



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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*Texas Education Agency Urges Schools to Order Instructional Materials
New Instructional Materials Essential for New High-Stakes Standardized Tests*

Austin, Texas – Prompted by the State Board of Education (SBOE), the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is urging schools to order instructional materials that students need to prepare for the new STAAR end-of-course assessments.

In a September 16 letter to all Texas school superintendents, TEA Commissioner Robert Scott wrote “I would like to remind school districts to take advantage of this opportunity to order instructional materials for this school year.”

At the September meeting, SBOE members expressed concern after learning many schools across the state have delayed ordering instructional materials under the new allotment system created by Senate Bill 6. The bill establishes priorities for using the allotment and asks school districts to use the allotment first to support student performance on the state assessment.

SBOE member Ken Mercer, of San Antonio, found it troubling that “only 33 percent of 9th grade English materials had been ordered as of Tuesday” because schools know that students entering the 9th grade are the first high school class required to take the STAAR end-of-course assessments.

SBOE member Lawrence Allen Jr. of Houston suggested the board also send its own letter encouraging districts to implement the new programs.

A Texas Curriculum analysis of current TEA data shows that as of September 20th just over 30 percent of schools have placed orders for the updated instructional materials.

“It is unfortunate that fully one half of the schoolchildren in Texas do not have the new instructional programs aligned to the stronger curriculum standards that are reflected in the STAAR test,” said Mark McDonald, executive director of Texas Curriculum

Legislators included provisions giving priority to proclamation 2011 subjects in this new allotment system, because they are aligned to the new STAAR end-of-course assessments or cover new standards to prepare students. The district superintendent is required to certify that every student has instructional materials that cover all elements of the essential knowledge and skills of the required curriculum, other than physical education, for each grade level as required in the Texas Education Code, Section 28.002.

Additionally, the new instructional materials are replacing programs that are 8-18 years old, in the subjects of English Language Arts, including handwriting and spelling, English as a Second Language, and Pre-Kindergarten. All of these materials contain the building blocks for effective college and career readiness. Updated PreK materials emphasize much higher expectations in early reading and math skills. Stronger ESL materials are built around new proficiency standards and are designed to improve English comprehension of students with limited English proficiency.



“With end-of-course tests looming this school year, there must be more urgency to getting the education materials into students’ hands so they can succeed. As of now, just over 40 percent of the funds made available by the Texas Legislature to procure the materials have been spent,” McDonald said.