

March 31, 2016

Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701



Dear Commissioner Morath,

Thank you for your communications and actions related to the technical issues of the STAAR-A Online testing. As a superintendent, I thank you for taking immediate steps to acknowledge and ameliorate the situation in your support of students and districts.

Northwest ISD faced the same testing issues reported by other districts. Of the 20 NISD campuses testing, students at six campuses experienced difficulties. We also faced the corresponding inability to speak with ETS during the rush of the testing glitch. Understandably, ETS was inundated with calls during that time frame. As research into the depth of the process and technical difficulties continues, I'd like to pose the concern we have as to whether there may be students who show submitted that were not able to submit.

I believe that this also affords us the opportunity to step back from the situation and examine the whole experience that is *accountability testing* in Texas.

- Is it sustainable to continue accountability testing as we know it, yet grow by an additional 80,000 students a year?
- Is it physically possible to expand and manage an unwieldy, cumbersome process of testing?
- Can systems and processes exist to sustain a testing regime that requires students in all districts to do the same thing at the same time across Texas?
- Should they?

I believe Texas is bigger than this. We can find a way to ensure a quality education for all of Texas' public school children without depending on what is an unreliable, cumbersome and burdensome approach. Your voice and advocacy for an accountability system that recognizes the value of scale and the significance of valid samples are appreciated.

Your response yesterday did much to relieve the anxiety of parents, students and teachers, and is sincerely valued.

Sincerely,

Karen G. Rue, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

CC: Johnny Veselka, Executive Director, TASA