

Evaluation of the texas education system

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Evaluation of the Texas Education System The goal of any states education system is to create a policy to successfully reach all students and to provide access and equality of opportunity for all citizens to receive an education while remaining within reasonable funding limits. This is an elusive goal pursued by all state governments that is still left without a definite solution but simply an evaluation of how well students in each state perform. The "mission" of the Texas Education System is to "ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation" according to Education Code of Texas. The major criteria for judging the success of a state's education system are graduation rates, dropout rates and the level of funding states provides public education facilities. Texas has had a long history of struggling graduation rates which legislators have tried to address though many policy changes often ending in mixed results. Texas has ranked the lowest in the nation for the percentage of population over the age of twenty five without a high school diploma. Poor education is blamed for economic decline which spurs tougher education, causing unrealistic expectations for students in today's education system. Texas is currently ranked 36th in the nation with a 68% graduation rate according to the Texas Comptroller, Carole Keeton Strayhorn. Texas has tried to address this tricky issue through many key policy changes in recent years with one of the most significant is the adoption of a new system of state testing called the STAAR test. The test is designed to be more rigorous than previous tests and will measure a child's performance, as well as academic growth. The theory

behind this test is to make Texas school's curriculums more concepts based and relevant to what students have previously learned and to teach students skills they will need to know later in life, both in furthering education and real world situations. By creating a test in this format educators hope to increase student interest and show how the knowledge is useful to increase students interest in school and help motivate them to continue their education until graduation. Policy changes have shown the rate has increased about 8 percentage points in five years, from 78 percent in 2007 to 85.9 percent in 2011 while there is progress being made Texas is still a long way away from evolving forming a "perfect" education system. Texas, long considered one of the states "falling behind" in the education field, has experienced a surprising turn in the number of students dropping out of schools in recent years. "The last time the Texas Supreme Court ruled on the state's school finance system, in 2005, it warned of a "severe dropout problem" calling the lagging graduation rates of blacks and Hispanics in the state "especially troublesome" says Morgan Smith of the Texas Tribune. Texas now ranks 7th nationally in four-year graduation rates, in high schools, among the 26 states that were reported to use the National Governors Association four-year on-time graduation rate formula. In 2008 Texas led the nation in the reduction of the number of dropout factory high schools with 77 high schools. From 2010 to 2011 Texas allocated approximately \$500 million in state and federal funding for dropout prevention and recovery initiatives further increasing efforts to reduce dropout rates. According to the TEA (Texas Education Agency) "In Texas, out of 300,488 students in the class of 2008, 79.1% graduated, 8.9% continued in high school the year following

their anticipated graduation, 1. 5% received GEDs, and 10. 5% dropped out of school". Funding is a major issue for Texas schools. State funding for public schools places Texas at number forty-seven in the nation despite having the second enrollment in the nation. Texas was the only state in the nation to cut average per pupil expenditures in fiscal year 2005, resulting in a ranking of 40 nationally; down from number 25 in fiscal year 1999. Texas currently is ranked forty-seventh nationally in what it pays for each student's education. The Texas legislature cut over \$5 Billion from public education in the 2012 session, and with a high potential for a deficit in 2013 funding is only going to get worse. The budget reductions that districts are being forced to make have devastated schools across the state. Funding cuts have led to increasing class sizes, reducing services and supplies and thinning the ranks of teachers, custodians, librarians and other school administrators as well as the loss of bus service for students living within two miles of schools. If something isn't done about these reductions to the education system Texas schools are going to see a sharp drop in student performance in the near future. The Texas education system, while not entirely perfect, has shown vast improvements over the past decade. With schools showing rising graduation rates and dropout rates on the decline the state has proven that education is an issue they are taking serious steps to reform. While Texas schools may be showing progress from an academic stand point, they fall greatly behind many other states when it comes to funding. Texas has historically had one of the most underfunded education systems in the nation. When taking all the criteria for judging an education system into account Texas schools appear to have academically sound education system

that with a few policy changes to funding could easily become one of the best in the nation.