

Social Studies TETN Notes
January 29, 2008

(These are not official minutes of this meeting, only notes about the meeting. They were reviewed by Rosemary Morrow, Director of Social Studies at TEA.)

**Report on the State Board of Education (SBOE) Meeting:
January 17-18, 2008**

Committee of Full Board (Thursday):

*** Implementation of Absolute Return Fund of Funds:**

- Usually items for discussion are included in the Thursday session of the Committee of the Full Board
- However, much of the first day was taken to consider one contract.

*** Report on College Readiness:**

- An update on College Readiness Standards was presented by Dr. Raymund Paredes, Commissioner of Higher Education
- All the standards documents are ready for ELAR (English language arts, reading), science, and mathematics contents. The committee is still editing social studies.
- Rosemary said in looking at the revised documents, the standards are more aligned now to our TEKS than they were previously.
- The standards have been approved by the Higher Education Board and will be posted when the edits are finished. When they are, Rosemary encouraged everyone to go through the standards and make individual evaluations about how they match up with TEKS.

*** ELAR TEKS Review**

- Update on ELAR TEKS review: The facilitator will deliver the final draft document on February 13 to the SBOE. There will be a called meeting that day to consider this item only.
- The ELAR TEKS must go to first reading before they can go out for public comment.
- The ELAR TEKS will then go back to the SBOE on April 21. Again, this event is a special called meeting, to consider this item only.
- The idea may be to do the second and final readings on that same day so the textbook adoption process can move forward.

*** Re-adoption of Instructional Materials**

- We have no expiration date on social studies textbooks, but usually our books are adopted for 6-7 years. During the current adoption cycle, the books will be used for 10 years.
- Mathematics, however, required the board to re-adopt books already in place until the new cycle occurs. Publishers wanted to increase the price, but the board voted to keep the prices the same as the original adoption.

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Committee on Instruction: This committee impacts our curriculum community more than most other SBOE committees.

***Credit by Examination:**

- The University of Texas Austin and Texas Tech are the vendors for these exams.
- Questions have been raised about the tests as to whether they are truly EOC-type tests and if they are correctly aligned to TEKS. An initial review revealed that some tests were still aligned to the Essential Elements.
- The SBOE recommendation requires the universities to hire outside auditors to spot check tests on an annual basis. Their charge is to verify the tests' alignment to TEKS, including the new revisions of TEKS.
- Students taking an exam to earn course credit should be able to exhibit mastery of what students should know and do.
- The tests will be in place in Fall 2009. Rosemary is aware of revisions which are underway at The University of Texas at Austin.

***Identification of Advanced Courses:** The state has more clearly defined what an advanced course should entail.

- Questions have arisen related to the "no pass-no play" rule. A student can have less than a 70 average in an advanced course and still participate in extra-curricular activities: e.g., 60 or above.
- Some courses which have been considered advanced might not have been. This language clarifies what an Advanced Course means (e.g., AP, IB).

***Additional Requirements for High School Health:** Changes in the health course are efforts to make students healthier and for them to learn how to make healthy choices, resulting in more productive learning.

- Parenting and Paternity Awareness Program: This initiative comes from the attorney general's office.
 - There are efforts to remind high school students of responsibilities they have when they become parents, both mothers and fathers.
 - These pieces will probably be incorporated into health class. Some students take health in middle school, and these courses must also have this component.

***Funding Split in State Plan for Career and Technical Education (CTE):**

- Previously there has been a 60/40 split for CATE funding, 60% going to public education and 40% given to CATE at the higher education level.
- Last November, the SBOE decided to change that split to 70/30. Higher education asked for reconsideration, but board voted to keep the 70/30 ratio in place.

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College Readiness Standards:

- The higher education coordinating board approved the College Readiness Standards that include the four core content areas and cross-disciplinary standards.
- D. Paredes thanked all who recorded their opinions through the survey that was administered. He said more comments were submitted related to social studies than other content areas, over 1000 comments.
- The next step involves TEA Commission Robert Scott signing off on the document for public education. Then the standards go to the SBOE for aligning the College Readiness Standards and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.
- Then stage two of the three stage process begins. We heard from Dr. Joseph Kulhanek at the last TETN. This committee will be made up of 60% public representation and 40% higher education for stage two. The percent of public education representation will increase. How and when Phase II will begin is yet to be determined.

TEKS Review

***English Language Arts and Reading:** The ELAR TEKS revision process is running a little over a year behind schedule. The current calendar shows the TEKS being presented to the SBOE on February 13 for discussion and possible first reading. April 21 is a second called SBOE meeting for the purpose of discussing the ELAR TEKS.

