



Frisco ISD largest district in state awarded exemplary rating

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For the first time this year, Frisco ISD celebrated its exemplary rating from the state's accountability system,

which uses criteria of TAKS scores, annual dropout rates and completion rates to measure a district's performance. Frisco ISD is the largest district in Texas to obtain an exemplary rating without using special features the state provides to help districts bump up an additional rating level.

"I just think it's a culmination of a lot of hard work and academic focus ... it is truly something to celebrate," superintendent Rick Reedy said.

The state can rate a district's performance among five subgroups: African American students, Hispanic students, White students, low social economic status students and all students combined. Frisco ISD's diversity among students qualifies it to be measured by the state in each of these groups on each subject tested (English language arts, math, science, social studies and writing).

To be exemplary, the district must have 90 percent of students meeting the standard in each subgroup on each one of the tests. The district's students must also meet a 95 percent completion rate and have 1.8 percent or fewer dropouts in seventh and eighth grade. Frisco ISD missed the exemplary rating last year, because it did not meet the completion rate.

The absolute standard exemplary rating, awarded to 72 Texas school districts, puts Frisco ISD within the top 6 percent of districts in the state. While Frisco takes the lead in size for this category with 33,757 students, Allen ISD is the second largest exemplary district with 18,086 students.

"It's a monumental achievement," Reedy said. "No district our size has done it using absolute standard."

The state allows school districts to use several exceptions to "gate up" one rating level such as Texas Projection Measures (TPM) that uses a formula to predict if a student currently failing a TAKS test will likely be considered passing within the next couple of years. TPM is applied to each individual student that is failing, and students who are projected to increase their scores to passing can be counted as passing in that school year.

While some campuses within Frisco ISD used TPM to boost their campus rating, the district as a whole did not.

"We're proud of our staff and students for many, many reasons, and it's nice to stand in the top 6 percent of the state by meeting this standard all the way around without any assistance or help," said Debra Nelson, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction.

While critics of TPM argue that the exemptions allow schools to find a back door way into a boosted rating, assistant superintendent of program evaluation and assessment Mike Waldrip gave a presentation to the school board on Monday about the precision of TPM.

"It's a very accurate measurement in our district," Waldrip said.

His presentation showed that in the math portion of the test, at least 98.2 percent of students projected to meet the standard with TPM did meet that standard the following year. From 10th to 11th grade, the accuracy was as high as 99 percent for the math test.