



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF TEXAS EDUCATION FUND

State Study: Mandated Achievement Testing in the Public Schools of Texas Ideas for Spring Meetings on Education & Testing

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With our state study under way on mandated testing, it is a good time to plan a spring meeting to raise local interest and awareness about education issues. Recent election campaigns certainly helped focus attention on these topics. Consider having your local superintendent or a panel that includes administrators from your school district. It would be a good idea to invite educators with expertise on the budget and on testing and accountability in your area.

Here are some questions you may want to ask your speakers to address:

- a. What are the demographics of your local school district? What are the percentages for low income and English language learners? How many languages are spoken in your area?
- b. What information can you provide on the school district's budget?
- c. How much of the budget is devoted to testing--for administration of the state's standardized test, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), as well as for preparation, including benchmark tests and any other tests that are used to prepare students to take the TAKS?
- d. How many school days are devoted to the TAKS and preparation for it? How often are benchmark tests given?
- e. How are students performing on the TAKS? How are your schools rated under the state's accountability system (Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable, Academically Unacceptable) and under the federal No Child Left Behind system, which is based on the TAKS (do they meet Annual Yearly Progress, or AYP)?
- f. What is the average salary for teachers in the district?

Consider sharing the information you gather at your meeting with the co-chairs of the study, Mandated Achievement Testing in the Public Schools of Texas. You can send that information to Nan Clayton at nanclayton@yahoo.com, and Anne Roussos at roussos@swbell.net.