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Texas Public School Education: Aiming for Excellence

**A Report to the 71st Texas Legislature
From the State Board of Education
and the Texas Education Agency**

**Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas 78701**



1986-1988

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Aiming for Excellence**

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TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
1701 NORTH CONGRESS AVENUE
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

December 1988

To the Citizens of Texas and Members of the Legislature:

Through the combined efforts of Texas citizens, educators and lawmakers over the past several years, the state's public schools have made significant steps toward excellence. Many gains have resulted from recent education reforms. Student achievement, as evidenced by test scores, has improved. Additional efforts have been made to meet the special needs of poor, handicapped, limited English proficient, at-risk and other children. Measures have been taken to ensure the competency of new teachers and the continued effectiveness of all teachers. Advances have been made in improving financial equity among rich and poor school districts.

Texans have a right to be proud of these accomplishments. Still, we should also be aware that our work is far from finished. Educational excellence for all 3.2 million children in Texas public schools is a goal that cannot be achieved without additional time, commitment and resources.

To help the state meet its educational goals, the State Board of Education has recognized four priorities for the future and has based its future budget requests and legislative recommendations on the priorities of: (1) educational equity, (2) quality education for students at risk, (3) flexibility with accountability, and (4) organizational equity and effectiveness. Underscoring these priorities is an emphasis on educational success for all students.

This report has a dual purpose. The first is to fulfill requirements of Texas Education Code Section 11.26(c)(4), which requires a biennial report to the Legislature on activities of the State Board and Texas Education Agency; to accomplish this purpose, the report details state-level actions over the past two years. The second purpose of the report is to focus attention on some of the future needs of the Texas public school system as it strives for improvement.

It is only through education that our state can hope to advance and thrive in the 21st Century. A shared commitment among all Texans can help achieve our goal of excellence in Texas public schools.

Sincerely,



Jon Brumley, Chairman
State Board of Education

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(State Board for Vocational Education)

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MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

Following months of work and lengthy deliberations by the State Board of Education's Long-Range Planning Committee and a series of 16 public hearings held across the state, the State Board adopted the Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives for Texas Public School Education in November 1985. This process was the first step toward meeting the legislative requirement for the adoption of a four-year long-range plan for meeting the needs and goals of the state's public education system.

The Mission Statement for Texas public schools, and its accompanying goals and objectives, focus on the varying needs of the education system. At the same time, they are held together by a common thread: the desire and necessity to provide a quality education to current and future generations of Texas schoolchildren.

MISSION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN TEXAS

Texas is moving toward the 21st century amid a period of dramatic change in the economic conditions of both the state and the nation. The educational system of the state is responsible for preparing our children to live and work in this changing future.

All students need to develop essential academic skills and to acquire a knowledge base on which to build lifelong learning. All students will be taught a core curriculum of English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, health, physical education, and technological literacy. All students will acquire a knowledge of citizenship and economic responsibilities and an appreciation of our common American heritage including its multicultural richness. To the full extent of their individual abilities, students will be provided the opportunity to develop the ability to think logically, independently, and creatively and to communicate effectively.

Educating our children to be productive in a changing future necessitates an excellent educational system. A system that can accomplish this mission must be characterized by quality, equity, and accountability. Instruction must be provided at the highest levels of quality. Educational opportunities and resources must be distributed with equity for all students. The educational system must maintain accountability for demonstrated results and continuous improvement. Such a system will have the vitality to prepare our children for the changes and the challenges of the future, a future which will belong to the educated.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

GOAL 1:

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

All students will be expected to meet or exceed educational performance standards.

Objectives

- 1-1 Set increasingly challenging expectations for academic performance by all students in the public schools, measure student learning, and report performance results.
- 1-2 Close the achievement gap between educationally disadvantaged students and other populations.
- 1-3 Support priority funding for prekindergarten, kindergarten, and the elementary grades.
- 1-4 Improve student skills in thinking critically and solving problems.
- 1-5 Recognize outstanding achievement by students and improved academic performance by campus.
- 1-6 Establish programs to reduce the dropout rate and encourage higher attendance.

GOAL 2:

CURRICULUM

A well-balanced curriculum will be taught so that all students may realize their learning potential and prepare for productive lives.

Objectives

- 2-1 Review and revise the state curriculum on a scheduled basis.
- 2-2 Encourage programs to develop students' citizenship skills and interpersonal effectiveness.
- 2-3 Encourage the development of self-esteem, respect for others, and responsible behavior.
- 2-4 Develop methods to accurately identify and assist the slower learner.
- 2-5 Provide for the expansion and enrichment for students whose mastery of the essential elements of the curriculum is substantially above grade level.
- 2-6 Coordinate statewide testing, textbooks, and instructional materials with the state curriculum.

GOAL 3:

TEACHERS AND TEACHING

Qualified and effective teachers will be attracted and retained.

Objectives

- 3-1 3-1 Set standards for the teaching profession and ensure that all teachers demonstrate competence in basic skills.
- 3-2 Refine and support a compensation and career development system that offers advancement in teaching.
- 3-3 Improve working conditions of teachers by ensuring orderly learning environments, adequate time for planning and preparation, and a reduction in paperwork.
- 3-4 Provide methods and techniques of instruction to meet students' varying abilities and learning styles.
- 3-5 Develop effective methods for recruiting teachers to meet identified needs.
- 3-6 Develop and implement methods to enhance the public's perception of teachers and the public schools.

GOAL 4:

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The organization and management of all levels of the educational system will be productive, efficient, and accountable.

Objectives

- 4-1 Review and redefine the responsibilities of the State Board of Education, the Central Education Agency, and regional education service centers, and reorganize to fulfill the mission of the public education system.
- 4-2 Improve the statewide accreditation process by using a performance-based accountability and evaluation system and attend, on a priority basis, to those districts most in need of regulatory attention.
- 4-3 Ensure that all certified public school administrators demonstrate competency in instructional leadership and management.
- 4-4 Ensure that the training of school board members and professional administrators strengthens their abilities to direct the educational process.
- 4-5 Establish a continuous, statewide educational planning process.
- 4-6 Institute a statewide information delivery and retrieval system.
- 4-7 Recruit qualified staffs that reflect as nearly as possible the ethnic composition of the state as a whole.

- 4-8 Strengthen coordination between the Central Education Agency and other state agencies, colleges and universities, employment training programs, and the private sector.
- 4-9 Plan to increase local responsibility for quality educational programs.
- 4-10 Investigate and implement methods to improve the ability of small districts to use funds efficiently and to deliver a well-balanced curriculum of high quality to all students.

GOAL 5:

FINANCE

The financing of public education will be equitable to all students in the state.

Objectives

- 5-1 Develop a management and financial reporting system that will provide meaningful and timely information at the state, district, and campus levels.
- 5-2 Identify price differentials in program and service costs among districts on a continuous basis.
- 5-3 Monitor equalization and equity in the distribution of funds and relate program effectiveness and student progress to costs.
- 5-4 Analyze and evaluate all funding sources on a continuing basis.
- 5-5 Analyze the financial impact of the education reform movement, and estimate education costs for the 1985-95 period.
- 5-6 Strengthen the accountability process, including accreditation and audit processes, selected management audits, and a periodic review of costs by campus, if needed, to ensure adequate student progress.
- 5-7 Administer and manage the Permanent School Fund for the optimum use and benefit of public school students and public education.

GOAL 6:

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Parents and other members of the community will be partners in the improvement of schools.

Objectives

- 6-1 Improve parental involvement.
- 6-2 Increase communication between teachers and parents regarding the academic performance and development of students.

- 6-3 Provide educational programs that strengthen parenting skills and help parents to provide educational assistance to their children.
- 6-4 Develop mutually beneficial partnerships between schools and community entities.
- 6-5 Initiate and develop a long-range plan for adult and community education.

GOAL 7:

INNOVATION

The instructional program will be continually improved by the development and use of more effective methods.

Objectives

- 7-1 Investigate new technologies which improve student performance, strengthen the curriculum, and achieve educational goals.
- 7-2 Develop demonstration programs for new instructional arrangements and management techniques.
- 7-3 Institute an information exchange that collects and disseminates data about advancements in education and systematically obtains advice about current practices and results from representatives of educational organizations, research groups, and schools.
- 7-4 Develop a comprehensive, coordinated plan for a statewide educational research effort aimed at improving all facets of public education.

GOAL 8:

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications among all public education interests will be consistent, timely, and effective.

Objectives

- 8-1 Communicate state education policies, needs, and performance to the Governor, the Legislature, students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and the public.
- 8-2 Reflect school district differences such as size, socioeconomics, urban and suburban factors, and community characteristics in reporting educational performance.
- 8-3 Provide the media with accurate information on a timely basis.
- 8-4 Determine public perceptions of local schools and provide information about developments and achievements in the public school system.
- 8-5 Increase the public's awareness that Texas' economic base has changed dramatically and that as a consequence, students need to succeed in school if they are to have an opportunity later to achieve economic success.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The task of meeting the needs of Texas now and in the future centers on our ability to provide a quality education to every child in the state's public schools. The academic performance of Texas students must improve. To best meet this goal, the State Board of Education has identified four priorities for the future. These are:

- Educational equity,
- Quality education for students at risk,
- Flexibility with accountability, and
- Organizational effectiveness and efficiency

These priority areas represent the basic efforts necessary to move Texas closer to its overriding objective of providing a quality education to all children.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Educational opportunities and resources must be distributed equitably among the school districts that serve the state's 3.2 million students. State policy identifies three criteria for determining equity:

- Educational programs will be substantially equal for students with similar needs.
- Funding will be adequate and substantially financed through state revenue sources to provide appropriate education to meet individual needs.
- Students will have access to needed programs and services regardless of local property wealth.

