



May 15, 2008

Texas Education Agency
State Board of Education
1701 N Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

Dear SBOE Member:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments regarding the proposed rule changes to 19 TAC Chapter 110 Subchapters A, B, and C.

According to the Texas Education Code, the mission of public education in Texas is to “ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation.” The code also states a goal of Texas public education is for students to “demonstrate exemplary performance in the reading and writing of the English Language.”

Unfortunately, too many students are graduating from Texas public schools without the reading and writing skills necessary to function and succeed in college or the workplace.

During the fall of 2006, 38 percent of students at two-year public colleges and 24 percent of students at four-year public college needed remedial education to be able to do college-level work. The Commission for a College Ready Texas reports as many as 50 percent of Texas college freshman are enrolled in remedial education compared to 28 percent across the United States. A 2006 survey by the Conference Board found that 81 percent of employers viewed recent high school graduates as “deficient in written communications” needed for letters, memos, formal reports, and technical reports.

The need for remedial education or developmental education is costly to students, parents, employers, colleges of higher education, and taxpayers. The Texas Legislature appropriated \$206 million in General Revenue funds for the 2006-2007 biennium to help Texas public institutions of higher education pay for the instructional cost of remedial education.

The State Board of Education has the opportunity to raise standards and emphasize the importance of writing and grammar in the English/Language Arts curriculum. We encourage you to pass standards that:

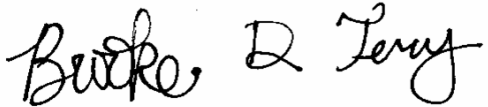
- Raise the rigor and expectations of our students and teachers;
- Are clear and specific, and
- Imbed grammar in the curriculum and include it as a separate strand.

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Passing an English/Language Arts curriculum that clearly outlines expectations should help schools better prepare students with their reading and writing skills. We support higher standards and believe the proposed English/Language Arts standards will help our students succeed.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on these proposed rule changes.

Sincerely,

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

Brooke Dollens Terry
Education Policy Analyst
Texas Public Policy Foundation