

# EDUCATION MATTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE JAYTON-GIRARD ISD ADMINISTRATION

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## money matters

By Tim Seymore, Superintendent

It took a while, but the legislature finally came up with a school finance plan. How did we fare? Well, for the next two years, I would say we came out about as good as we could have hoped for, considering the financial shape the state is in. Contrary to what Governor Perry and Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst claim, the state is not in good financial condition, and they funded education 5 billion dollars below current funding levels over the next biennium.

What does that mean for Jayton School? Well, we will see a loss in revenue for the 2011-2012 school year of just under \$200,000. For the 2012-2013 school year, a loss of about \$300,000 from current levels. Of course that is based upon student populations and taxable values holding steady, neither of which are a given. In addition, for the years 2013-2017, funding will be at no higher levels than the 2012-2013 level and will be set a lower levels, as needed, to meet the state budget. These levels will either be set by the legislature or the commissioner of education. As of September 1, 2017, the target revenue and hold-harmless provisions currently in law, which allow Jayton School to keep a higher spending level and pay less recapture to the state, will expire. The result will be Jayton School spending levels will be completely formula based and will be set with

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equivalent per pupil spending levels similar to Motley County, Patton Springs, and Aspermont.

This will be the first time in Jayton since the start of serious oil and gas production began in Kent County that Jayton School will be forced to operate on substantially less money than they have over the last 30 or so years.

The JGISD Board of Trustees will over the next year be developing a plan to reduce spending to accommodate the cuts in revenue. Thankfully, the school has built up a healthy fund balance which will allow for unbudgeted contingencies and or emergency situations.

Please be understanding as you begin to hear of changes in policy or procedures that are directed at reducing spending over the next few years.

## a staar is born

Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will implement the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program, which includes new assessments in grades 3 through 8 and development of twelve end-of-course (EOC) assessments for students in grades 9 through 12. STAAR phases out the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) program, in place since 2003. Students enrolled for the first time in grade 9 in the 2011-12 school year must perform successfully on the EOC assessments to graduate. To graduate on the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Programs, students

must also meet performance targets on certain assessments. As a result of this new testing framework, the school board has reviewed policies concerning grading and class rank, along with a range of other issues associated with the implementation of EOC assessments.

### WHAT IS STAAR?

STAAR differs significantly from the current TAKS program in the following ways:

1. STAAR assessments evaluate content and skills from  
(Please see STAAR, page 2)

## staar

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills at greater depth and a higher level of cognitive complexity.

2. STAAR assessments emphasize readiness in terms of subsequent grades or courses, and ultimately, college and career readiness.

3. EOC assessments constitute a new form of exit-level testing. To graduate, students must achieve a cumulative score at least equal to the product of the passing standard times the number of EOC assessments in each foundation area (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). In general, students on the Recommended or the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Programs are required to take all twelve EOC assessments. Students on the Minimum Program will usually take fewer EOC assessments.

### **STAAR Test Design**

One of the primary goals of the STAAR program is to increase the rigor of the assessments so that students have the academic knowledge and skills they need to meet the challenges of the 21st century. STAAR will assess skills at a greater depth and higher level of cognitive complexity and will include not only more items, but a greater number of rigorous items per test.

