**[](http://www.houstonisd.org/HISDmedia)**

HISD Board of Education votes to support course in Mexican-American history, culture

*April 3, 2014* – The Houston Independent School District Board of Education approved two key resolutions Thursday that will affect high school students across the district. A resolution that the inclusion of a high school level Mexican-American history and culture course in the state’s graduation plan passed unanimously. Board members also approved a resolution not to double-test middle school students who are taking Algebra I.

HISD, the largest district in the state, is petitioning the Texas Education Agency to adopt a Mexican-American studies course as part of the state curriculum, focusing on the history and culture of Mexican-Americans in Texas.

“Mexican-American history courses will expose our students to the significant impact that Mexican-Americans have had on the history and culture of Texas,” said HISD Superintendent Terry Grier. “As a district with such a diverse population, it is our obligation to provide students facts and stories that will help them understand that our country and our state’s history includes people that look like them.” The district has 211,552 students and 62 percent are Hispanic.

The resolution not to double-test middle school students was developed in response to a new recommendation from the Texas Education Agency. Previously, students who took Algebra I and Biology in middle school were required to take both the EOCs and the grade-level STAAR assessments in those courses.

In March, the U.S. Department of Education denied Texas a waiver on multiple assessments, but State Commissioner of Education Michael Williams left the decision up to districts. He ruled that even if taken in middle school, the Algebra I EOC would count toward a new graduation requirements created by Texas House Bill 5.

The resolution approved by the board specifies that middle school students will only be tested once in a subject area. Therefore, middle school students who are enrolled in high school courses for which state exams are given will only take the high school End-Of-Course exam. Middle school students taking geometry and biology will also take one test, either an EOC or grade-level STAAR assessment:

* Students who take geometry in the eighth grade will take the Grade 8 STAAR math assessment. There is no STAAR geometry EOC.
* Students who are take biology in the eighth grade will take the STAAR biology EOC instead of the Grade 8 STAAR science assessment.

In May 2012, the Board of Education approved a resolution calling on the state Legislature to reconsider the current public school accountability system and the “high stakes” testing of public school students.

****