Texas' system of public school finance provides for shared efforts of state and local taxpayers. Because property wealth varies greatly among the state's 1,071 school districts, this state-local funding system results in broad differences between the very wealthiest and very poorest districts. Numerous efforts over the past four decades, culminating with education reform legislation passed in 1984, made strides in overcoming both funding and program inequities. In addition, the State Board of Education has taken several actions aimed at overcoming problems caused by limited access to resources. These include the Long-Range Plan for Texas Public School Education, which specifies steps that should be taken by educational entities to achieve a high quality education system; the Master Plan for Vocational Education, which redirects vocational education to better meet both the academic and career needs of students; the Long-Range Plan for Technology, which plots the course for meeting educational needs through technology from 1988 through the year 2000; the Plan for Regional Education Service Centers (ESC's), which focuses on the role of the 20 Regional ESC's in improving the quality of public schools; and many curriculum frameworks, which provide guidelines for

teachers to help ensure that students receive a thorough, well-rounded education. (Details about all these actions may be found elsewhere in this publication.)

Despite these efforts, full achievement of equity has yet to be accomplished due, in part, to the tremendous diversity in the educational needs of students and the types of school districts in which they are educated. The State Board of Education believes the state has a responsibility to better resolve problems that exist in state funding for poor school districts.

As this report is being written, the state is currently the defendant in a lawsuit that seeks to overhaul the school finance system on grounds that inequities among rich and poor districts represent a violation of provisions of the Texas constitution. The *Edgewood v. Kirby* lawsuit was brought against Commissioner of Education W.N. Kirby and the state on behalf of the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio and more than 60 other property-poor districts across the state. Almost 50 other school districts intervened in the suit on the side of the state. In April 1987, State District Judge Harley Clark ruled in favor of the plaintiff districts and declared the Texas school finance system unconstitutional.

Although the Third Court of Appeals has ruled in favor of the state, the State Board of Education believes inequities in school finance must be addressed. The current system, while apparently constitutional, is inadequate to meet the needs of students in property-poor districts. Thoughtful consideration of current and proposed state finance systems for public education is necessary to ensure that changes made in the current system deal adequately and responsibly with the issue of equity. In addition to the need for studies of equity measures and alternative finance systems, the Board also supports investigation of the relationship between student outcomes and expenditures; that is, how differences in student performance are related to varying levels of expenditure by school districts.

Changes in the school finance system must be addressed by the Texas Legislature. In addition, several steps will be taken by the state to help ensure equity in the educational programs offered to students. The Board has established these priority efforts as part of its budget recommendations for Texas Education Agency operating expenditures for the 1990-1991 biennium:

- Increase the technical assistance provided to local districts by Texas Education Agency staff to improve student performance on low-achieving campuses.
- Disseminate information to school districts on exemplary programs in other districts and states.
- Conduct finance studies to provide the Legislature with data necessary to make decisions affecting school finance equity.
- Implement Vocational Education Master Plan initiatives.
- Coordinate with other agencies the provision of services to handicapped students.
- Develop materials and provide staff development services to assist school districts in preparing for mandated programs for gifted and talented students.
- Increase technical assistance by education service centers in core service areas which are state initiatives.

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

Texas public schools are committed to the belief that all children can learn, yet many factors affect children's chances for success in school. Such things as a lack of parental involvement in a child's education, family economic status, and psychological and social factors place certain students at greater risk of failure than others. Without the necessary assistance, these educationally disadvantaged—or "at-risk"—students may drop out of school or otherwise be left ill-prepared to face the future as adults.

The State Board of Education believes that the specific needs of at-risk students often go unmet. A 1986 study commissioned by the Texas Department of Community Affairs and the Texas Education Agency estimated a statewide dropout rate of 33 percent. Disproportionately higher estimated percentages of minorities—45 percent of Hispanics and 34 percent of Blacks—do not graduate from high school in Texas. In addition, results of state-mandated basic skills tests indicate scores for educationally-disadvantaged students are significantly lower than those of other students.

High dropout rates and low achievement among educationally-disadvantaged students are not new occurrences; for more than 25 years, studies have documented similar concerns. Yet, because of the critical demand for an educated workforce now and increasingly in the future, new methods must be found and new commitment must be made to providing a quality education to at-risk students.

Specific policies have been developed by the State Board to address the problem of at-risk children. School districts, using established criteria for identifying at-risk students, must plan for and provide programs to meet their needs. Students identified as at risk are those who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Have not been promoted one or more times and are in grades 7-12,
- Are two or more years below grade level in reading or mathematics,
- Have failed at least two courses in one or more semesters and are not expected to graduate within four years of the time they enter the ninth grade, or
- Have failed one or more of the reading, writing or mathematics sections of the most recent Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) tests.

School districts may also consider other environmental, social, economic, developmental, and familial factors in identifying at-risk students, including delinquency, limited English proficiency, underachievement, lack of motivation, pregnancy, or sexual, physical, or psychological abuse. Not all at-risk students are low-achievers. Gifted students who are not being properly challenged academically also may be at risk of dropping out.

In addition to requirements for the identification and provision of services to at-risk students, the State Board and Texas Education Agency have undertaken other efforts specifically aimed at reducing the dropout rate and meeting the needs of educationally disadvantaged students. These actions are described elsewhere in this report.

The State Board has also identified other actions, supported by budget recommendations, that the Texas Education Agency will undertake in the next biennium to help assure a quality education for students at risk. These include:

- Provide technical assistance to low-performing school districts through initial campus visits and develop technical assistance plans and materials.
- Operate a clearinghouse on dropout prevention (mandated by legislation adopted in 1987).
- Expand services in compensatory education.
- Produce and monitor AIDS and drug abuse prevention education curricula.
- Coordinate with other state agencies involved with multi-problem youth.
- Focus on at-risk issues in in-service programs and other advanced academic training for teachers.
- Develop pre-service teacher training strategies that focus on at-risk populations.
- Assist districts in providing transition services for handicapped students.

FLEXIBILITY WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

Texas citizens pay some \$12 billion a year in local, state, and federal taxes to support the state's public school system. Texans have a right to expect that the schools be held accountable for the money—and trust—that taxpayers invest in education. While the Legislature may enact laws and the State Board and Agency may enforce regulations aimed at improving public education, the ultimate responsibility for delivering quality instruction to students rests with local school districts. They, finally, bear the burden of accountability to local taxpayers.

The State Board of Education believes the state has a responsibility to set standards for a quality education program and to hold districts accountable to those standards. Among the mechanisms in place to assure accountability are the performance-based accreditation process, compliance reviews, management audits, and various technical assistance programs. Supporting those efforts is the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), which will provide more meaningful analysis of school operations and program effectiveness. (Detailed information on these accountability mechanisms can be found elsewhere in this report.)

But while the state takes steps to ensure compliance with standards of quality, the variety of needs and resources that characterize the 1,071 school districts across the state demand various approaches to meeting those standards. Competent decision-makers at the local level must have the autonomy to accomplish their goals creatively and efficiently, focusing on methods that best meet the needs of their individual students. Flexibility must be afforded to districts that have a proven record of meeting minimum state standards to enable them to take innovative approaches for school improvement.

For the 1989-90 biennium, the State Board of Education has targeted several actions to be taken by the Texas Education Agency to accomplish the goal of accountability with flexibility. These include:

- Assist in implementing a site-based management approach through the performance-based accreditation process.
- Provide management audit training for local districts.
- Improved use of accounting systems and follow-ups on audit recommendations.
- Provide and analyze teacher testing and appraisal data from PEIMS for review of university-approved programs in teacher education.
- Expand use of PEIMS in the accreditation and monitoring processes.
- Evaluate recent education reforms.
- Develop comprehensive automated public education model development including financial, personnel and performance sectors.
- Develop and validate new or current tests for use in the master teacher testing program.
- Mediate and help resolve complaints.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Education is one of the largest "businesses" in Texas. With an annual budget of more than \$12 billion and a staff of more than 200,000 employees serving 3.2 million students in 1,071 local districts, the task of assuring maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the management of the state's public school system is monumental. Skilled, resourceful management at all levels of the education system is critical to its success.

An organization's effectiveness is determined large measure by the competence of its staff. To attract and retain a capable, talented professional staff in any big business, there must be opportunities for career growth and attractive, competitive compensation. In public education, these two necessities represent serious problems at both the local and state levels.

Although teacher salaries in Texas have improved since the most recent across-the-board pay increase and the career ladder system were approved by the Legislature in 1984, they have not remained competitive with other states. Immediately after the pay raises were approved in 1984, Texas teachers' salaries rose from 28th to 21st among the states. Yet at the same time, other states also saw the need to pay teachers more competitive wages. Within four years, Texas' average teacher salary fell back to 28th place.

Higher salaries for public school educators are not only necessary to maintain a qualified, quality work force but also to attract college students into the profession. Texas, like the rest of the nation, is losing far more teachers to retirement and attrition each year than it is gaining from new graduates of teacher education programs or from the alternative teacher certification routes. Even so, many local school districts offer salaries markedly above the state-authorized amounts for comparable positions at the Texas Education Agency. Compared to professionals in other fields, educators at the state and local levels continue to earn

less than their education, experience, and job importance should merit. For a long-term commitment to quality staffing in the state's educational entities, the compensation level of the profession as a whole must rise to meet market conditions. It must also be recognized that attracting and keeping qualified professionals is insufficient by itself; further efforts are required to recruit a staff whose ethnic composition reflects the composition of the state as a whole.

Higher salaries alone will not accomplish the goal of improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Steps must be taken to ensure that competency levels of professional personnel remain high. The Texas Teacher Appraisal System—a standard, statewide system for evaluating the classroom performance of every Texas teacher—is a key mechanism for ensuring high quality in the delivery of instruction to students. (A similar appraisal system currently is being developed for school administrators.) These regular evaluations include prescriptive developmental training or retraining to help teachers overcome identified weaknesses in their performance. Teachers whose evaluations indicate consistently above-average performance are eligible to advance on the career ladder, which provides annual salary bonuses. In addition, requirements for advancement on the career ladder encourage teachers to undertake advanced academic training and additional college work.

In addition to the need to improve salaries for educational personnel, the State Board of Education believes other steps can be taken to ensure greater organizational effectiveness and efficiency in Texas' public education system. These include:

- Improve the uniformity of assessment under the Texas Teacher Appraisal System.
- Provide leadership management training based on needs identified through appraisal of individual administrators.
- Develop a statewide program of teacher induction that provides first-year teachers on probation status with appropriate supervision.
- Develop a system for renewable teaching certificates.
- Coordinate and initiate the development of the Texas Academic Skills Program examination with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
- Begin implementation of the Long-Range Plan for Technology.
- Establish a design and plan for a statewide communication system linking the Texas Education Agency and school districts through coordinated use of media.
- Provide training for textbook coordinators.
- Develop automated desk audit and automated fund flow systems.
- Develop computer application system for textbooks and certification.

