



Fact Sheet on Adequacy Study Commissioned by the State of Texas

Texas' Constitutional Adequacy Mandate. “Adequacy” is the term that many states are using to figure out how much it costs to educate children so they can meet the educational standards of their states. In Texas, the State Constitution in Article VII, Section 1 imposes a mandatory duty on the Legislature and “empowers and obligates” the Legislature to meet a distinct constitutional standard to “make suitable provision” of education through a system of public free schools.¹

Texas' Adequacy Study. The state contracted with researchers at Texas A&M University to conduct a statewide “adequacy study.”

Performance Standards Used in Texas' Adequacy Study. The standards used by the study are not consistent with standards currently being met by Texas public schools. The study set the adequacy standard as:

- A 55 percent passing rate on the TAKS reading/language arts and mathematics tests for grades 5-8 and 10.
- An average percentage of graduates scoring above a specified score on the SAT or ACT test.
- An average percentage of students completing at least one advanced course.

Criticisms of the Study. Critics observe that:

- test results for grades 3, 4, 9 and 11 were excluded from the model;
- test results for writing, science and social studies were also excluded;
- the study did not include considerations of costs associated with operations, such as transportation, food service and utilities;
- the study did not include consideration of the costs associated with the other required state curriculum, including foreign languages, science, social studies, fine arts, technology, physical education, business applications, speech and communications.

Findings. Using these standards, the study reported the following results:

- “Money matters” in Texas public education and “other things being equal...it costs more to produce higher levels of educational outcomes.”
- The state already spends above the average minimum funding level to meet performance standards identified for use in the study. This amount is between \$6,172 and \$6,271 per student.

¹ The Texas Education Code echoes this concept by stating, “It is the policy of this state that the provision of public education is a state responsibility and that a thorough and efficient system be provided and substantially financed through state revenue sources...” (Section 42.001, Texas Education Code).



- Additional funding is needed, even with the low 55 percent passing standard established for the research. As much as \$400 million is needed to provide all Texas school districts resources need to meet the study's passing standard of 55 percent.

Important Questions.

1. Do the standards used in the study, such as a 55 percent passage rate in only grades 5-8 and 10 in two subjects, meet those envisioned by the Texas Legislature, the state Constitution, and the Texas public? Are these standards consistent with state accountability standards and federal performance standards?
2. Shouldn't any measure of adequacy take into account other important performance measures as laid out by Governor Perry and the state, such as decreasing the dropout rate?
3. Do the standards used in the study imply that a 45% failure rate of children in our public schools is "adequate" or "acceptable?"