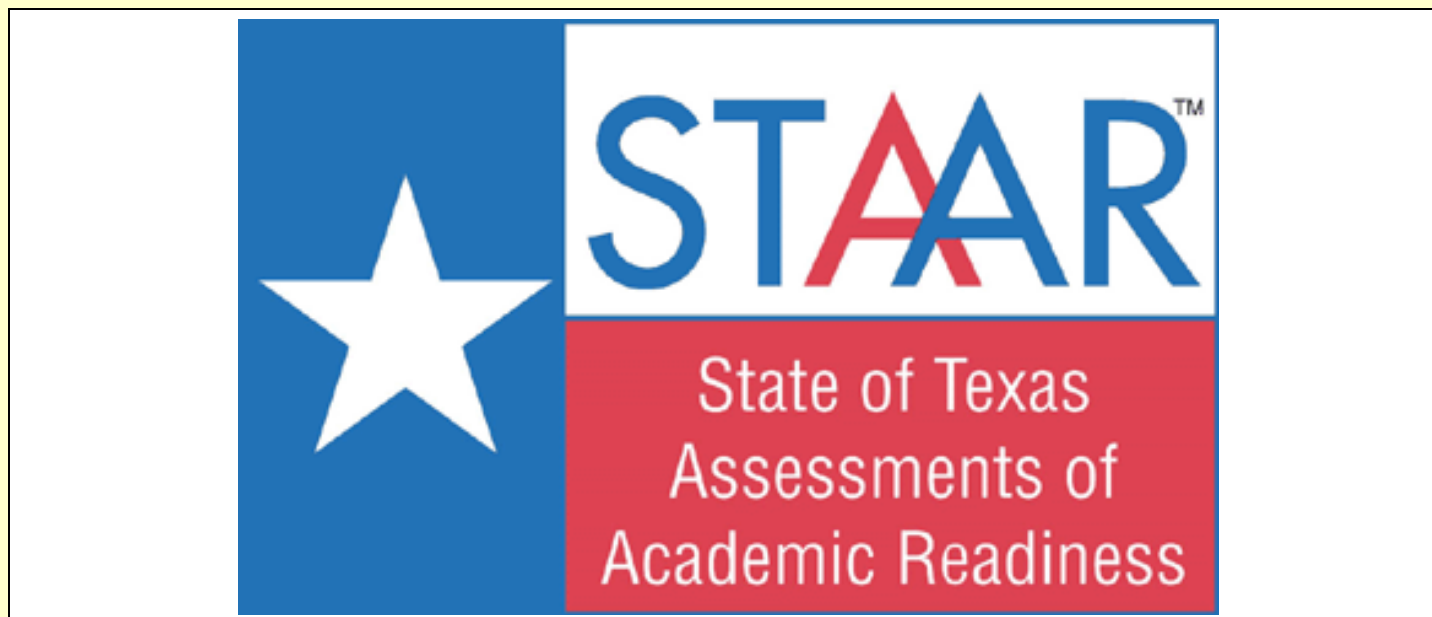
In addition, the test design for STAAR will provide a more clearly articulated assessment program that focuses on fewer skills and addresses those skills in a deeper way.

**More focus.** In an effort to structure STAAR assessments so that they are more focused, TEA has made a distinction between “readiness” and “supporting” standards from the TEKS content standards eligible for assessment. TEA has defined a set of readiness standards for each grade or course that are necessary both for success in the current grade or course and for preparedness in the next grade or course. These readiness standards will be emphasized annually in the STAAR assessments. The content standards that were deemed to be supporting are still an important part of instruction and are eligible for assessment. However, the supporting standards may not all be tested each year.

**More clarity.** TEA will provide educators with information about each assessment to clearly identify readiness and supporting standards, communicate the relationship between the TEKS and the STAAR assessment program, explain the role of readiness and supporting standards on the tests, and provide sample items from the new assessments.

**More depth.** In order for STAAR to focus on preparedness for student success in subsequent grades and courses, and ultimately in college and/or a career, the tests will assess skills in a deeper way than TAKS through the inclusion of items measuring higher cognitive complexity.

*Texas students, teachers, administrators, and school boards are being asked to “step it up a notch or two” at a time when funding is dwindling. This will be a challenge, but one we can overcome, with everyone’s help. A focus on teaching and learning is paramount. A commitment to the principle, “Let nothing get in the way of the learning,” will be necessary, and that commitment must come from EVERYONE, if we are to succeed.*



## we want you

We need your help to meet the growing challenges that must be overcome to have a great school. There are a host of ways that you can help.

