

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Lake Worth ISD Board Members and Raise Your Hand Texas Discuss STAAR and Accountability System

Lake Worth, Texas: Raise Your Hand Texas (RYHT) and community leaders held an event on February 15 in Frisco to call on lawmakers to support Texas Kids and make much-needed reforms for the state test and add additional indicators to the public school accountability system.

Lake Worth ISD Board President Armando Velazquez and Vice-President Mac Belmontes represented the district at Wednesday's meeting. The board of trustees are part of the inaugural trustee advocates program put on by RYHT.

Senior Director of Advocacy for Raise Your Hand Texas Dr. Libby Cohen stated that "students are more than one test on one day. A single test should not be the sole indicator of school and student performance."

RYHT is requesting the current A-F school district and campus rating system be updated during this year's legislative session to support Texas Kids. The accountability plan should align with the following basic principles for **KIDS**:

Knowledge for parents and community members

- A single letter grade tells an incomplete story to families, educators, businesses and community members.
- We need multiple letter grades reflecting different kinds of work to give communities better insight into a school's area of strength and areas of growth rather than a single summative score.

Indicators beyond the test

- Add additional indicators to our accountability system, especially at the elementary and middle school levels, that reflect work we know contributes to positive long-term outcomes for students.

De-emphasize STAAR

- STAAR test results should only count for up to 50 percent of the overall score in the state's accountability ratings system.
- Eliminate tests that are not required by federal law, including the 8th grade social students STAAR test, U.S. History STAAR EOC exam and the English II STAAR EOC exam.

Seek feedback

- The voices of the people they ultimately serve – parents, students and local stakeholders, including private industry partners – should all be represented as districts seek to understand where they are succeeding and where they need to improve.

- Families want to know if their children feel safe, secure and engaged at school. Including a student safety and school climate survey can help to provide this insight.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) currently grades Texas public schools on the A-F scale. However, elementary and middle schools are graded on its students' STAAR scores.

LWISD board members held listening circles in November and December last year and received feedback from parents, employees and community members on the STAAR test and rating system, and will use these suggestions during the legislative session.

“We will continue to strive for the students, staff and community in Lake Worth ISD and serve as advocates for the future of public education,” Velazquez said.

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RYHT is a non-partisan nonprofit organization supporting public policy solutions that invest in Texas' 5.4 million public school students, encourage innovation and autonomy, and improve college and workforce readiness.