

# Lawmakers: Give students a break in new grade law

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Several key state lawmakers told Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott on Monday that he has the legal power to delay an anxiety-causing law that students' scores on new, tougher standardized exams be factored into their final course grades.

The four senators, led by Sen. Florence Shapiro, chairwoman of the Senate Education Committee, said in a letter to Scott that they support postponing the rule that the exam scores count for 15 percent of high school students' grades. The letter (posted below) suggested delaying the mandate until the 2012-13 school year to give schools more time to get used to the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (or STAAR).

Superintendents across the state [have been questioning](#) how to interpret the law — as many districts calculate only semester grades, not final grades — and warning that it could have significant ramifications for students' grade-point averages, important in college admissions.

Sens. Dan Patrick, R-Houston; Royce West, D-Dallas; and Kel Seliger, R-Amarillo, also signed the letter.

A spokeswoman for Scott, Debbie Ratcliffe, said the commissioner will issue a decision regarding the letter soon.

“The commissioner’s reviewing it, as are our lawyers,” she said.

Scott has not addressed the grade requirement specifically but recently [made headlines](#) for saying that the state’s testing program has turned into a “perversion of its original intent.”