***Science:**

- Elementary and middle school representatives met a couple of weeks ago. They made a lot of progress but there is much work yet to do. Julie and Rosemary observed the meeting part of the time. This coming Thursday-Saturday science high school representatives will meet.

***Career and Technical Education:** By law CTE TEKS revisions must be finished by next legislative session. The process is just getting under way.

***Social Studies TEKS** revisions are in the queue to follow science revisions. Members of the field should be ready when the call is given.

Assessment: Lynn Franzen from the Student Assessment Division spoke to the group. She wanted to address items that often come to her division in relation to TAKS and End of Course tests (EOC tests).

***TAKS Update:**

- There appears to be some confusion: TAKS is still here; it is still a graduation requirement for those currently in sixth grade and higher, and the eighth grade social studies TAKS will not be replaced.

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- Lynn showed the group a copy of the Web page that has an updated implementation timeline for all the EOC tests. It is located at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/eoc/index.html>.
- The class of 2011-2012 will be the first class where the EOC tests are graduation requirements.
- Implementation of EOC tests is voluntary until the class of 2011-12 enters ninth grade; it is a district choice before that time.
- Lynn encourages districts to have some people take the EOC tests while they are voluntary to analyze/evaluate current curriculum before the tests are required.
- Field testing is required if a district/campus has been chosen by the state, but the scores do not count toward student or campus ratings.
 - The U.S. History EOC test will be field tested this spring.
 - World Geography EOC test is currently under development. The field test will be held during 2009-2010.
 - The World History EOC Field test will be in 2011-12.
- In the draft blueprints, all 92 SEs (student-expectations) in U.S. History are included, categorized under six objectives, and spread proportionally over the curriculum.
- The number of questions for the test is not firmly set yet, but the number will probably be around 68 items. Student Assessment is getting input from teacher advisory committees, and there are reasons for both more and less questions. There need to be enough questions on the EOC tests so that we have sufficient data to truly assess course requirements. On the other hand, test fatigue and consistency across subjects are other considerations.

Questions for Social Studies:

***Bible Literacy:** People are asking about teaching Bible Literacy as a course.

- House Bill 1287 is not scheduled for implementation Fall '09. TEA is waiting for a reply from the attorney general for the next step.
- Anyone wanting to offer Bible Literacy this fall may do so. Students will receive state credit but there is no state funding for materials.
- Bible Literacy can be taught as an Independent Study course under ELAR with a certified ELAR teacher or as a Special Topics course with a certified history teacher.

***Personal Financial Literacy (PFL):** Rosemary is still getting questions about PFL.

- Yes, it is to be added to the high school economics course.
- There are 12 instructional areas in PFL and now some 50 approved vendors with available resources, many of which are free.
- Rosemary strongly encouraged the group to include these 12 areas of instruction in the economics course as their districts work on curriculum

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- The 12 areas of instruction will most likely be rolled into the economics TEKS as revisions take place.
- Rosemary is finding that some districts are still unaware of the law passed in 97th session requiring the PFL component be taught at high school.

***Time on Instruction:**

- Rosemary hears from parents at the elementary level, sometimes teachers, about not having enough time for social studies instruction. Some districts are trying to figure out how to double-up on courses to make time for all content. This has implications for upcoming high-stakes end-of-course assessments.
- There is no provision for an exact number of minutes or percentage of time that must be spent on social studies in elementary grades. The Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 74.2 and 74.3 say there must be adequate time for teachers to teach and students to learn and that all standards must be taught. With EOC tests, these requirements will become more critical, as opposed to TAKS where only some of the courses are being assessed.

TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:

§74.2. Description of a Required Elementary Curriculum.

A school district that offers kindergarten through Grade 5 must provide instruction in the required curriculum as specified in §74.1 of this title (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills). The district must ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, health, physical education, technology applications, and to the extent possible, languages other than English. The school district may provide instruction in a variety of arrangements and settings, including mixed-age programs designed to permit flexible learning arrangements for developmentally appropriate instruction for all student populations to support student attainment of course and grade level standards.

§74.3. Description of a Required Secondary Curriculum.

(a) Middle Grades 6-8. A school district that offers Grades 6-8 must provide instruction in the required curriculum as specified in §74.1 of this title (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills). The district must ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, health, physical education, technology applications, and to the extent possible, languages other than English. The school district may provide instruction in a variety of arrangements and settings, including mixed-age programs designed to permit flexible learning arrangements for developmentally appropriate instruction for all student populations to support student attainment of course and grade level standards.

