



TSTA Legislative Session Update, February 6, 2013

Today's news is all about testing.

Senate passes Bill to Eliminate “15% Provision” for End of Course Exams

Today, the Senate passed Senate Bill 135 by Sen. Patrick. SB 135 eliminates the requirement that end of course exams account for 15% of a student's final grade. Senator Patrick's bill originally would have left the 15% provision up to local school districts, but he accepted an amendment offered by Senator Leticia Van de Putte that eliminates the provision completely.

House Public Education Committee Chair Introduces House Bill 5, an omnibus testing and accountability reform bill

Chairman Jimmie Don Aycock filed HB5 today, and every member of the House Public Education Committee was among a bipartisan group of legislators who signed on as co-authors. Rep. Aycock emphasized that this bill is a starting point for a serious discussion about fixing a broken testing and accountability system. As we have reported previously, a number of serious bills have been filed that address this important issue, but the final version of HB5 will likely become the vehicle that ultimately passes this session.

Some of the key points in the bill include:

- **Coursework:** Creates one foundation diploma that gives students a variety of postsecondary opportunities. It gives students more flexibility in the courses needed to graduate and allows schools to partner with colleges and industry to develop rigorous courses that address workforce needs.
- **Assessment:** Reduces the number of required end-of-course tests required for high school graduation from 15 to five: ELA II (reading and writing), Algebra I, biology and US History. Eliminates the cumulative score requirement and the requirement that end-of-course scores determine 15 percent of a student's course grade. Allows satisfactory scores on Advanced Placement or college-entrance exams to satisfy graduation requirements.

- **Accountability:** Calls on the state to evaluate schools on more than just test scores, creating understandable labels of A,B,C,D and F to describe school performance. Allows local communities to require a local ratings system.

Again, Rep. Aycock emphasized that this is a starting point and TSTA will work closely with legislators throughout the process to address issues that are raised as the final bill is crafted.