GOAL I:

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

All students will be expected to meet or exceed educational performance standards.

STUDENT TESTING-TEAMS

Education reforms adopted in 1984 placed a greater emphasis on basic skills testing of students by requiring the administration of reading, writing, and mathematics examinations at grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 as well as an exit-level examination in math and English language arts administered to students beginning in the eleventh grade. This testing program, the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills or TEAMS, entered its fourth year in 1988-89 with most testing set to occur in the spring semester.

During the first three years of the program, considerable improvement was shown in student test scores in the lower grades. Student scores have improved in all three subject areas in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7 and have remained basically stable at grades 9 and 11. While the State Board of Education has been pleased with the progress exhibited in the lower grades, the Board has been concerned that results for grades 9 and 11 did not improve and directed the Texas Education Agency to conduct a study to determine why scores have not improved at those grade levels.

In the spring and summer of each year, the Texas Education Agency and the State Board of Education study the passing standards for the TEAMS tests. Passing standards were raised for the English language arts section of the exit-level test in each of the first two years of the TEAMS program and were raised for the math section in each of the first three years. Students are now required to answer 70 percent of the test items correctly to pass each section of the exam.

In the fall of 1987, the State Board of Education expressed an interest in adding a written composition to the exit-level TEAMS test. Texas Education Agency staff conducted a feasibility study and concluded that this could be incorporated into the student assessment program beginning with the 1990-91 school year. National experts and Texas educators provided comments and advice on this new policy. After studying various options, the State Board in 1988 adopted a policy to add a written composition beginning in 1990-91 and to provide analytic scoring of all essays in grades 9 and 11 that do not meet the minimum passing requirements. This will provide useful information for the student and the teacher.

Also, in 1988, the Board approved a change in test administration dates from the spring semester to early fall for the TEAMS examinations beginning in 1990-91. The Board also called for the inclusion of norm-referenced test items and the expansion of the TEAMS tests to cover more of the essential elements, also beginning in 1990-91.

STUDENT TESTING—SAT AND ACT

The scores of Texas students on the country's two major college entrance examinations rose slightly from 1987 to 1988, while the number of students taking the test increased substantially.

The mean score on the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test was 417 in 1988, up slightly from 416 the previous year. The mean SAT math score was 462, up 3 points from 459 in 1987. Although Texas students' average scores on the SAT continued to be lower than national averages, Texas scores showed a slight improvement in 1988 while national scores showed a slight decline. The number of Texas students taking the SAT increased to 80,107 in 1988, a gain of 4,743 students over the previous year. Minority students accounted for approximately 50 percent of the increase. About 44 percent of total Texas high school graduates took the SAT.

The SAT scores of minority students in Texas increased at a greater rate than the overall averages. The verbal scores of Black students increased 5 points and math scores rose 12 points. Mexican-American students' verbal scores increased 1 point and math scores increased 6 points.

Texas students' scores on the ACT Assessment of the American College Testing Program also showed a slight increase, from 17.3 in 1987 to 17.6 in 1988. Some 46,288 Texas students took the ACT, an increase of more than 5,000 students from the previous year.

IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

A key objective aimed at meeting the State Board of Education's goal of improving student performance is to close the achievement gap between educationally disadvantaged students and other populations. The Board has directed the Texas Education Agency to step up its efforts to provide help to schools on establishing and meeting student performance goals to close the achievement gap, as well as to assist schools in providing a quality education to all students.

In 1987, Agency staff members spent literally thousands of hours on-site in nearly one-third of the school districts in the state in an effort to provide technical assistance to low-achieving campuses. The assistance included providing actual training sessions for campus principals in effective schools research, assisting in the development of local curriculum guides, and organizing meetings among teachers, administrators, and parents to foster community support of campus goals and objectives. In addition, Agency staff members made 97 monitoring visits to bilingual/English as a Second Language programs to provide on-site technical assistance.

Agency staff also responded to more than 2,500 written and telephone requests from teachers across the state. The Agency prepared and produced dozens of presentations for the TI-IN and Interact networks, which use satellite and microwave transmissions to beam information to local school districts.

Agency staff, 20 principals from low-performing elementary schools, and six consultants developed an instructional leadership training packet which focused on understanding and implementing change, improving communication skills, mentorship and mentoring, leadership skills, and effective schools research.

Other technical assistance to school districts focusing on improving student achievement included the following activities:

- Staff development, workshops and inservice training in response to requests from school districts;
- Publications detailing effective schools strategies;
- Help upon request in developing dropout prevention programs, special language programs, drug education programs, and appropriate teaching strategies;
- Federally-funded projects and programs in areas such as migrant education, special education, adult education, bilingual education, Chapter 1 programs, Services for the Deaf, drug education, and vocational education.

Funding was provided to each of the 20 regional education service centers to employ at least one full-time staff person to assist school districts in improving achievement levels and increasing graduation rates on low-performing campuses. The service center staff members assist the schools through a three-part approach that involves inservice training for educators, parental involvement training in elementary schools, and the development of model programs for secondary schools.

DROPOUT PREVENTION

The education reforms adopted by the Legislature in 1984 mandated a study of the state's dropout problem. Commissioned by the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Department of Community Affairs, a report issued in December 1986 included the following major findings:

- The 1985-86 dropout rate for Texas public schools was 33 percent (based on students entering the ninth grade who failed to graduate);
- Dropout rates differed markedly for the three major racial/ethnic groups in Texas: 27 percent for Whites, 34 percent for Blacks, and 45 percent for Hispanics; and
- The majority of Texas school dropouts left school because of poor grades, marriage or pregnancy, or financial problems.

In May 1987, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1010, which requires local school districts to provide remedial and support programs for students who are at risk of dropping out of school and to designate one or more "at-risk coordinators" in each district. It also mandated a biennial report to the Legislature beginning in January 1989 on the number and ethnicity of student dropouts in grades 7 through 12.

To help implement and complement the legislation, the State Board of Education amended rules regarding alternatives to social promotion to improve the holding power of Texas schools. These rules, which took effect September 1, 1987, require local school districts to adopt policies delineating appropriate services and programs for students at risk of early school departure and to provide academic options and services to these students. These requirements were designed for local flexibility in determining the types of academic options and services to be provided to at-risk students in order to provide individualized assistance toward high school graduation.

A clearinghouse for dropout prevention—also mandated by House Bill 1010—was established by the Texas Education Agency in 1988 to collect information on dropout programs and services and on prevention and recovery strategies for various categories of students with a high dropout rate. This information will be disseminated to local providers of dropout programs and services and to the interagency coordinating council on dropout prevention.

In addition, the Agency published IMAGES (Information Manual of Alternatives Guiding Educational Success), a resource manual for dropout prevention and recovery in Texas. The manual was a product of the Task Force on Dropout Prevention appointed by the commissioner of education in 1987. It summarizes the current status of research on dropouts and at-risk students and focuses on national and Texas dropout prevention and intervention programs. It was distributed to the 20 regional education service centers throughout the state and is available to school districts.

Other efforts to reduce the dropout rate in Texas are made by school-community guidance centers, which are established to assist in continuing the education of students with severe behavioral problems or character disorders. The centers work closely with truant officers, police departments, and juvenile probation units to coordinate assistance to troubled students and their parents.

School-community guidance centers provide a variety of services designed to reduce the factors that contribute to truancy, academic failure, dropping out, and delinquency. The basic core of services includes instruction counseling, home/school liaison, and follow-up. Basic academic skills are emphasized through individualized instruction or tutorial assistance, while social skills development, problem solving and job awareness are also provided. School districts, cooperatives of districts, and cooperatives of districts with educational service centers are eligible for funding for school-community guidance centers. Twenty-one centers are currently operating.

To assist with the needs of a specific category of at-risk students, the Agency developed contracts with three universities and one education service center for summer programs directed at migrant secondary students. The three-year projects are now in their second year of operation and have produced six modified correspondence courses, a remediation kit based on objectives from the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS), and course credit for over 1,200 migrant students.

Other dropout prevention programs approved and funded by the Agency included three model classrooms for disadvantaged students and seven consortia for early identification of children at risk. Finally, the Agency in 1987 produced and distributed to every commercial televi-

sion station in Texas (and to many cable stations upon request) a series of three Public Service Announcements (PSA's) to raise awareness of the dropout problem in the state. One of the PSA's stressed the importance of high school graduation to students; another focused on community involvement to fight the dropout problem, particularly among Hispanic students; and the third explained the seriousness of the problem and its effect on all Texans.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

To adequately serve students with varying needs, the education system often must operate closely with other entities that serve children. Cooperation between these agencies can help in finding long-term, comprehensive solutions to the problems that lead to high dropout rates and that impede school success.

The Texas Education Agency has taken numerous steps to ensure proper coordination and cooperation among the many agencies that deal with school-age children. Among these efforts is the development of interagency agreements to coordinate services and funding provided by 14 state agencies. Students served include adjudicated youth, handicapped offenders, handicapped youth in transition from public education to adult services, handicapped students in private residential facilities, and school-age residents of state schools for the mentally retarded.

The Agency is participating with seven other health and human service state agencies, private sector child care providers, and parent/advocacy representatives in the development of a memorandum of understanding concerning the interagency coordination of services to "multi-problem" children and youth throughout the state. State law requires that the memorandum of understanding be adopted by each agency by rule.

The Agency, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, and Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation have developed a transition from school to work program for handicapped students. The three agencies conducted jointly eight statewide administrator awareness conferences to inform their local offices of the interagency agreement that had been signed by the respective commissioners and to encourage the cooperative development of transition service programs at the local level. Staff from the three state agencies made numerous on-site technical assistance visits to the nine transition services programs which included eight different education service centers and approximately 20 school districts.