- ✦ Serve on the site-based decision making committee. This committee made up of teachers, parents, business and community members will help to develop a district improvement plan that will guide us to excellence in this new era of testing and accountability. New standards, new requirements, reduced funding, changing demographics all play a part in how we must adjust and this committee will be an integral part of that process. Serving on this committee will require a series of several meetings throughout the school year to discuss and modify the plan.
- ✦ Serve on a booster club. We have two booster clubs at Jayton School. The Jaybird Booster Club supports the athletic and academic contests participants by providing encouragement, adding spirit, and providing services and supplies to help our teams succeed. The Going Band from Jaybird Land Booster Club supports the bands and music programs in the school in much the same way.
- ✦ Come to the school events. Showing our kids that you support them in everything they do is essential to their success. Check the school website calendar for upcoming events at [www.jaytonjaybirds.com](http://www.jaytonjaybirds.com). Provide your phone number and/or email address, if you want messages about upcoming events.
- ✦ Volunteer at school. If you have time and want to serve the school in some way, let us know. We can surely find a place for you to help out. There are a host of things you can do to help out around the school. This requires a background and fingerprint check, which we can schedule for you.
- ✦ Be supportive and informed. If you want to know something about how the school works, or if you hear something about the school that you think sounds absurd, come and ask. We will tell you what we are doing and why. We want people to know what is going on around here.
- ✦ Help keep our kids safe. Respect posted speed limit and school zone signs. Drive slowly around the school. Stay off of your cell phone while driving around the school.

If you want more information about any of these, please call the school and you will be put in touch with the appropriate person. 806-237-2991

## REEL Thoughts

High school registration is done, and class schedules have been finalized. Teachers have completed various trainings through the summer and are busy making final preparations for the upcoming school year. Maintenance personnel have dedicated hours to improving facilities, and they've given everything a good scrubbin'. Folks in the offices have diligently finished the paperwork and processes that accompany the end of one school year and the beginning of another. And, if you've noticed a lot of tired and sore kids shuffling around town, it's because football, cross country and band practices have all gotten underway! All of this indicates the first day of school, Monday, August 22, is just around the corner.

If you have kids in school, hopefully you've already received a packet of forms to be completed and returned. While the packet may seem rather extensive, we are required to maintain up-to-date files with this information for all students. So, we appreciate you taking time to make this possible.

I know students and parents often have contrasting feelings regarding the start of school, but rest assured, those of us in the school building are anxious for the year to get underway. Kids are the reason we're all here, and it sure is more interesting when they're filling the halls!

I hope you've all had a great summer break, and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Jodie Reel, Principal



### A New Face in the Crowd

We are pleased to have join our staff, Rob Phillips. Mr. Phillips will be our new Agricultural Sciences teacher. Mr. Phillips comes to us from Ozona High School, where he directed the AG/FFA programs. Mr. Phillips has been busy this summer. In addition to moving his family to Jayton, he has taken our FFA kids to Leadership Conference at Western Texas College and to the State FFA Convention in Lubbock.

Check out these websites to learn something new!

[www.constitutingamerica.org](http://www.constitutingamerica.org)  
[www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/)  
<http://www.constitutionfacts.com/>  
<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/>  
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/JJ/hlj2.html>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kent\\_County,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kent_County,_Texas)

Check out our school website!

[www.jaytonjaybirds.com](http://www.jaytonjaybirds.com)

You can submit calendar entries, or stories about upcoming events, or whatever you want!

## School Supplies

The school has a limited supply of selected school supplies available to help you defray the cost of back-to-school.

Supplies are available to those that need them on a first come-first served basis.

Come by the school office to pick up supplies.

Limit: One package per student.

## PLANNING AHEAD

August 18 Football Scrimmage  
Aug 22 School Starts  
August 27 Gridiron Classic

*Jayton School is now on  
TWITTER!*

Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and  
twitter, "JaytonSchool"  
to see what's happening at  
school.

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**School Board**

Debbie Manske, Pres.

Paul Martinez, V.P.

Kathy Owen, Sec.

Stacy Burchett

Connie Martinez

Jay Kingston

Jim Galart

## Excellence In Education

Be it hereby resolved that the Jayton-Girard Independent School District Board of Trustees is committed to the relentless pursuit of excellence in education. We pledge to recruit, employ, and retain only the most dedicated and effective teachers, administrators, and auxiliary staff. We pledge to support the staff in its pursuit of excellence by providing leadership and vision for the district, by promoting professional development that results in outstanding performance from every employee, and by continuously evaluating the operations of the district.

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.jaytonjaybirds.com](http://www.jaytonjaybirds.com)

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