



# TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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## **TSTA: Teacher evaluations should encourage professional development, not punish educators**

The Texas State Teachers Association today urged Education Commissioner Mike Morath to design a teacher evaluation system that encourages professional development to help teachers and students achieve instead of punishing teachers over test scores.

“The goal of teacher appraisals should be creating a first-class learning environment for Texas’ 5.2 million public school children, not a ‘gotcha’ game designed to single out teachers for punishment,” said TSTA President Noel Candelaria.

“Educators welcome evaluations and constructive guidance on how to master their teaching skills. Their students benefit when those evaluations are conducted fairly and based on a range of indicators of student progress and are not tied to a student’s ability to take a designated test,” he added.

Candelaria commented as the Texas Education Agency accepted public comments on T-TESS, the new teacher evaluation proposal drafted under former Education Commissioner Michael Williams. Under the T-TESS proposal, at least 20 percent – perhaps more – of a teacher’s evaluation would be based on STAAR test scores.

Candelaria pointed out that T-TESS was drafted in an effort to satisfy an outdated waiver requirement under the No Child Left Behind Act, which Congress recently repealed. In its place, and with strong bipartisan support, Congress enacted the Every Student Succeeds Act, which encourages states and school districts to reduce the importance of high-stakes testing. The new law also prohibits the U.S. Secretary of Education from mandating that teachers be evaluated based on test scores.

“TSTA urges Commissioner Morath and TEA to comply with the spirit of the Every Student Succeeds Act and eliminate STAAR test scores from the teacher evaluation model,” Candelaria said. “Education is a continuous, collaborative process, and an individual teacher’s contribution to a student’s success in any given year cannot be fairly measured by the student’s ability to pass a set of standardized tests.”

Some alternatives to STAAR test scores could include high school graduation and college admission rates, success in pre-AP courses, improvements in English language proficiency and other indicators of student progress.