

## Testimony to the State Board of Education

by **Brooke Dollens Terry**  
Education Policy Analyst

Thank you, Dr. McLeroy and State Board members for your time. It is a pleasure to be here and share with you my research on end-of-course exams.

In writing my paper on end-of-course exams, I researched test strategies in other states and foreign countries to glean best-practices and choose to study Advanced Placement, or AP, tests and New York Regents exams in-depth since they are both examples of long-standing and well-designed end-of-course exams.

Based on my research, I have the following recommendations as Texas moves forward in designing and implementing end-of-course exams in high schools across the state.

### TEST DESIGN

- Assess writing with essays on all three English and all three History exams.
- Assess student knowledge with short answer, free response and open-ended questions rather than multiple choice questions to encourage the teaching of knowledge over test-taking strategies.
- Don't reinvent the wheel by designing new tests from scratch. Many other states are using and designing

end-of-course exams for the same subjects. Look for common ground in curriculum and work together.

- Seek assistance from entities like the College Board and ACT and from college professors to ensure exams are well-designed and rigorous.

### TEST ADMINISTRATION

- Provide teachers with a standard grading rubric for each end-of-course exam to ensure all exams are graded the same.
- Have a panel of teachers who taught the course grade each exam.
- To prevent grading bias or cheating:
  - Assign teachers from another school district to grade the exams, and
  - Remove all references to the student's name, hometown, and school district from the exam.

Brooke Dollens Terry is an Education Policy Analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation. She may be contacted at: [bterry@texaspolicy.com](mailto:bterry@texaspolicy.com).