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(b) Secondary Grades 9-12.

(1) A school district that offers Grades 9-12 must provide instruction in the required curriculum as specified in §74.1 of this title (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills). The district must ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn the subjects in the required curriculum. The school district may provide instruction in a variety of arrangements and settings, including mixed-age programs designed to permit flexible learning arrangements for developmentally appropriate instruction for all student populations to support student attainment of course and grade level standards.

Source: The provisions of this §74.2 adopted to be effective September 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 4311; amended to be effective September 1, 1998, 23 TexReg 5675; amended to be effective January 9, 2007, 32 TexReg 80.

- In the EOC tests all TEKS are up for assessment. At the World Geography meeting the other day, the only TEKS eliminated for the test were spelling and grammar. There are very broad topics for World Geography.

*C-SCOPE:

- Rosemary is hearing questions about C-SCOPE. The creators are eager to share information with TEA and get the word out to districts.
- It is a collaborative venture so smaller districts can have the same opportunities as larger districts to have aligned curriculum and documents. Smaller districts do not have the personnel to accomplish that task as do larger districts. Rosemary has not seen the documents but knows much hard effort went into these documents.

Responses from the Field: Julie asked these questions to the group:

- What questions do you have of us that can we answer now? No one had any responses.
- What questions do you have that we may need to research?
 - No one had any responses.
 - Rosemary is still waiting to get special education information that was discussed at the previous TETN. The person who has the answer has been out.
- What issues are there in the field that we should know about?
 - Debbie Behling from Region 4 (Houston) said that the middle schools have been requesting more help with social studies than in previous years.
 - Rosemary commented that she is seeing more Academically Unacceptable middle schools in the data. One reality may be that the elementary feeder schools offer little or no elementary social studies. The students can't catch up in a year or so if they didn't have any instruction before middle school.
 - Carol Curtiss from Region 13 agreed that the same situation occurs in the Austin area. Julie said that for some students, the 8th grade

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is the first time students have access to materials and information which they should have received in lower grades.

- The stress and push for other subjects in elementary due to TAKS often puts social studies on the back burner. Rosemary wants to go back and look at data and see if there are any trends. The scores for the sub-groups impact schools' ratings.
- What topics do you want discussed during the 2008 TETNs?
 - There was a request for more help with second-language learners. Rosemary said the bilingual team will be getting additional information to the field in the near future.
 - Tina Melcher from Region 13 said that the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) may address that issue when the training becomes available. The preparation for trainers will be starting soon, several of whom are ESC specialists, and will include strategies for reading in the content areas. Grade 6 will be trained this summer, with grades 7 and 8 participating in Summer 2009. The training is required for teachers in schools with unacceptable ratings. Other teachers can attend as well. Rosemary talked to Dr. Muffet Livaudais, Director of Special Projects, recently. Muffet indicated that the final version of the document used for training is almost complete, and she will share it as soon as it is ready. Rosemary will get someone to come to a future TETN to share more about TALA.
 - Dr. Barbara Evans from Region 11 (Fort Worth) wondered if there would be a writing component on the EOC tests. The college readiness standards are emphasizing writing. Lynn said for social studies there is no consideration; she doesn't know about ELAR. Rosemary said she is not ready to give in just yet. Brenda Tingle has told us that when high stakes assessments are taken with paper/pencil format or online design, there are limits. But with technology changes we don't know exactly what the testing format will look like. How to incorporate the college readiness assessment requirements is unknown at this time. Senate Bill 1031 and other laws require that we measure college readiness and show evidence. However, that requirement will not necessarily count in high stakes testing.
 - Lynn Franzen added that by law the social studies tests can't be given before the first week in May but the results must be reported before the end of the school year to be included in students' course work grade. This restriction may limit the tests to a multiple choice format because of the huge number of tests to be scored, as well as the added expense. ELAR is in February so writing can be graded. The test would not be a true EOC test if given that much earlier in the year.

