@tea.state.tx.us. **Please provide this notification no later than May 1, 2012.** This is a one-year deferral only and will not apply in the 2012-2013 school year.

I remain committed to the STAAR assessment program, rigorous public school accountability, and to implementing the reforms in Senate Bill 1031 from the 80th Legislative Session and House Bill 3 from the 81st Legislative Session. The new assessment system will be better for students and educators, and will better ensure Texas students are ready for postsecondary success.

Sincerely,

Robert Scott
Commissioner of Education

RS/ff