



December 10, 2007

Commissioner Raymund Paredes  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
P.O. Box 12788  
Austin, TX 78711-2788

Dear Commissioner Paredes:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the draft College Readiness Standards.

In House Bill 1, the Texas Legislature directed the drafting of college readiness standards that identify what students should know to be successful in college or the workplace. The Texas Public Policy Foundation urges you to use this process to raise the rigor of Texas' high school standards in English, math, science and social studies. It is extremely important that students graduating from Texas high schools are properly equipped and ready for college or the workplace.

As you know, too many Texas high school graduates are not prepared for the rigors of college and need remedial coursework in reading, writing or arithmetic. In fact, during the 2006 fall semester, 162,597 students were enrolled in remedial classes at Texas public higher education institutions. Poor preparation in high school does not prepare students for success in college or in a demanding work environment. Instead, a lack of preparation prolongs the timeline to attain a college degree and makes graduation from college less likely. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, students who enroll in a remedial reading course are 41 percent more likely to drop out of college.

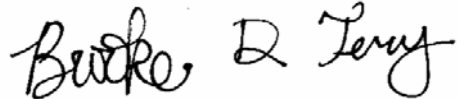
Thus, it is imperative that Texas raise expectations and truly prepare all students with a more robust and rigorous curriculum. At a minimum, high school graduates should: read, be exposed to and understand important works of literature; know grammar and be able to write well and succinctly; be able to do basic arithmetic and solve complex math and science equations; be able to think critically; and know the history of our founding and understand our system of government.

Unfortunately, both the social science and science sections of the college readiness standards seem to bow to a political agenda that promotes teaching environmentalism, a scientifically debatable position on man-made climate change, government regulation, and global multiculturalism at the expense of teaching of democracy, liberty, and America's free-enterprise system. If Texas wants active citizens proud of their heritage and willing to vote and defend America, Texas students need to be thoroughly acquainted with the history and principles on which America was founded.

Student and teachers have limited time in high school to learn the skills needed for successful careers or post-secondary education. Therefore, the Foundation recommends caution and suggests that the standards reflect a more balanced treatment of the politically contentious topics such as environmentalism, government regulation, and multiculturalism.

We believe the best way to ensure the continued growth and preservation of freedom and liberty in Texas is through a more challenging and rigorous curriculum, without political bias, that leads to a well-educated and civically literate citizenry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brooke D Terry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'B' and 'T'.

Brooke Dollens Terry  
Education Policy Analyst  
Texas Public Policy Foundation