The major preliminary finding from the pilot programs was the need for a formal, consistent definition of each agency's role and responsibility in transition services. In public education, specifically, a significant problem was identified concerning the large number of handicapped students who graduated at age 18 and 19 without appropriate vocational and self-help skills. The local mental health/mental retardation and rehabilitation agencies reported that they either do not have sufficient resources to serve these students or are having to expend a disproportionate amount of their resources to provide additional training for the students. State Board of Education rules for special education were amended in September 1988 to place a greater emphasis on vocational and self-help skills in determining graduation requirements for handicapped students.

In addition, the Agency participated in interagency work groups with the Texas Health and Human Services Coordinating Council, the Teen Pregnancy Intervention Council, Texas Youth Commission, and Texas Department of Community Affairs and actively participated in the 12 Early Childhood Intervention Council meetings to help develop and fund programs for approximately 10,175 developmentally delayed infants.

Finally, a memorandum of agreement between the Agency and the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) was signed in 1987 to ensure that children placed by TYC in community-based residential facilities receive educational services through the local school districts. TEA meets annually with school districts which are affected by the facilities and with TYC to ensure that all needs are being met and to make any necessary modifications to joint procedures.

DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED

Effective September 1, 1987, pursuant to agreement between the Texas Education Agency and Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the school districts in which state schools for the mentally retarded are located, with the exception of Brenham Independent School District, assumed total responsibility for the education of all school-age residents of the state school. More than 500 of the 1,243 students were integrated into classes within the districts on a daily basis. Of the remaining 700-plus students, 600 were being served by the school districts on the state school campuses. Brenham State School continued to provide education for approximately 100 students only for the 1987-88 school year. The school districts' plans for 1988-89 school year call for more than 700 of the state school students to be integrated into local district classes on a daily basis.

The Agency and the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation jointly utilized \$3.2 million appropriated to the department for fiscal year (FY) 1988 to pay for a majority of the residential care portion of the costs for some 146 mentally retarded, autistic and emotionally disturbed students whom school districts had to place in residential facilities. The \$3.2 million covered approximately 70 percent of the \$4.6 million total cost of the residential care portion of these placements. The school districts maintained their responsibility for paying for the education and related service costs of these placements.

Additionally, the Agency and the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation disseminated joint application procedures for school districts and local mental health (MH) or mental retardation (MR) authorities to use for the 1988-89 school year in providing services to mentally retarded, autistic, and emotionally disturbed students whom school districts have placed or will refer for residential placement. The procedures provide for the MH or MR authorities to use the \$3.2 million appropriated to the department for the 1988-89 school year to assist school districts in educating those students who previously had to be placed in private residential facilities.

GOAL 2:

CURRICULUM

A well-balanced curriculum will be taught so that all students may realize their learning potential and prepare for productive lives.

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

To help ensure that all students have access to the required curriculum in Texas—known as the “essential elements”—curriculum frameworks developed and distributed to local school districts focused on special instructional strategies for all students as well as for those with a wide variety of needs and characteristics. Agency staff in 1987 and 1988 assisted with more than 100 major statewide conferences for administrators, parents, migrant, bilingual, and compensatory educators and also sponsored statewide conferences for administrators, supervisors, and teachers in the areas of mathematics, science, English language arts/reading, social studies, and foreign languages. In addition, numerous workshops were conducted in various curriculum areas at education service centers and school districts. Frameworks in math, social studies, English language arts, and music were developed during the biennium for use in school districts as guides for developing appropriate local curriculum. In addition, four brochures describing bilingual/ESL programs were published.

To emphasize higher-order thinking skills in the curriculum, an institute for higher-level skills was conducted for school district personnel and a publication on higher-level thinking skills was published and formally presented at the conference. Another 40-hour institute for school district and service center personnel was conducted in the use of higher-level thinking skills for migrant students. In addition, presentations were made around the state on effective teaching strategies and critical thinking skills for at-risk students.

In 1988, approximately 750 school administrators, supervisors and teachers participated in four regional and one statewide curriculum review meetings to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the state-mandated essential elements. Changes in the curriculum and in State Board of Education rules in the future were recommended.

Curriculum assistance to school districts also included:

- Training for approximately 1,000 Regional Day School personnel in specialized curricula for the deaf;
- A series of regional workshops for approximately 5,600 vocational education teachers to provide preliminary instruction related to the new and revised vocational curriculum;
- Presentations at approximately 40 conferences to promote school-to-adult life transition for special education students; and
- Statewide conferences for administrators, supervisors, and teachers on new trends and developments in mathematics, science, reading/English language arts, social studies, foreign languages, technology, and driver education.

EDUCATION FOR SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

Education does not consist simply of teaching basic reading, writing, and math skills. A successful public education system will ensure that its students understand the basic, universal values that will enable them to grow into responsible, self-supporting, and self-governing adults.

The State Board of Education, recognizing this responsibility, directed the Texas Education Agency to develop materials to assist local school districts in combating three major societal problems—school-age pregnancy, drug abuse, and AIDS—through the existing statewide curriculum. This three-phase program, called “Education for Self-Responsibility,” uses the essential elements for the subjects of health, science, social studies, and home economics to offer approaches for teaching students how to face personal decisions with an emphasis on responsibility.

“Education for Self-Responsibility I: Prevention of School-Age Pregnancy” was developed in 1987; “ESR II: Prevention of Drug Abuse” was developed in 1988; and “ESR III: Prevention of AIDS” will be developed in 1989. These publications include guidelines for instruction for pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Use of the Self-Responsibility guides is optional for school districts.

Perhaps most importantly, the publications emphasize the need for community involvement in combating these problems. School districts are asked to involve community members in developing local programs to ensure that community standards are upheld.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Because of the high priority of health-related issues which have been targeted not only at the national level but also at the state level, school districts are faced with many highly visible health concerns that they have not previously been called upon to address in the curriculum. Coordination with other agencies involved in addressing these concerns is critical in the development of statewide policy.

In 1987 and 1988, the Agency worked jointly with numerous other state agencies and commissions—including the Texas Department of Health, Texas Department of Human Services, Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Cancer Council, Texas Diabetes Council, Legislative Task Force on AIDS, and education service centers—to coordinate programs and services in the following areas:

- Deinstitutionalization of school-age residents of state facilities for instruction,
- Comprehensive school health,
- Cancer prevention,
- Targeting potential runaway children,
- Services for multi-problem children and youth,

- Services to medically fragile students (such as HIV infection, fetal alcohol syndrome),
- Services to children with chronic diseases (such as asthma and cancer),
- The federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act,
- Prevention of school-age pregnancy,
- Services to school-age parents, and
- Suicide prevention.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

To help meet its goal of ensuring that all students are adequately prepared to be successful, self-supporting adults, the State Board of Education in 1987 adopted the Master Plan for Vocational Education. The plan emphasizes a coordinated academic/vocational curriculum, basic skills and preparation for priority occupations.

The plan called for a phased-in implementation schedule to allow districts ample lead time for planning, to conduct research and development work on a pilot basis, and to permit legislative review. During the 1988 fiscal year, the State Board of Education approved curriculum rules to restructure the course offerings set forth in the master plan. Among these changes were the identification of essential elements for cluster courses and restructuring of the curriculum for agricultural sciences and technology, home economics, and industrial technology to provide for a flexible set of semester courses appropriate for the future Texas economy. Curriculum guides and student materials for 37 new and revised courses were developed through a \$1.3 million project involving vocational curriculum development centers located at East Texas State University, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University, and the University of Texas at Austin. The revised curriculum was effective in the 1988-89 school year.

At the same time, tenth grade occupationally specific courses were eliminated, along with pre-vocational courses in the seventh through twelfth grades. The last year for Coordinated Vocational Academic Education courses in the seventh and eighth grades will be 1988-89. After that, these programs will be phased into alternatives to social promotion.

The State Board also approved a number of federally-funded research and development projects to support implementation of the master plan. Chief among these are the three regional planning projects initiated in the 1987-88 school year. These three pilot sites are jointly funded by the Texas Department of Commerce, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Education Agency. They are designed to develop a regional planning process to identify training needs, develop programs to meet these employment needs, and then identify primary service deliverers. An independent evaluation of the regional planning projects was conducted during the year. The projects will develop recommendations for changes in law and improved interagency coordination at the local, regional, and state levels to promote regional planning.

The Board also approved priority occupations. Using data from the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and expert review by labor market specialists in the state, the Board identified a list of priority occupations which the Texas economy will need in the 1990s. The criteria for selection included those occupations with a large number of projected annual average job openings to 1995, a positive occupational growth-to-replacement ratio, a vocational training time of between three months and four years, and entry-level wage rates in excess of \$6 per hour. These jobs were deemed to be those for which a priority should be placed in training students since they would have the most impact on the future Texas economy. Other vocational training would continue to be provided to meet local needs.

Finally, the Board adopted funding rules that support the needed changes in vocational education. Beginning in 1988-89, requests for new, additional or redirected program units would be approved and funded in a priority sequence. Beginning in 1989-90, all units would be approved and funded using a priority ordering as follows: (1) master plan initiatives, including applications courses, cluster courses, "2 + 2," and principles of technology; (2) courses addressing priority occupations; (3) courses identified through regional planning processes; and (4) courses designed to meet other local needs. The Board also provided that if funds were insufficient to support all requests for vocational program units, available funds would be targeted to those courses with the greatest relevance to the future Texas economy.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Students with special needs are served through a wide variety of programs in Texas public schools including compensatory (or remedial) education, special education, bilingual education, gifted and talented education, and migrant education.

During the 1987-88 school year, Texas Education Agency staff participated in accreditation visits to assist in reviewing school programs for handicapped students. Documents and reports were published and disseminated to assist school districts and the public in understanding special education parent and student rights, State Board of Education Rules for Handicapped Students, and guidelines for extended year services.

Approximately 4,000 educators attended workshops, conferences and inservice training designed to improve instruction for special education students. Staff also conducted 50 dyslexia training workshops and on-site conferences for education service centers, colleges and universities, and school districts.

A task force on Mastery of Essential Elements for Handicapped Students was organized to develop alternative methods for addressing mastery of essential elements and grading for handicapped students. After evaluating current practices and methods being used across the state and surveying educators on proposed new criteria for successful methods of implementing mastery for handicapped students, selected examples of practices were gathered into a publication sent to all school districts.

