

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Ashley Holt
830-221-2621

Release Date: July 30, 2010

Comal ISD, 22 campuses earn TEA top ratings

Comal ISD was named a TEA (Texas Education Agency) Recognized school district for the 2009-10 school year. Of the district's 22 campuses that were eligible for a rating, 12 campuses earned an "Exemplary" rating and 10 received a "Recognized" rating.

Memorial High School (now Alamo Colleges—Memorial Early College High School) and the Comal Discipline Center were not eligible to receive a rating due to minimal student populations.

Ratings are based on student performance on the 2010 TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills), the completion rate, and the dropout rate.

"This news is outstanding," said Comal ISD Superintendent Dr. Marc Walker. "It took a great deal of hard work on behalf of all of our students, teachers, staff and parents to achieve this kind of success. Many of our schools made great improvements in test scores, and we are proud to be a recognized district."

Spring Branch Middle School and Rahe Bulverde, Comal (Garden Ridge), Goodwin Frazier, Arlon Seay, Specht, Hoffmann Lane, Rebecca Creek, Timberwood Park, Morningside, Johnson Ranch and Oak Creek elementary schools each earned an "exemplary" rating.

"Exemplary" ranked campuses must have at least 90 percent or more of its students and each student subgroup (white, Hispanic, African-American and economically disadvantaged) pass each TAKS test given. Those tests include math, writing, reading/English language arts, science and social studies.

Startzville, Bill Brown and Freiheit elementary schools; Canyon, Church Hill, Mt. Valley and Smithson Valley middle schools; and Canyon, Canyon Lake and Smithson Valley high schools each received a "recognized" rating.

Campuses that earn a “recognized” status must have at least 80 percent or more of their students and each student subgroup pass each TAKS test given, which is an increase from the 75 percent requirement in 2009.

In addition to meeting passing standards on the TAKS, high schools are rated on completion rates for the class of 2009. To be “recognized,” high schools must have 85 percent of all students and each student subgroup complete high school. “Exemplary” rated high schools must have 95 percent of all students and each student subgroup complete high school and 75 percent had to complete high school for an “Academically Acceptable” status. The overall completion rate for Comal ISD’s class of 2009 was 94.7 percent. The annual dropout rate is another rating indicator used by the state.

Middle schools can have no more than a two percent dropout rate from 2008-09 (all students and each student subgroup) for any of the three ratings. Comal ISD’s middle school dropout rate for 2008-09 was .1 percent.

In addition to student scores, completion rates, and dropout rates, school and district ratings are based on several other factors as well including Required Improvement and the Texas Projection Measure (TPM), which is a projection model that was added to the accountability system last year.

“This projection model was developed to offer alternative approaches to demonstrating student achievement that meets both state and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goals,” said Comal ISD Director of Accountability and Staff Development Tammy Lind.

The projection model estimates whether a student is likely to pass TAKS assessments at the next high-stakes (exit-level) grade, which includes grades five, seven (writing only), eight and 11. TPM is based on a student’s current performance on TAKS (individual hard score) and on the overall TAKS score of the campus the student attends (TAKS scores from all students attending that school).

Although this projection model has the potential to affect the ratings schools receive from the TEA (exemplary, recognized or academically acceptable), Lind said the measure is intended to show whether or not a child is on track to pass as well as how well a school and district are doing.

“When a child enters our system, they may be performing below grade level, and we may not be able to move them to grade level in one year,” Lind said. “But this projection model shows that our schools are working for our students, and if a child stays in our system, they will be successful.”

Comal ISD earned its “recognized” status without TPM factored in, and with TPM factored in, the ratings of 11 of the district’s campuses were positively affected.

“Our students and staff have done an outstanding job in exceeding state standards,” said Lind. “While it’s a complicated formula, the state has provided an accountability measure (TPM) that allows us to project where our students will be academically in the future and that indicates progress is occurring on our campuses. It shows us that our system here in Comal ISD is preparing our students to do well in the future regardless of their performance in a given year.”

Lind also said that despite working within an accountability system that adds new factors to the formula every year and is constantly evolving, the district and all of its schools have seen significant overall gains.

“This is the accountability system that our state has provided for us, and we are working well within that system,” said Lind. “Comal ISD overall showed substantial improvements in each subject area. We are proud of all of our students and teachers and of the 12 ‘exemplary’ and 10 ‘recognized’ ratings our schools earned based on our current accountability system.”

For additional information on TPM and other factors affecting school and district ratings, please visit the TEA website at www.tea.state.tx.us. Comal ISD’s district and school TAKS results will be posted soon at www.comalisd.org/About_Us/Student_Performance.asp.