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- Barbara Dorff from Region 10 said they are seeing principals much more hesitant to let teachers leave the classroom for professional development, even if the substitutes are paid with grant money. Are others seeing the same trend? Regions 16 (Amarillo) and 13 agreed.
- Rosemary asked how we can address this situation. Danna Beck from Region 16 said that she offers Saturday trainings with stipends from her Teaching American History grant. Other options are online training, video conferencing, and book studies. Rosemary asked who is helping with online training. Danna developed Region 13's offerings herself, but it depends on the type of training. Teachers from small districts in Region 16 want to go to Amarillo to shop.
- Debbie Behling from Region 4 said they are developing online professional development with their curriculum and benchmark tests. She said that teachers from charter schools come, and those who are required to get G/T updates hours annually will attend. Sally Barr in Region 15 said they are doing more video conferencing with follow ups with the specialist on-site for specific problems. Carol Curtiss in Region 13 said they are using community museums on Saturdays. Rosemary agreed that it is difficult for some teachers to come to professional development sessions unless a stipend is provided.

Announcements

- Region 11 is sponsoring a Geography conference on February 9. NTGC is trying to do satellite conferences. The cost is \$25 which includes lunch. Dr. Debora Brown will send out on list serv. Rosemary is trying to send out what she receives from the ESCs so everyone know what events are being offered and they can attend if they want, no matter what part of the state the event is taking place.
- Tina Melcher is leaving Region 13 as of February 15 and going to Round Rock ISD as Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator. Rosemary congratulated Tina and wished her well. She hopes to see the CSSs in that area grow.
- Steve Cure, from the Texas State Historical Association, congratulated Donna Jenkins from Murphy Middle School in Plano ISD for receiving the 2007 Mary Jon and J.P. Bryan Leadership in Education Award.
- Update: Steve has been fielding questions about History Day program office's move to North Texas University from Austin. People wonder where programming will take place. The state History Day competition will continue to be held in central Texas, for teachers and students and their convenience. The schedule is being developed to adjust for the assessment calendar over the years as need be.

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- Lynn responded to a question about the change in the TAKS date for February 17, 2008. This change was made to avoid a conflict with primary election day.
- ESC social studies specialists will meet before TSSSA in March as usual. Carol Curtiss said she would be sending out information soon.
- TSSSA announcement: There will be an exciting lineup of keynote speakers. There is still room for more proposals to be submitted. The organization, along with TCSS, will also be working on the TEKS survey in an attempt to stay ahead of the revision timeline. Members were encouraged to register for the conference and participate in survey.
- The SBOE meets the same days as TSSSA, so Rosemary asked to know the schedule for the TEA update presentation so she and Julie could be at TSSSA for that event.
- Tina Melcher, current TSSSA president, is still looking for a few more break-out presenters. There is lots of talent out there, so let her know; she has until February 15 to fill the slots.
- Rosemary mentioned changes in personnel at TEA:
 - Dr. Susan Barnes, Commissioner of the Division of Standards and Programs, is retiring.
 - In her place, Dr. Sharon Jackson, is moving from Deputy Commissioner for Curriculum.
 - Anita Gibbons, who has been working with Instructional Material, will now become Deputy Commissioner for Standards and Alignment. Others have spoken highly of her, and Rosemary is looking forward to working under her. The open spot for the curriculum director, previously held by George Rislov, will be posted again in the near future.
- Rosemary congratulated Vincent Muscarelli in Region 2, Corpus Christi ISD, for completing his doctorate. Vincent asked about the 3% cap on special education TAKS scoring and its impact on social studies. Lynn Franzen said she was not sure but he might want to contact the Accountability Division, as they are directly involved with these situations.
- Lynn said the special education staff continues to say that tests should be chosen based on what is best for each individual student, not an established percentage. There likely is some issue about how accountability rating will be affected if a district goes over the 3% cap.
[ANSWER OBTAINED AFTER THE MEETING: Since social studies is not part of NCLB, Social Studies TAKS-M and TAKS Accommodated are not part of the campus and district accountability until 2010.](#)
- Region 3 asked what the event number is for this TETN; Rosemary answered that it is 30453. To view this TETN check with your center technology coordinator to get information.
- Make a note that one of the SBOE meetings was left off a previous listserv message. Add the April 4th TETN to the list you received if you haven't yet

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done so. Someone caught it for Rosemary; the next listserv message will have the correct dates again.

- The next SBOE is in February, but April 4 was the first date available on the TETN schedule.
- Any time you have questions contact Rosemary, Julie, Brenda Tingle, or Lynn Franzen, and do support History Day. Regional history fairs are under way, and it will not be long until the state event.
- Rosemary has heard that there were some problems this year when students were attending a school and did not have final exams before the Christmas break, and then moved to a school where final exams had already been given. There were some glitches with the variation of semester ending dates as a result of the same start date in August 2007.
- As there were no other questions or comments, Rosemary and Julie sent their best wishes for a successful spring semester.