During 1987-88, the Agency completed the second phase of a three-year evaluation study of compensatory, gifted and talented, and bilingual/ESL education programs. The first phase of the study identified data resources, refined evaluation questions, and developed program descriptions. The second phase included reports on the relationships between local demographics and performance and program implementation and performance. The data used in this analysis were provided by more than 3,000 campuses.

GOAL 3:

TEACHERS AND TEACHING

Qualified and effective teachers will be attracted and retained.

TEACHER EDUCATION

A new law enacted by the Legislature in 1987 significantly changed the requirements for becoming a teacher in Texas. Students in teacher education programs no longer will earn degrees in education but instead will earn academic degrees. No more than 18 hours of education courses, including student teaching, can be required for certification.

After State Board rules were changed to reflect these new requirements, the Texas Education Agency began working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the 64 colleges and universities that offer teacher preparation programs to help them develop the required new approaches. Of particular concern to the Board and the state's colleges of education are requirements for establishing an induction year for all new teachers. During this first year, new teachers will be supervised by experienced teachers and by university faculty to ensure that they are adequately prepared to teach.

THE TEXAS TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEM AND CAREER LADDER

Prior to enactment of House Bill 72, no uniformity existed in the appraisal and evaluation of teachers in school districts across the state. While some districts had comprehensive, effective evaluation systems, others had no formal mechanisms with which to appraise the classroom performance of teachers. House Bill 72 required the State Board of Education to establish a standard, statewide system for effectively evaluating the instructional abilities of teachers. The purpose of this statewide appraisal system is twofold: first and foremost, it is intended to improve the classroom performance of teachers by identifying strengths and weaknesses and prescribing actions to be taken to improve teaching abilities; and second, it assists in placing teachers on the career ladder, which provides yearly pay bonuses to teachers who earn high evaluations and who undertake advanced academic training.

The appraisal system was implemented in Texas schools for the first time in the 1986-87 school year. As a result of concerns expressed by teachers and administrators to the State Board of Education, a 28-member panel of Texas educators—including 10 classroom teachers—was appointed to review suggestions for improvements in the system. The State Board in April 1987 adopted many of the panel's recommendations, including reducing the number of indicators on the appraisal instrument, changing the method for scoring exceptional quality points, simplifying the professional growth plan and self-appraisal sections of the appraisal form, and providing options for professional growth with no financial burden

for either the school district or the teacher. In addition, the 14,000-plus appraisers who were trained and certified by the state in the summer of 1986 were required to undergo additional training that focused on the changes and on clarifying scoring requirements for exceptional quality points.

In September 1988, as a result of additional public hearings on the appraisal system and career ladder held the previous summer, the State Board of Education took additional steps to improve these two important aspects of the state's education system. The changes included:

- Requiring that all observations of teachers for appraisal purposes be unscheduled, except for the first observation by an appraiser other than the teacher's supervisor. However, the rule also stipulates that districts that choose to do so may authorize each appraiser to designate a time period of no less than three weeks duration during which the unscheduled observation shall occur.
- Changing the "satisfactory" rating on appraisals to "meets expectations,"
- Requiring local school districts to provide each teacher with a copy of the district's policy on the procedure for presenting grievances regarding appraisals, and
- Requiring the teacher's supervisor to conduct a post-observation conference with the teacher following each formal observation.

As part of its package of legislative recommendations, the Board asked the Legislature to increase funding for career ladder supplements to \$100 per student in 1989-90 and to \$110 per student in 1990-91. In addition, the Board recommended that the Legislature delay the scheduled implementation of Level IV of the career ladder from 1989-90 to 1991-92 and authorize the State Board to study and recommend to the Legislature in 1991 options for allocation of career ladder funding to school districts.

Another provision of the career ladder and appraisal systems is the designation of individuals on Level IV as "master teachers." The State Board appointed an advisory committee of educators to assist in drafting a master teacher appraisal instrument. In addition, Texas Education Agency staff conducted a job relatedness survey of the master teacher appraisal system, and a pilot study was planned for the 1988-89 school year.

ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION

Recognizing the need to recruit new teachers to help fill anticipated classroom vacancies across the state, education reforms in 1984 included provisions for alternative certification. These programs allow individuals who have college degrees but who have not taken steps to become teachers through traditional educational routes, to participate in intensive training and apprenticeships and to earn teaching certificates. The growth in the number of school districts participating in alternative certification is indicative of the growing confidence in the program. There were 31 districts involved in the 1986-87 school year; by the following year, the number had more than doubled to 81 districts.

Once individuals complete the year-long alternative certification training, they must pass the same subject area exams that college of education graduates must pass to earn their

teaching certificates. Performance on the tests by individuals in alternative certification programs consistently equals, and sometimes exceeds, that of individuals who have taken the traditional route to teaching. This high rate of success on the certification exams, coupled with the high evaluations on the teacher appraisal system earned by many alternatively certified teachers and the large number of minority candidates involved in the programs, are testimony to the growing awareness and value placed on the program. Expansion of alternative certification into areas of teacher shortages, such as special education, mathematics, reading and bilingual education, is also indicative of the potential of the effort. Continued expansion and development is forecast for the coming biennium.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION

A common complaint voiced by teachers is that excessive paperwork limits their ability to devote adequate time to student instruction. The Legislature, State Board of Education and Texas Education Agency have taken several steps over the past three years to reduce the amount of paperwork required of school districts in general and teachers in particular. The commissioner of education appointed a Paperwork Reduction Task Force in 1986 and, as a result of its recommendations, requirements for documenting mastery of the essential elements of curriculum and lesson plans were clarified to local districts to ensure that extensive, burdensome paperwork was not mandated for teachers.

Committed to seeking other ways to limit paperwork, the Agency reviewed forms used in school districts in documenting the assessment and placement of handicapped students and developed a set of simpler forms for special education. The new forms address all required rules and regulations in a format that allows many items to be addressed simply by making a check mark rather than writing out a response. This format can save many hours in assessing handicapped students, conducting admission, review, and dismissal committee meetings, and writing individual educational plans.

In addition, paperwork for vocational education programs also was reduced by eliminating "competency profiles" in grades 7-10 and reducing follow-up studies on voc-ed students from five years to one year.

Finally, the advent of the Public Education Information Management System (see details on pages 29-30.) also spells an end to many time-consuming, written reports for school district administrators.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Legislation enacted in 1987 required the Agency to produce a multi-media campaign aimed at attracting talented students into the teaching profession. The first phase of the campaign is being launched with the production of a pamphlet, videotape, television Public Service Announcements, and packets of materials for school counselors. Focusing on the theme "A Choice for the Future: Be a Teacher," the campaign is intended to appeal to high school and college students.

The videotape—to be available to the 20 regional education service centers, which in turn will make them available to school districts and colleges—features several Texas teachers who discuss what the profession means to them and are seen interacting with their students. The pamphlet, which provides a brief explanation of the benefits of being a teacher and the requirements for becoming a teacher in Texas, is available free of charge to all school districts, colleges and universities and is also sent to interested individuals directly from the Texas Education Agency. Public Service Announcements will emphasize the “Choice for the Future” theme and encourage students to pursue more information about teaching. Finally, the counselor’s packets will include detailed information about teaching for counselors to share with interested students.

GOAL 4:

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The organization and management of all levels of the educational system will be productive, efficient, and accountable.

PERFORMANCE-BASED ACCREDITATION

Student performance is the key measure of the effectiveness of a school district's instructional program. To emphasize the importance of student achievement in determining the productivity, efficiency and accountability of Texas school districts, the State Board of Education directed the Texas Education Agency to develop a performance-based accreditation process. This process has as its cornerstone what are known as the "effective schools correlates," the product of extensive educational research into the qualities that make schools most effective. These correlates, which are underscored by the belief that all children can learn, include:

- Emphasizing quality instruction as a top priority,
- Setting high expectations for students and teachers,
- Creating a positive atmosphere in schools that makes them conducive to learning,
- Providing strong instructional leadership at the campus level, and
- Monitoring student progress to ensure that standards are being met and that improvement continually takes place.

To enable the state to best determine student performance levels, the Texas Education Agency developed an evaluation format that provides data at the student, campus, and district levels on a variety of achievement measures and allows the comparison of various subgroups (by sex, race, socioeconomic level, etc.) among districts, regions, and the state as a whole. During regular monitoring visits to Texas school districts (which occur at least once every five years), these data are used to help determine instructional weaknesses. The Agency then provides technical assistance to low-performing districts and campuses, using the effective schools research as a basis for improvement efforts.

Staff from the Curriculum and Program Development Department assisted accreditation teams in monitoring districts with campuses identified as low-achieving. At the direction of the State Board, four new staff members were added and 28 current staff members redirected 25 percent of their time toward the direct provision of technical assistance to low-performing campuses. Staff were assigned to work with each of the 20 regional education service centers to determine existing resources for providing technical assistance and where additional resources were needed. Planning conferences were then held with service center staff. Modular materials were developed for use by school districts and training in the use of the materials was provided to Agency, service center and school district staff. Low-performing target campuses were visited to determine needs, regional workshops were

presented on effective schools research, and direct assistance was provided to target campuses. In addition, Agency staff conducted more than 50 workshops on effective schools research and school improvement practices for school districts, education service centers, and Agency personnel.

The development of individualized accreditation reports based on effective schools correlates and accreditation standards has made the accreditation process more meaningful to local school districts. Prior to the development of the performance-based system, accreditation was based more on technical compliance with rules and regulations than with actual measures of student performance. Performance-based accreditation, which includes requirements for campus and district school improvement plans, helps focus on making necessary changes where they are most needed to improve student achievement.

THE TEXAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

The Agency also has recognized the need to involve school personnel more directly in the accreditation process. The Texas School Improvement Initiative was developed and the Academy for Effective School Leadership was established to train principals to become members of state accreditation teams. From the initial 40 elementary school principals trained in the initial session of the Academy in March 1988, the School Improvement Initiative grew to encompass the training of an additional 250 principals the following summer. These principals became members of accreditation monitoring teams during the 1988-89 school year. Plans call for groups of secondary school principals to be trained in 1989 to join teams in the 1989-90 school year.

