



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

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Education Position on Testing & Accountability (2008)

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports state-mandated STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS that are used with a state-mandated curriculum as a method to measure individual mastery and proficiency in a subject, and as a diagnostic tool to measure student growth in progress from one year to the next. In addition, the League supports state mandated tests that are:

- Developed and reviewed by a broad spectrum of Texas educators who are acknowledged experts in their fields.
- Written with sensitivity to the diversity of the state's population.
- NOT used as the sole determination for grade-level advancement or graduation from high school.
- Used to measure end-of-course proficiency for graduation from high school.
- Developed to measure higher-level thinking skills.
- Limited in frequency of test administration, which would also apply to benchmark tests, practice tests, and field tests.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports a state-mandated, STANDARDIZED CURRICULUM that is developed with broad input from Texas educators, the public, business groups, and elected and appointed officials. In addition, the League supports a state-mandated curriculum that:

- Reflects the diversity of the state's population.
- Covers subjects that are included on the standardized tests, as well as those that are not included, to ensure richness and variety.
- Provides the academic rigor necessary for success in postsecondary education and careers.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports a state-mandated ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM to ensure that districts are teaching the standardized curriculum. In addition, the League supports an accountability system that:

- Aligns with any federal accountability system to avoid conflicting results.
- Identifies academic achievement and gaps in performance among subgroups of students, based on standardized tests and other indicators (for example, dropout, attendance, and high school completion rates).
- Is used as a diagnostic method to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of schools and school districts, but NOT to establish school or school district ratings; NOT to sanction, reconstitute, or close schools; and NOT as a primary factor to appraise and terminate educators.
- Measures a school's growth in academic achievement from one year to the next, rather than as a single-year assessment.
- Places less emphasis on the standardized test and includes additional measurements, such as other types of tests, performance in coursework, and portfolios.
- Directs resources to *improve* performance, but not to reward schools.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITY for academic achievement for all students. Specifically, the League supports:

- Universal but not mandatory prekindergarten programs.

- Universal but not mandatory full-day kindergarten programs.
- Early intervention for academically at-risk students.
- Research-based instruction for English learners and other targeted subgroups of students.
- Tutoring and/or remedial classes for students who fail a section or sections of the standardized test.
- Availability of extended school day, Saturday classes, summer school, extended school year, and night courses at various school levels.

The League of Women Voters of Texas endorses SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS in the mandated testing environment. Specifically, the League supports:

- Adequate planning time or class-release time for improving student performance.
- Professional development that is relevant and is supported by research demonstrating improvement in student achievement.
- Reduction in class size, especially for low-performing students, at all grade levels.
- Qualified teacher aides for low-performing campuses.
- Incentives to attract experienced and qualified teachers to low-performing campuses and to subject areas where shortages exist, but NOT to reward teachers or campuses for improvement in the performance of their students on the standardized test.
- Mentoring for new teachers, with compensation for mentors.