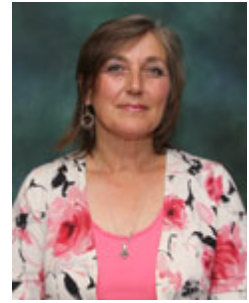


## A Letter from Keller ISD Trustee Wendy Collins

As a parent of three children in Keller ISD, I know that spring in Texas not only brings sunshine and windy days, it also brings the **TAKS!** No, this isn't a new virus we need to be concerned about; it is the **Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills**. This is a series of tests for students in grades 3 through 11 that measure a student's mastery of the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) state-mandated curriculum. Whether students are served through general education, special education, or bilingual/English as a Second Language program, these state tests provide a snapshot of the degree to which students are learning.



Every district and school in Texas is also given an accountability rating, based in part on these scores: Exemplary, being the highest, Recognized, Academically acceptable and Academically Unacceptable being the lowest. It is with great pride and admiration for our teachers and students to say that Keller ISD is a **Recognized** district. This is not an easy task with a district as large and diverse as ours.

As we approach this 2009-2010 TAKS season, I know that our teachers and students have been working very hard all year in preparation for these tests. I thought it would be appropriate and reassuring at this time to share again a few highlights from last year's TAKS testing season. These scores became official in July, 2009.

An example of outstanding reading scores was seen in grades 3, 5 and 8. Third grade students continue to perform at an exceptional level. Overall 97 percent met standard scores which is a 2% increase. An amazing increase of 13 percentage points was seen in our third grade students' commended performance in reading. Fifth grade scores saw a 5% increase in the number of commended scores, 45% specifically. A two percent increase calculates to 94% of our fifth graders meeting the passing standard. Our eighth grade reading met standard scores continued to hold strong at an amazing performance level. Ninety-nine percent met the standard while 65% of our students performed at the commended level.

Math TAKS scores continue to show a trend of improvement. In fifth grade, for example, the percent of students that met the standard score held steady at 91%. Students who received commended scores jumped 5 percentage points to 54%. Eighth grade math scores improved from last year in both standard and commended scores. Among eighth grade students, an exceptional 94 percent met the standard score with an increase in commended averaging to 37%, respectively.

Our high school scores are also impressive.

|                | 9 <sup>th</sup> | 10 <sup>th</sup> | 11 <sup>th</sup> |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Reading/ELA    | 96              | 96               | 98               |
| Math           | 80              | 79               | 91               |
| Science        | N/A             | 81               | 93               |
| Social Studies | N/A             | 97               | 99               |

Our district's results are a reflection of the determination, attitude and hard work of our amazing students, parents and teachers.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will begin to introduce in 2011-2012 the next generation of student assessments which will be called the **State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness or STAAR** for students in grades 3-8. STAAR will replace the TAKS, which has been in place since 2003. Whereas, high school students will begin to meet graduation requirements by meeting standards on End of Course (EOC) assessments. EOCs will be phased-in for students in grades 9-12 beginning in 2011-2012.

The last TAKS-based school accountability ratings will be issued in 2011. Ratings will be suspended in 2012 while a new accountability system is developed. The new state rating system will debut in 2013.

TEA also recognizes districts and campus accomplishments in areas other than those evaluated under the state accountability system. Gold Performance Acknowledgements are annually awarded to honor districts and campuses with high performance on indicators other than those used to determine accountability ratings. In 2009, Keller ISD earned four GPAs for Commended Performance in Reading, Commended Performance in Writing, Commended Performance in Social Studies and Higher Education Readiness in ELA. Of Keller ISD's 34 assessed campuses, 32 received one or more Gold Performance Acknowledgements for a total of 117. In addition, Keller ISD celebrated 32 of its campuses were rated either Exemplary or Recognized, the most in the district's history.

As we approach this year's "TAKS Season" I would like to thank our parents for the vital role they play in this achievement. The constant support you provide to your child and this district is the key to our students' academic success. I would also like to thank our teachers for their hard work and commitment in preparing our students for these important assessments and for continually maintaining a positive environment within which each and every one of our students have the opportunity to excel!

I wish you the best of luck and much success as we enter into this year's round of testing! Keep up the great work and thank you for continuously helping Keller ISD be "Intentionally Exceptional"!