Participants in the Academy learn how accreditation monitoring visits are conducted, the role of accreditation team members, and how reports are prepared and recommendations are made. Although the principals do not do the work of the accreditation teams, they observe and ask questions and act as peer examiners during monitoring visits to individual districts and campuses. Through this exchange, it is hoped that principals will develop a statewide peer-support network that will give them an opportunity to meet with their peers and to give and receive feedback on their performance as instructional leaders.

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

During the 1987-88 school year, the first phase of a comprehensive management training program was implemented to promote increased levels of performance among local school district administrators in the areas of general management, instructional leadership, appraisal, paperwork reduction and other topics. Acting on recommendations of an advisory committee, the State Board of Education approved a phased three-year program that will be fully implemented by the 1989-90 school year.

The program required every local school district to conduct an assessment during the 1987-88 school year to identify the individual training needs of each district administrator. Several pilot programs were being developed and field tested during the 1988-89 school year to allow

local districts to choose from a number of programs to provide needed training. At the same time, an advisory committee has been at work developing administrator evaluation criteria for field testing during the 1988-89 academic year. These criteria will become part of the administrator evaluation system, similar to the Texas Teacher Appraisal System, that will be implemented during the 1989-90 school year.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER TRAINING

With the adoption in 1986 of State Board of Education rules requiring training for all members of local school district boards of trustees, hundreds of board members have been schooled in the basic tenets of educational policy-making. In 1987, the Board appointed an advisory group comprised of school board members, education service center executive directors, school superintendents, and university representatives to review and recommend updates to rules on school board member training.

As a result of the advisory committee's recommendations, the rules were revised by the Board in September 1988 to place a greater emphasis on the importance of board member training. Under the revised rules, a school district whose board members do not complete the mandatory training requirements will be cited for that deficiency in its accreditation report. All board members must participate in a local district orientation session within 60 days before or after their election or appointment. The rules allow each regional education service center, plus private and professional organizations, school districts, government agencies, and colleges and universities to apply to the Texas Education Agency for approval to sponsor training programs.

THE PUBLIC EDUCATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PEIMS)

Aimed at improving the Texas Education Agency's abilities to collect, store and analyze information from local school districts, the Public Education Information Management System is providing the Agency, the State Board of Education and other state policy-makers with more effective data for accountability and decision-making.

Development of PEIMS began in late 1984, and the first data submissions were made in the 1987-88 school year. Plans call for the system to continue to be phased in over a five-year period culminating in the 1992-93 school year. Staff, financial, organizational, and dropout data submissions already have been implemented. Information on individual students and some additional dropout data are planned for implementation over four years. Data on school facilities will be collected in the fifth year. Each type of data added to PEIMS will be pilot tested one year prior to its scheduled implementation. PEIMS also will continue to be adapted to meet emerging needs and requirements from the education community and policy-makers.

To accomplish the implementation of PEIMS, funds were provided to the 20 regional education service centers to edit and deliver standardized data from school districts to the Agency. A PEIMS coordinator was funded in each ESC to train and assist school districts in submitting PEIMS data. Districts submit their data to their regional ESC, where edits are performed before the information is forwarded to the Agency. Edit standards are updated and published annually. Twice a year, the PEIMS coordinators meet in Austin to attend training workshops. Training topics include new data standards, editing criteria, data collection procedures, and general PEIMS updates.

In 1988, the role of the ESCs in PEIMS was expanded. The Agency contracted with the Region XX service center in San Antonio to produce an improved edit system for processing PEIMS data. The new system, which will be available for use on mainframe, micro- and mini-computers, will be faster than the previous edit system. Many new edits, published in the 1988-89 PEIMS Data Standards, will be added to the new system. Some of these edits were added based on analysis of the 1987-88 PEIMS data. In addition, a summary report of data submitted by each school district will now be generated by the edit program so that districts can receive immediate feedback about their data.

With the help of an internal committee of major users of Texas Education Agency data, the PEIMS staff compiled a book of universal data definitions of school budget and staff operations at a level of detail not previously collected by the Agency. These data standards defined the content, format and definitions of data required from school districts and replaced the various sets of forms and definitions previously sent to districts from different divisions in the Agency. Collecting data at the more detailed level of school operations and using state-of-the-art database management software enables unlimited user views, queries, and reports.

When fully implemented, PEIMS will eliminate dozens of the "pen and paper" reports currently required of school districts while providing a more comprehensive, manageable, and efficient system for evaluating the accomplishments and needs of the state's public education system.

THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

Established in 1949, the Texas Education Agency is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of State Board of Education rules and state laws in local school districts and with channeling more than \$6 billion in state and federal funds to districts. The State Board of Education is the Agency's governing body and appoints the commissioner of education, who is the Agency's chief executive officer. Five deputy and ten assistant commissioners support the commissioner by directing Agency operations in the areas of Educational Quality, Curriculum and Program Development, Finance and Compliance, Research and Information, and Internal Management. These departments and their component divisions carry out the primary functions of the Agency. Two other deputy-level Agency departments that report directly to the commissioner are legal services, headed by the general counsel, and an investment office, directed by the chief investment officer, that advises the Board on investment of the Permanent School Fund.

Education reforms adopted in 1984 changed the scope and direction of the Agency, which was reorganized to better carry out the goals of reform. Despite the increased responsibilities created by the reforms, the Agency operated during the 1987-88 biennium with a smaller staff and smaller budget than were initially approved to implement the reforms.

The Agency is organized around five distinct functions designed to:

- Improve the effectiveness of schools, teachers and administrators (Educational Quality);
- Enhance educational programs for students (Curriculum and Program Development);
- Provide funding to local districts and to ensure proper use of state and federal funds (Finance and Compliance);
- Conduct educational research, develop and administer student and teacher testing programs, and provide analytical information and policy development (Research and Information); and
- Efficiently and effectively support operations of the Agency itself (Internal Management).

One of the State Board of Education's objectives for achieving the goal of improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness in the state's public school system is the recruitment of more minority applicants for positions in the Texas Education Agency. In 1987, a full-time staff member was hired specifically to recruit minority candidates for Agency jobs. In addition, more than 300 Agency employees—both supervisory and non-supervisory—were trained on the subject of equal employment opportunity through the Texas Commission on Human Rights.

REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

Twenty regional education service centers, created by the Legislature in 1965, provide a wide range of services to local school districts across the state. To more clearly define the role of ESCs in providing services that complement the Board's efforts to improve Texas public schools, the Board made several changes in 1988 to the State Plan for Regional Education Service Centers, which was adopted in 1986. The amended plan calls for service centers to provide various types of training and technical assistance and requires the Texas Education Agency to evaluate annually the quality of services provided to school districts by the ESCs. Adoption of the revisions followed extensive discussion by Board members of service delivery areas, accountability, coordination of services, and the types of core services ESCs should provide to districts. Suggestions from ESC executive directors were incorporated into the revisions.

Texas Education Agency staff worked closely with the ESCs to implement the Plan by coordinating a standard application system encompassing all ESC activities. Agency staff reviewed, negotiated, and approved 20 ESC applications and 87 amendments; maintained fund-flow accountability for 18 projects at each ESC; received and reviewed ESC fiscal and program documents; implemented an ESC annual performance report system; and conducted on-site monitoring of Agency-approved projects.

GOAL 5:

FINANCE

The financing of public education will be equitable to all students in the state.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL DISTRICTS

Some \$6 billion in state and federal funds are allocated to Texas school districts each year. The responsibility for ensuring that districts receive the Foundation School Program (FSP) funds to which they are entitled and that the money is spent appropriately falls to the Texas Education Agency, which also reviews and approves requests for certain grants and other special funds.

Agency divisions which deal with vocational education, special education, adult education/employment and training, and compensatory/bilingual/migrant education processed and approved applications for approximately \$587 million in non-FSP in 1987. More than 3,000 applications and literally thousands of other financial documents were reviewed and approved. These funds were generated from 26 different federal and state funding sources.

State Foundation School Program allocations were distributed through a new electronic transfer system. Prior to the development and implementation of this system, Foundation School Program warrants for all districts were mailed. The warrants had to be placed into envelopes manually and carried to the post office. Districts were dependent on the timeliness of the postal service for the delivery of a significant portion of their operating funds. In addition, the State Treasury could not determine the amount of funds needed at any given time so that adequate funds would be available when the warrants were presented for payment. Foundation School Program warrants are now transferred electronically through a clearinghouse of the Federal Reserve System, allowing districts to manage financial resources more effectively and efficiently since they know exactly when the funds will be deposited into their accounts. The State Treasury knows exactly the amount of funds needed prior to the actual transfer and can, therefore, manage the state's resources much more efficiently.

THE PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND

Created with a \$2 million appropriation by the 1854 Texas constitution, the Permanent School Fund was established as a means to ensure adequate financing for Texas schools. Subsequent constitutions, legislative acts, and constitutional amendments gave the Fund all proceeds from the sale and rental of more than 46 million acres of public land as well as mineral production rights to 7 million acres of land. Mineral rights to tidelands to a distance of 10.35 miles also have been granted to the Fund.

Over the years, more than \$5 billion has been deposited into the Fund by the General Land Office from these sources. Today's schoolchildren are reaping the benefits of income from

these assets. The Permanent School Fund in 1988 provided a total of more than \$572 million to local school districts.

In addition to employing an investment officer and staff at the Texas Education Agency to advise the State Board of Education on investment of the Permanent School Fund, the Board continued to use independent investment advisors. Advice from staff and outside counsel provides the Board with valuable information with which to make decisions regarding asset allocation of available funds, proper bond maturities to be purchased and specific stocks to be bought and sold.

For the past five years, the total portfolio of the Permanent School Fund ranked in the top 2 percent of similar funds with an average 14.8 percent return per year, according to a report issued by Kidder, Peabody & Company. The average return for all funds measured during this period was 11.7 percent. Income produced by the Permanent School Fund for the schools has doubled in the past six years, from \$103 per ADA in 1982 to a current annual rate of about \$205. Current yield of the Fund's portfolio remains high at 9.3 percent. Dividend growth rate of the stock portfolio is 7.8 percent. Gains, both realized and unrealized, on securities have replaced General Land Office deposits as the primary source of Fund growth.

LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

In addition to helping ensure that school districts are accomplishing their primary goal of providing good instructional programs for students, the state also is responsible for ensuring that funds are spent wisely. Various monitoring functions combine reviews of written reports with on-site visits to school districts to hold the districts accountable for the use of state and federal funds. In addition, the Agency's audit staff reviews budgets of local school districts annually and investigates complaints involving the use of state and federal funds by districts.

Another mechanism in place to ensure accountability is the required Annual Performance Report. Each school district must prepare this yearly report and make it available to the public. The law states that the report must describe the district's educational performance and give financial information related to costs incurred by the district. The reports contain information about such topics as test scores, performance trends, attendance and dropout data, discipline, and personnel.

The Agency also monitored local Regional Day School Programs for the Deaf for management and accountability and to provide a basis for contract negotiation and funding approval. Contract application approval included reviewing, processing, and approving 249 applications, amendments, and expenditure reports.

GOAL 6:

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Parents and other members of the community will be partners in the improvement of schools.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents play an extremely important role in the academic success of their children. In fact, as a pamphlet published by the Texas Education Agency points out: "Parents are their children's first and most important teachers." In addition to the pamphlet, which was made available to all local school districts and also is distributed by the Agency in correspondence and at conferences and meetings, the State Board of Education and Agency have taken several steps aimed at encouraging greater parental interest and involvement in education.

Numerous research publications, including the U.S. Department of Education's *What Works* and the National Institute of Education's *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission of Reading*, underscore the importance of parents reading to their children and assisting them with their schoolwork to help ensure children's long-term success in school. However, adult illiteracy in Texas precludes large numbers of parents from being able to accomplish these tasks. Because many parents do not possess rudimentary reading skills or have very limited English skills, their children cannot receive the benefits of parental participation in schoolwork.

To assist these parents, the Agency co-sponsored a statewide family literacy conference with the Intercultural Development Research Association and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. The conference, entitled "Empowering the Family through Education," presented operational details of models that already exist for family literacy programs with emphasis on programs for limited English proficient parents.

The Agency provided assistance in planning and implementing another state parental involvement conference for more than 500 parents, teachers and administrators. Staff also conducted sessions at two major conferences dealing with involvement of parents of at-risk children. A migrant parental involvement framework was published, workshops were conducted to assist school districts, and staff worked with the State Parent Advisory Council for Migrant Education. Update sheets for the special education parents' rights book (in both Spanish and English) were developed and disseminated to all school districts, while audio tapes of the book were sent to each education service center. Braille and Vietnamese language versions of the book also have been printed.

A special project in adult education was funded for the development of a model and implementing strategies for involving non-reading parents in an inter-generational approach to combating illiteracy. This approach involves the delivery of literacy instruction to parents of preschool- and primary school-age children in a setting where the parents are taught

to help their children while at the same time they are assisted in improving their own literacy skills. An implementation handbook was developed as part of the project, covering a review of the literature regarding learning and social context, the core curriculum design, recruitment of parents, implementation procedures, working with limited English proficient parents, and documentation of the implementation process.

Special calendars of daily activities for parents and children in kindergarten through grade 3 were developed and more than 28,000 were distributed. The activities are aimed at helping parents provide educationally enriching support to their children and to assist them in making the link between home and school.

Finally, the Agency produced a television Public Service Announcement, distributed to every T.V. station in the state, that focused on the importance of parental involvement to children's success in school.

ADULT LITERACY

Since 1983, adult education special projects funds have been used to fund the start-up of literacy councils in communities to complement and assist the public adult education system in locating and teaching the least educated, most in-need adults who function below a reading grade equivalent of fourth grade. Volunteer tutors are recruited and trained to teach non-reading adults. To assist the volunteer councils and the implementation of volunteer adult literacy programs, a project was funded in 1987 to provide adult literacy tutor training, trainer training and technical assistance on a statewide basis. This funding is considered "seed money" for literacy councils to become established as private, non-profit organizations which complement the public adult education system. Initial one-year support of these councils was determined to be less than adequate since self-sufficiency frequently takes more than 12 months; the small six-months continuation grants begun in fiscal year 1987-88 allow councils the additional time needed to secure other financial support.

GOAL 7:

INNOVATION

The instructional program will be continually improved by the development and use of more effective methods.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

As Texas has moved away from an oil- and agriculture-based economy, technology has come to play a larger and larger role in both business and education. High-tech industries born in Texas, such as Texas Instruments and Electronic Data Systems, have led the way for hundreds of other similar business ventures, while nationally-respected consortia—Microelectronics and Computer Corporation (MCC) and Sematech—have based their operations in Texas due in large part to the educational promise of the state.

Today's students must be skilled in the use of technology that will be a staple of so many future jobs. Computer literacy courses at the junior high level are mandated by the state, while students choosing the advanced high school program must earn additional credits in computer-related subjects. In addition to the required coursework, the State Board of Education has approved and funded several pilot projects in individual school districts designed to serve as models for innovative technology education programs in other districts. These projects include:

- The implementation of a course in the principles of technology in the Austin Independent School District and Leander ISD as developed by the Center for Occupational Research and Development in Waco. The program, which is an applied physics course, will be evaluated during the 1988-89 school year to determine whether it should become part of the public secondary school curriculum.
- The Texas Learning Technology Group developed a program to teach physical science using an interactive video disc system. The Texas Education Agency funded 20 districts to test the effectiveness of this system in helping students learn the content and skills in physical science and developing positive attitudes toward science. The districts were selected through a competitive process that was based upon geographic location and extent of need. Special efforts were made to include schools of various wealth and size. The systems were installed and teachers were trained in the summer, and the program was implemented and will be evaluated during the 1988-89 school year.
- A project to develop a "2 + 2 program" (encompassing the final two years of high school and two years of junior college training) in electronics-related occupations has been funded through Leander ISD, which is coordinating its activities with Austin Community College. The project has been developed with the advice of representatives of major electronics manufacturing firms in the Austin area.
- Eight demonstration projects were funded using technology to address basic skills. These projects included using computers to help students learn to read, in developing higher order thinking skills, and for TEAMS test remediation.

- A project in the amount of \$110,000 was funded through the University of Texas at Austin to develop and implement a model distance learning program in vocational health occupations. The initial phase of the project, in which three small school districts participated, developed a distance learning delivery system for the course entitled health care science.

Finally, to assist school districts and other educational entities in the purchase of software for computer systems, the State Board of Education appointed a Software Advisory Committee. After researching what other states, consortia of states, and private organizations had done, the committee established the first phase of a process to establish standards for the evaluation of software and creating an approved list of software for the state. That process is awaiting funding.

DISTANCE LEARNING

The vastness of the state, coupled with limited resources and demand for courses in very small school districts, make the use of technology potentially quite cost effective and efficient in the delivery of instruction to students and inservice training to educators. For example, through the use of distance learning systems, a 10-member class of high schoolers in remote West Texas might learn French from a teacher in a studio in San Antonio, interacting and asking questions via two-way audio/one-way video communication. Students are able to take advantage of a wider range of course choices while their school district saves the money it would take to hire a full-time French teacher. Likewise, teachers in that small district could benefit from inservice training from noted state and national educational authorities without traveling long distances or paying the costs for the trainers to come to them.

One such distance learning system is the TI-IN Network, a private venture which operates out of the Region XX Education Service Center in San Antonio. The Texas Education Agency offered three hours per week of programming on TI-IN during the 1988-89 biennium on a wide variety of topics. School district personnel can learn about new State Board of Education rules and regulations or be brought up to date on the latest instructional approaches in such areas as special education or gifted and talented education. A regular Agency-produced program on TI-IN—TEA Information for Public Schools (TIPS)—keeps district staff informed of national and state education-related news, deadlines for state-mandated reports, schedules of conferences and other events, and general information about Texas Education Agency programs and projects. In addition to producing TI-IN programs, Agency staff coordinated the approval of 38 courses for credit offered through TI-IN and other distance learning systems in the state, while also assisting districts and education service centers in coordinating needs and services with distance learning suppliers.

“STAR SCHOOLS”

Two projects through the federal “Star Schools” program were funded in an effort to provide instruction in math, science, and foreign language to students who qualify for Chapter I (Title I) funding and other students who traditionally are not served in these courses. One

One project conducted by the Public Broadcasting System will give a small number of schools selected by PBS access to inservice and courses in these areas. In the second, conducted by TI-IN, 60 districts selected by the Texas Education Agency based upon lack of enrollment in science, math, and foreign language courses, would receive TI-IN programming in these areas as well as inservice offerings in these areas.

GOAL 8:

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications among all public education interests will be consistent, timely, and effective.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Technology has brought about great changes in business and business communications in Texas. Educational entities also can take advantage of quick and efficient electronic communications systems to keep better informed of all facets of the public school system. Among the activities undertaken by the Texas Education Agency to encourage and make better use of electronic communications systems is its ongoing, cooperative agreement with a private concern, the Electric Pages. Via the Electric Pages, some 30 different Agency divisions post information on electronic bulletin boards and also can communicate with districts through electronic mail.

In addition, Agency staff conducted training and provided technical assistance on the administrative and instructional use of telecommunications for all service centers, numerous districts throughout the state and Agency personnel. The Agency also established a subscription to SpecialNet, a special education electronic communication network. Approximately 66 Texas SpecialNet users are now on-line with this national network. Agency staff use the network on a daily basis for sharing information with the Office of Special Education Programs in Washington, D.C., with other state departments of education, and with the 66 Texas users.

CAMPUS RECOGNITION

While it is important to communicate the needs of the state's education system to policy-makers and taxpayers, it is equally important to communicate its successes. In 1988, the State Board of Education for the first time publicly recognized individual campuses and school districts that exhibited significant improvement or high achievement on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) tests.

The Board appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on Awards and Recognition, comprised of Board members and school district representatives, to devise an appropriate means of congratulating Texas students and educators for their TEAMS successes. Criteria was established to recognize schools in which 90 percent or more of the students in each grade level tested mastered all TEAMS tests during the 1986-87 school year, or schools which recorded gains of 30 percent or more in the percentage of students mastering TEAMS tests from the 1985-86 school year to 1986-87. Following these criteria, a total of 342 campuses received certificates from the State Board in May 1988 honoring them for exceptional achievement. The number of honored campuses grew to 629 when the Board recognized 1987-88 TEAMS achievements in November 1988.

The Agency also cooperated with the U.S. Department of Education to coordinate submission of schools and programs eligible for national recognition. In 1988, the Agency invited every school district in the state to submit information for consideration in the U.S. Department of Education's Elementary School Recognition Program. Eighty-one districts returned nomination forms and the Agency recommended 29 public elementary schools for recognition. Of those, 13 were recognized by the federal government as exemplary schools.

In 1987, the Agency reviewed 11 applications and recommended nine for recognition under the Chapter 1 Secretary's Initiative. Staff provided training and received 13 programs submitted for recognition as effective in meeting the compensatory needs of children. Eight of the 13 were recommended for recognition by the U.S. Department of Education and seven were recognized by the Secretary of Education.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

An important task in helping school districts provide the best possible instructional programs to their students consists of identifying exemplary programs and sharing information about them with school districts across the state. As part of this effort, the Agency selected five districts which had implemented exemplary practices in educating special education students in the least restrictive environment and worked with them to develop and disseminate a program on the TI-IN satellite system.

The school districts submitted videotapes of the handicapped students being educated with their normal peers in academic, physical education, and vocational settings. Principals from the campuses involved went to San Antonio to be interviewed on the TI-IN show and the videotaped segments from their campuses were used in the show. The TI-IN tape was subsequently edited, copied and disseminated on a request basis throughout the state and nation.

In addition, other TI-IN presentations on exemplary programs in bilingual education, parental involvement, content mastery for special education students also were conducted by Agency staff as well as staff from several school districts.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency share a commitment to keeping the public and school districts well informed of educational issues, trends, successes, and needs. Several ongoing projects and programs help accomplish that goal, including:

- A weekly radio program called "Report Card" which airs on some 45 stations across Texas featuring interviews about current topics in education.
- A series of pamphlets called *Texas Public Education and You* made available to the general public via correspondence from the Agency in response to citizens questions, conferences,

the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers and school districts. Pamphlets have covered such topics as general public school statistics, the Agency, and parental involvement.

- A monthly newsletter called *Texas Education Today*, distributed to the news media, school districts and education associations. The newsletter focuses on State Board of Education actions, student and educator achievements, reports of meetings of education-related groups such as the Select Committee on Education, and other issues of interest.
- A twice-yearly newsletter called *TEA Direct Line* which provides information and feature stories to some 200,000 Texas teachers and administrators.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

- (1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;
- (2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;
- (3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;
- (4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;
- (5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;
- (6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and
- (7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

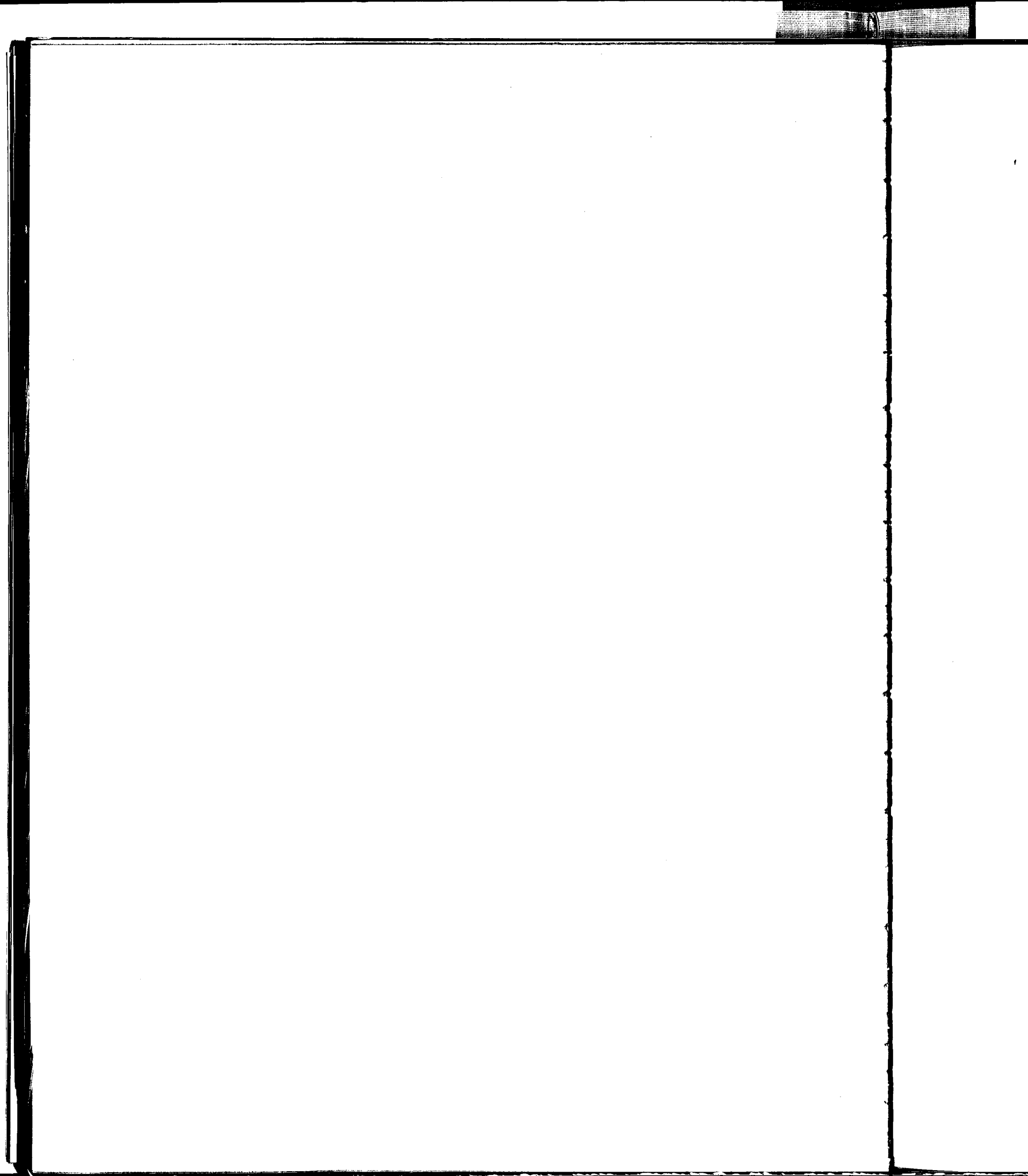
In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

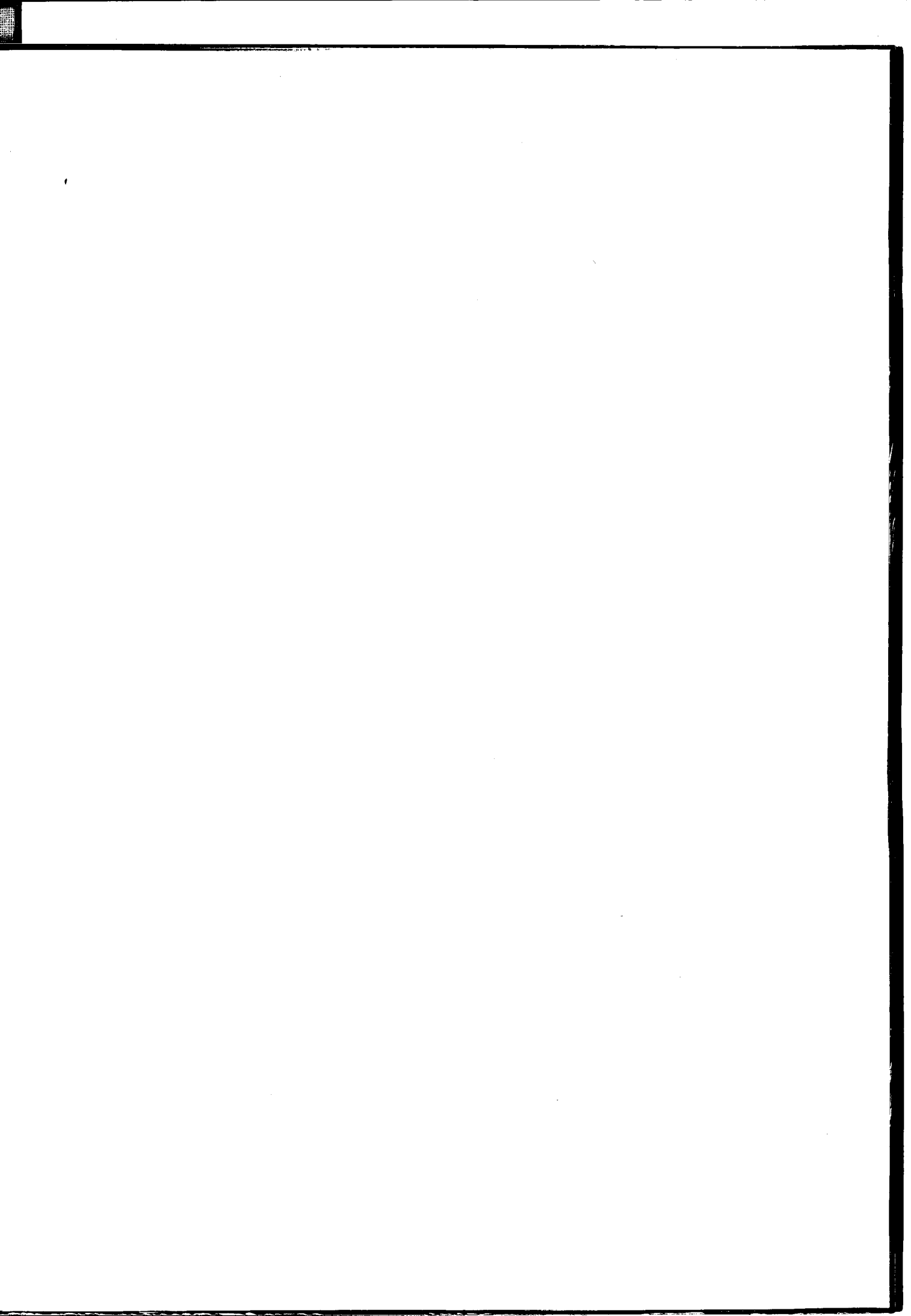
Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.







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